

REF Press Release:

Europe must ring-fence renewable energy and storage in Horizon Europe to deliver the Clean Industrial Deal

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EREF has co-signed a letter alongside other leading EU renewable energy and storage associations to the European Commission to ensure that the upcoming “Clean Tech for Climate” call under Horizon Europe (2026–2027) is clearly focused on renewable energy and storage technologies.

With a planned budget of EUR 600 million, the Clean Tech for Climate call is expected to support scale-up and market-ready projects. EREF welcomes this initiative to strengthen Europe’s industrial base, expand manufacturing capacity and enhance energy sovereignty. Yet, EREF notes with concern that the current structure risks diverting support to technologies not fully aligned with the EU’s climate, energy security and clean industrial objectives.

EREF, alongside the signing partners, strongly suggests ring-fencing the clean tech funding window for renewable energy and storage technologies, including wind, solar, hydropower, bioenergy, ocean energy, geothermal, and all forms of storage – from batteries and pumped hydro to power-to-X and renewable cogeneration. These technologies are already at the core of Europe’s decarbonisation and central to building resilient and made-in-Europe solutions.

Prof. Dr. Dörte Fouquet, Director of EREF, comments:

“Europe cannot afford another funding programme where the most central solutions for decarbonisation – renewable energy and storage – are underfunded. Horizon Europe must reinforce European sectors that are already delivering. This is about recognising what is needed to build a resilient, renewable-based energy system – and what should come first.”

EREF and the co-signatories recall that less than 5% of Innovation Fund support has gone to renewable or storage demonstration projects, despite their clear contribution to emissions reduction, affordability, and energy independence. In contrast, support has often been extended to technologies still reliant on fossil pathways or unproven at scale.

EREF reaffirms that all public funding for industrial decarbonisation and system innovation should reflect the transformation to a renewable-based energy system. Support should not be directed towards any technology relying on fossil fuels or nuclear energy but where it builds long-term capacity, supports European production, and strengthens local value creation – particularly through independent producers, SMEs, and energy communities and cooperatives.

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