# **Press release**

Brussels, 11 March 2021

**European Commission confirms lengthy delay, the end of EU strategy for sustainable buildings?**

*31 signatories, representing a diverse range of stakeholders, call for delivery of EU Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment in a letter [1] addressed to European Commission’s executive vice president Frans Timmermans, and commissioners Thierry Breton and Virginijus Sinkevičius.*

A broad coalition of 30 expert organisations sent today an open letter calling on the European Commission to deliver a strategy for a sustainable built environment to support the European Green Deal and meet EU climate goals.

One year after the launch of the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP), there is no clear timeline for a EU Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment. At the moment, the European Commission is even openly questioning its intentions to go ahead with this strategy.**This has triggered 31 organisations to call for an ambitious EU Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment (SSBE) to be published by the end of 2021**, in line with commitments set in the CEAP.

Such strategy is essential to tackle the substantial impacts of EU buildings and the construction industry, which account for an estimated 50% of energy consumption, 36% of CO2 emissions, 50% of raw materials, and 33% of waste and water use [2].

The letter has been sent today, on 11 March 2021, exactly one year after the release of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan. One year on, no strategy for sustainable buildings has been presented, nor is it expected this year as planned.

Signatories include environmental NGOs, industry stakeholders, and representatives from cities and regions.

A strategy is essential to address the sector’s high impacts, and make clear links between existing legislative proposals highlighted within the CEAP [3], and all other relevant legislation currently being revised [4].

**Michael Neaves, programme manager at ECOS**, stated that:

*‘We urge the Commission to deliver the EU Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment in 2021 as a priority. Only this way can the EU bring the pieces of this puzzle together and drive a transition to sustainable buildings in the EU, in support of EU climate law and the Paris Agreement.’*

**Gonzalo Sánchez, policy officer at EEB**, added:

“*A European Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment is essential to ensure the efficiency of the European policies to meet the EU climate goals in 2030 and 2050 and is also pivotal to a circular economy and the fair transition we need in EU. A compelling sustainable strategy is the best way to ensure The sustainability of the built environment will appear hand in hand with the Circular Economy approach the commitment of the political, social, and economic actors.”*

**Key messages from the letter:**

* A Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment was announced to be published by the end of 2021.
* The substantial impacts of the sector need to be addressed as soon as possible for the EU to meet its climate goals in 2030 and 2050 respectively.
* In order to accelerate the uptake of sustainable and circular building solutions and harmonised methodologies, and generate adequate investment, the construction value chain as a whole needs visibility and a clear commitment by the EU to develop a coherent legislative framework.
* This strategy is needed to drive sustainability, in part through circular economy practices, to tackle the impacts of buildings and the construction sector. [KK1] [MN2]
* Citizens and stakeholder groups now all need clarity and strong coordination from the European Commission – a strategy to deliver a comprehensive approach to sustainability of the built environment.

**Full list of signatories:**

**International organisations**

* ACR + Association of Cities and Regions for sustainable Resource management
* Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance (CNCA)
* Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe
* Corporate Leaders Group (CLG) Europe
* Energy Cities
* Environmental Coalition on Standards (ECOS)
* European Environmental Bureau (EEB)
* Eurocities
* ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability - Europe
* International Federation of Landscape Architects - IFLA Europe
* Fire Safe Europe
* RICS – Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
* RREUSE
* Sandbag - smarter climate policy
* World Green Building Council (WGBC) Europe

**National organisations**

* Ecocity (Greece)
* Ecoteca (Romania)
* Environment Engineering Group (Serbia)
* Deutsche Umwelthlife (Germany)
* The Circular Economy Institute - IGOZ (Poland)
* Friends of the Earth Bulgaria
* Global2000 (Austria)
* Levego Munkacsoport (Hungary)
* Natuur & Milieu (Netherlands)
* Mediterranean Information Office for Environment Culture and Sustainable Development MIO-ECSDE (Greece)
* Repairably (Slovakia)
* VšĮ "Žiedinė ekonomika" (Lithuania)
* Zala Briviba (Latvia)
* ZERO – Associação Sistema Terrestre Sustentável (Portugal)
* Zero Waste France (France)
* Zero Waste Association (Poland)

**Notes to editors**

[1] Link to letter

[2] European Commission figures:<https://ec.europa.eu/environment/topics/circular-economy/levels_en#ecl-inpage-261> and<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/news/sustainable-buildings-europe-s-climate-neutral-future>

[3] Policies proposes to form part of EU Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment: Construction Products Regulation, use of LEVEL(s) in public procurement and the EU sustainable finance framework, addressing Construction & Demolition Waste, LEVEL(s) and soil-related policies, as well as the Renovation Wave

[4] Relevant policies not mentioned in the CEAP: Energy Efficiency Directive and Energy Performance of Buildings Directive