



To:

*Céline Gauer, Head of Recovery and Resilience Task Force (RECOVER), European Commission*

*Brussels, 6 April 2021*

**Subject: Technical assistance for energy efficiency renovations to deliver the economic and political capital of Recovery and Resilience Plans**

Dear Ms Gauer,

We are in the middle of the last round of consultations for the preparation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs). In this delicate phase your guidance is paramount to ensure that the RRP's are fit to respond to the unprecedented health, economic, social – and climate – crisis that is hitting the European Union (EU).

The Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation and the European Commission Guidelines set a good framework<sup>1</sup> for drafting sustainable and economically effective RRP's. The very significant EU public resources which are being mobilised must be invested wisely in projects and reforms which are aligned with the Paris agreement objectives and the EU's 2030 and 2050 climate objectives.

Many of the national plans currently available place energy efficiency and in particular building renovations on centre stage. This is good news<sup>2</sup> – as the Commission itself notes, renovation is our biggest job creator – and provides positive signals for the many private investors poised to mobilise resources to boost renovations.

In previous correspondence and conversations, we shared with you our recommendations<sup>3</sup> on how to improve RRP's with regards to their coherence with the EU's more ambitious 2030 climate goal. With this letter we would like to raise your attention to the importance of supporting high quality technical assistance and capacity building to ensure the Recovery and Resilience funds are fully and well spent.

We note DG REGIO has made technical assistance a pillar of cohesion policy with the possibility for Member States to allocate up to 4%<sup>4</sup> of cohesion funds for this purpose. This is an approach which

---

<sup>1</sup> The requirement to earmark at least 37% of each plan for climate action is a good starting point. From a qualitative point of view Member States are required to reflect and explain how their plans are meant to contribute to the achievement of the climate and energy targets by 2030 and 2050. In addition, the plans will need to be aligned with the EU climate law detailing the impact of the measures on GHG emission reduction, energy efficiency improvement, renewables increase, integration of energy system, and electricity interconnections. Member States are also required to ensure complementarity and coherence with their National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), which should be updated in line with the increased 2030 climate targets.

<sup>2</sup> Many authoritative studies and economic research show that a green recovery holds the opportunity to provide short term boost to local economies and job creation while supporting, in the long term, the modernisation of our economic system and the ecological transition. These include: IEA, [Sustainable Recovery](#) (2020), BPIE, [Building Renovation: A kick-starter for the EU recovery](#) (2020)

<sup>3</sup> European Alliance to Save Energy, [Inputs for economic recovery, resilience and long-term sustainability](#) (2020)

<sup>4</sup> Up to 4% for each operational programme, of which there are +/-380 across Europe's countries and regions, can be used for technical assistance. It adds up to several billion € but the resources are extremely fragmented, and therefore it is difficult to monitor, coordinate and prioritise their use in the areas with the greatest potential.



should be replicated within the RRP because more staff, skills and experience will optimise the absorption rate (fully spending available funds), maximise impact and sustainability (spending strategically) and minimise irregularities (spending correctly).

With specific regard to building renovations, we notice that in the draft RRP there is a general lack of focus on technical assistance, despite the central role it plays in removing the administrative, financial and other practical hurdles for ministries, cities, local authorities, businesses and households to renovate our common building stock.

Due to the specific nature of building renovation programmes and related financial and non-financial barriers that hinder their full deployment, **we would suggest that at least 4% of funds allocated to building renovations are spent on technical assistance.** For example, this would enable proactive support for public authorities to map out their buildings stock, prepare good long-term renovation strategies, and develop and aggregate renovation proposals<sup>5</sup>. In addition, these funds could be invested in education and training of workforce (upskilling and reskilling) as well as in information campaigns to increase citizens and businesses' awareness about the multiple benefits that renovations bring in terms of cost-savings, comfort, improved living conditions and increased productivity.

**RECOVER can play a decisive role at this stage of the RRP process by making sure Member States are aware of the importance of integrating horizontal technical assistance programmes in their plans.** The clear rationale is that deploying technical assistance and building up administrative and logistical capacity is an enabler for ensuring that the benefits of a swift and green recovery are delivered and felt across countries, regions, cities and individual households.

The alternative is the very real risk of jeopardising the recovery funds' economic and political capital and its multiple benefits for citizens, the clean energy transition and, ultimately, the European integration project.

We hope you will consider our recommendations and we remain at your disposal should you require more information.

Your sincerely,

Monica Frassoni

---

<sup>5</sup> Such resources could be used by Member States also to "facilitate access to appropriate mechanisms for accessible and transparent advisory tools, such as one-stop-shops for consumers and energy advisory services, on relevant energy efficiency renovations and financing instruments", as suggested by the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.



## About us

The European Alliance to Save Energy (EU-ASE) aims to advance the energy efficiency agenda in Europe. The Alliance allows world's leading multinational companies to join environmental campaigners and a cross-party group of Members of the European Parliament. EU-ASE business members have operations across the 27 Member States of the European Union, employ over 340.000 people in Europe and have an aggregated annual turnover of €115 billion.

