Electrification target: making the EU more independent

On April 22, 2026, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced that the upcoming Electrification Action Plan will include an "ambitious electrification target". Following the AccelerateEU communication, this marks an important shift in the European Union (EU)'s approach to electrification. It is now a central instrument for delivering European energy security, technology leadership, and industrial resilience.

This shift reflects the scale of Europe's structural vulnerability to the succession of energy crises. Over the past decade, electrification in the EU has stagnated at around 23% of final energy consumption, leaving large parts of the economy exposed to fossil fuel volatility and related price spikes. More than half of the EU's energy needs are still covered through imported fossil fuels, and between 2021 and 2024, the EU spent approximately €1.8 trillion on oil, gas and coal imports. Since the escalation of the war in the Middle East, the Union has further spent €35 billion on energy imports, without receiving a single additional unit of energy.

The EU cannot control global fossil fuel markets, but can reduce its exposure to them. **Electrification is the only domestic, scalable and structural lever** to permanently reduce fossil fuel dependence while strengthening competitiveness, resilience and energy security. To send a solid investment signal and make it irreversible, **the EU can thus establish a binding electrification target of at least 50% by 2040 and set short-term milestones**. Given the role of electrification as a key security asset, this target could be included in the upcoming Energy Security Framework, coupled with sectoral benchmarks and a set of enabling measures within the Electrification Action Plan.

The benefits of a 50% electrification rate by 2040

The EU has a domestic and scalable lever to strengthen its energy security: electrification. With clear political signals and the right policy framework, the Union could electrify around 50% of its economy by 2040, compared to just 39% under current trajectories. This would reduce dependence on oil, gas and coal imports by up to two-thirds. It would simultaneously put the EU on a pathway to phase out LNG imports between 2030 and 2035, leaving only limited reliance on pipeline imports from Norway and the United Kingdom to meet EU gas demand by 2040.

The business case is already strong. Electrotechnologies are mature, deployable at scale, and largely rooted in European industrial capacity. This is true for wind turbines, industrial heat pumps, grids and part of the electric mobility value chain. A set of strong political signals combined with targeted enabling measures can accelerate investment and industrial innovation across these sectors. Additionally, electrification could also reduce fossil fuel import costs by an estimated €43 billion annually compared to a business-as-usual pathway, while improving industrial competitiveness through lower and more stable energy costs over time.

Key elements of the target design

Establishing a binding EU-wide electrification target under the Energy Security Framework, combined with national implementation pathways, ensures electrification is treated as a security asset and that the law could be adopted by the end of Q1 2027, ahead of major elections in France, Italy, Poland and Spain. This would provide a strong long-term investment signal while preserving flexibility for Member States on how to deliver electrification across transport, buildings and industry.

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Establishing an electrification target: key dimensions			
Dimension	Preferred option	Key design features	Why it matters
Scope	Economy-wide electrification target with sectoral benchmarks	Single EU-wide target across final energy consumption, complemented by sectoral tracking for transport, buildings and industry	Keeps the political signal simple and strong while ensuring accountability across sectors
Target level	At least 50% electrification by 2040	Intermediate indicative milestones: at least the existing 32% reference by 2030 and 40% by 2035. Higher milestones could be considered for the beginning of the period as a security matter	Provides a credible pathway consistent with energy security and fossil fuel dependence reduction objectives
Legal strength	Binding EU target with national implementation pathways	EU-level legally binding target, combined with national trajectories and based on clear electrification pathways where Member States have the flexibility on sectoral delivery	Different national starting points are taken into account, also allowing for different sectoral focuses
Governance	Energy Security Framework as the primary vehicle	Enshrining the target in the Energy Security Framework, with EU and national-level obligations. Member States retain flexibility on how to meet their target across transport, buildings and industry. They report/include that in their National Climate and Energy Plans (NECPs)	Clear planning allows for investment certainty and national flexibility on sectoral pathways
Policy framework	Electrification Action Plan with enabling measures	Faster permitting, power purchase agreement (PPA) guarantees, electrification-first principle for EU funding and EU Emission Trading System (ETS) revenues, taxation rebalancing	Ensures the target drives real deployment rather than remaining aspirational

Infrastructure and enabling measures

The Electrification Action Plan could serve as the **implementation pillar of the EU's electrification target** by setting out concrete enabling measures required to accelerate deployment across the economy. With a focus on grids, storage, permitting, investment frameworks and electricity price signals by 2030, it can include:

- **Accelerated grid investments**, anticipatory planning and stronger links with the Grids Package, with the exclusion of some of those investments from the Stability and Growth Pact based on security reasons.
- **Battery storage benchmark**, in line with the AccelerateEU's target of 200 gigawatts of storage capacity by 2030, **and flexibility measures** to reduce reliance on fossil fuel backup generation.
- **Fast-track permitting procedures for electrification projects**, including grids, storage, heat pumps and industrial electrification.
- **Guarantees for long-term PPAs** and targeted de-risking instruments, favouring zero-emission power capacity as well as flexibilities and batteries.

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- **An “electrification-first” principle for EU funding instruments, including EU ETS revenues.** This will ensure key support in electrification CAPEX for businesses and households.
- **Progressive rebalancing of national taxation between electricity and fossil gas** to strengthen electrification price signals.
- **Conditioned State aid approvals** to the realignment of national taxation between electricity and gas and the implementation of the electrification-first principle.
- **Sector-specific benchmarks for transport, building and industry** to improve implementation and accountability.

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