

Kyiv, 6 January 2023

Dear Executive Vice-President,
Dear Mr. Timmermans,

We, Ukrainian climate and environmental NGOs, are very grateful for the EU's political, financial and humanitarian support provided since Russia's full-scale invasion, as well as for adopting nine sanction packages against the aggressor state. We also value your personal support for Ukraine.

Talks about Ukraine's reconstruction have been ongoing since last spring, with several initiatives spearheaded by the EU. Now, the EU and Ukraine need to come to terms on the general framework and principles.

We strongly believe that Ukraine's way into the EU requires a Green Recovery in line with the European Green Deal. Therefore, the following points are of the utmost importance for us and may be helpful for your upcoming talks in Kyiv.

1. Greening of the emergency energy aid

We acknowledge the emergency energy assistance the EU is providing, including through diesel generators. However, in addition to them, **we propose to supply critical social infrastructure - hospitals, schools, kindergartens, water and wastewater treatment plants, city/town councils - with renewable energy solutions.** For example, solar energy systems with storage and heat pumps allow a high level of energy autonomy and resilience and could save precious financial resources to Ukrainian communities.

Diesel generators entail high operating costs as well as security issues which become a problem for prolonged everyday use. Advancing the market for renewable energy systems and services now will have positive long-term effects on the energy transition of Ukraine.

2. Focus on decentralised renewables in Ukrainian communities when preparing and implementing the Green Recovery

Energy security has never been as relevant for Ukrainians as now. It has become common sense that renewables provide this security. With this general support, we suggest the Commission and the Ukrainian government focus on measures to boost the implementation of decentralized renewable energy projects. Importantly, the move towards decentralised energy should help households to participate, inter alia through building up energy communities.

This sentiment is echoed by President Zelensky, who emphasized that "*A modern city needs decentralized sources of energy. Only green energy can really provide this*"¹ during his annual address to the Parliament. This was reiterated by Prime Minister Shmyhal during the Government session on 3 January 2023.² **However, a special emphasis on decentralised generation of renewables still needs to be included into Ukraine's drafts of the Recovery Plan and Energy Strategy 2050.**

¹ Speech by the President with the annual message to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the internal and external situation of Ukraine:

<https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/vistup-prezidenta-zi-shorichnim-poslannyam-do-verhovnoyi-rad-80113>

² Building a decentralized energy system will allow the country to reduce its vulnerability to enemy attacks: Prime Minister:

<https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/pobudova-detsentralizovanoi-enerhosystemy-zrobyt-ii-mensh-vrazlyvoiu-do-vorozhykh-atak-premier-ministr>

3. Increase the role of municipalities, transparency and the public in decision making

Strategies and plans for post-war recovery **should be developed with the active participation and involvement of all stakeholders, including local governments and CSOs**. We currently see the inclination of the government to over-centralise these processes. They must be adopted with a bottom-up approach, contributing to the further development of one of the most successful reforms in Ukraine - the decentralisation reform. Local governments are better equipped for this now but need to have ownership of community recovery processes.

4. Carbon intensive regions as pilot communities for Green Recovery projects

All Ukrainian coal and heavy industry regions are facing a difficult transformation process. However, the last couple of years saw vibrant progress on the coal phase-out and just transition of coal regions - both on local and national level. **As a result, coal mining communities can become pilots for the Green Recovery**. The open letter from eleven mayors of Ukrainian coal mining towns of September 2022³ strongly supports this point.

5. Creating financial mechanisms for the direct participation of municipalities

The EU's financial mechanisms for Ukraine's recovery should give direct access to municipalities (as well as NGOs and SMEs) and the whole process should not be solely controlled by the central government.

Your support, dear Mr. Timmermans, through raising these points within the Commission and vis-a-vis Ukraine's government would be much appreciated.

Signatories:

“Center for Environmental Initiatives “Ecoaction” NGO
Luhansk Regional Human Rights Center “Alternative”
Ecoclub NGO
Razom We Stand NGO
Ekoltava NGO
Kmelnytskyi energy cluster NGO
Agency for sustainable development of the Carpathian region “FORZA”
ICO “Environment - People - Law”
Energy Transition Coalition
Osokorky Wetlands park NGO
Zero Waste Lviv NGO
Center for social and media initiatives NGO
Danube-Carpathian Program NGO
Environmental Club Eremurus
Women`s Energy Club of Ukraine NGO
Initiative center “Toloka” NGO
Unique Planet NGO
Office for the Environment NGO

³ An open letter from the mayors of coal mining communities regarding Ukraine's recovery process:
<https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/press-release/859066.html>

Vuhledar city development agency NGO
All-Ukrainian Sustainable Development & Investment Agency NGO
DiXi Group NGO
ForestCom NGO
Charitable foundation "Charity Fund community development "PARITY"
Voice of the Nature NGO
Social Initiative "City of the Sun"
Black Sea Women's Club
"DYC "DOBRO" NGO
SaveDnipro NGO
Space of sustainable development NGO
Zero Waste Society NGO
Ecosense NGO
"PUBLIC SPACE "DEVELOPMENT" NGO
U-Cycle (Kyiv Cyclists' Association)