

Green electricity kiev

Ukrainian authorities and international partners - including the European Commission, the European Investment Bank and the World Bank - met in Lugano, Switzerland, on 4-5 July to outline plans as well as the financial support needed for the country's post-war recovery. There, the Ukrainian government and its National Council for the Recovery of Ukraine presented a draft reconstruction plan - written over one-and-a-half months with the support of industry and civil society groups in "a big, hugely inclusive process", says Anna Ackermann, founding member of Ukraine-based NGO Ecoaction and a policy analyst at the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

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"We don't want to do things as we used to," said Ukrainian energy minister German Galushchenko during the Ukraine Reconstruction Conference. "We want to reconstruct [Ukraine] based on the modern possibilities which exist in the energy sector."

That reconstruction "has to rebuild Ukraine in a sustainable manner aligned with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the Paris Agreement, integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions including green transition", said the declaration that emerged from the conference.

Prior to the Russian invasion, Ukraine had set itself an objective to phase out coal by 2040 - and 2035 in an "optimistic scenario"; - as well as to reach 12% renewables its final energy mix by 2025, 17% by 2030 and 25% by 2035.

According to policy research group Economist Impact's Ukraine Reform Tracker, the share of energy supply from renewables has risen steadily since 2014, from 2.6% to 6.6% in 2020 - and renewables make up about 10% of the country's electricity mix. Nuclear accounts for more than half of Ukraine's electricity, whereas coal accounts for about 28%.

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While the war may have slowed down the prospects to achieve these objectives, Ukrainian businesses restarted their activities soon after the war broke out and are keen to deliver on these goals, says Oksana Myronko, head of communications at the European Business Association (EBA) of Ukraine.

"We expect the reconstruction will be sustainable and according to the highest European standards as we have a good opportunity to rebuild an even more progressive and technological country," Myronko tells Energy Monitor. "Moreover, [we expect] that decarbonisation will be one of the key principles in Ukrainian economic development. Nevertheless, the priority is to stop the war."

In fact, the Ukrainian reconstruction plan has upgraded its renewables commitment to make it to 45% of its energy mix by 2032, and the country now aims to build as much as 30 gigawatts (GW) of solar, hydro and wind capacity by 2030, with the prospect of exporting part of that renewable power to and producing "green hydrogen" for export.

Before the start of the war, Ukraine's economy was the most energy-intensive in Europe, Myronko notes. "This is due to several factors: the structure of our industry, since energy-intensive industries such as metallurgy have key positions in it; large energy losses in housing and communal services due to the poor quality of buildings, other structures and their engineering networks; and huge losses during the transportation of thermal energy due to wear and tear of networks," she explains.

Although Ukraine has made significant efforts to reduce its gas demand, its high energy consumption has perpetuated the country's dependence on fossil fuel imports, mainly Russian oil and gas.

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