

EERA Feedback – Update of the governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action

The European Energy Research Alliance (EERA) is the largest low-carbon energy research community in Europe and beyond, comprising over 250 leading organisations from more than 30 countries, with the mission of catalysing European energy research to shape science-based policies and advance world-class innovation. EERA welcomes the EU Commission's upcoming update of the Energy Union and Climate Action's governance and proposes the following policy recommendations to enhance its effectiveness:

- 1) **Ensure stronger alignment with the Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET Plan), notably by better linking research and innovation (R&I) priorities with National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs)** – EERA calls for stronger alignment between the governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action and the SET Plan, a key instrument of the Energy Union's R&I dimension that supports the development and scaling-up of strategic clean energy technologies. By aligning national R&I programmes with EU objectives and facilitating the coordination of R&I and market uptake activities, the SET Plan strengthens cooperation among MS, EEA countries, industry and research organisations in support of Europe's competitiveness, strategic autonomy and decarbonisation.
- 2) **Foster system coherence across decarbonisation pathways** – EERA calls for ensuring coherence across different decarbonisation pathways, incl. electrification, energy efficiency, renewable energy systems, flexibility and storage and carbon management solutions when relevant, to jointly address three structural priorities: decarbonisation, security of supply and the global competitiveness of European industry. This integrated, non-prescriptive and complementary perspective is reflected in EERA's structure, which brings together 18 Joint Programmes covering low-carbon technologies and systemic research topics, allowing all relevant solutions to contribute according to local strengths and system needs.
- 3) **Recognise resilience and preparedness as core functions of the Energy Union Governance Framework** – EERA recommends that the Framework explicitly recognise resilience and preparedness as core dimensions of the Energy Union. Recent crises have shown that Europe's energy system must become more robust to external shocks, geopolitical disruptions and the weaponisation of energy, requiring coordinated action at EU level. In this context, energy communities and smart grids constitute important enablers of resilience and of a just transition and should be recognised as such. By decentralising generation and flexibility resources and enabling more responsive system management, they can reduce exposure to external supply disruptions and help maintain energy services at local level.
- 4) **Address the energy and digital transitions as mutually reinforcing** – EERA advises better capturing the synergies between the energy and the digital transitions and recognising digitalisation as a key enabler of the clean energy transition, allowing electrification, efficiency, flexibility, resilience and interoperability across energy systems.
- 5) **Recognise standardisation as an enabler of the implementation of the Energy Union** – EERA recommends better recognising the role of technical standards, digital interoperability frameworks and pre-normative research in supporting the implementation of the Energy Union.



- 6) **Strengthen multi-level governance** – EERA encourages better integrating the role of regional and local authorities, infrastructure operators and other place-based actors in the governance processes of the Energy Union, incl. the preparation and implementation of NECPs. With many energy transition measures implemented locally, governance arrangements should enable more structured contributions from sub-national actors. In addition, instruments such as appropriately revised partnerships can be used to further devolve strategic decisions to the concerned technical-scientific, socio-economic and industrial communities.