

Making the grid an asset for sustainability

A Eurelectric position paper

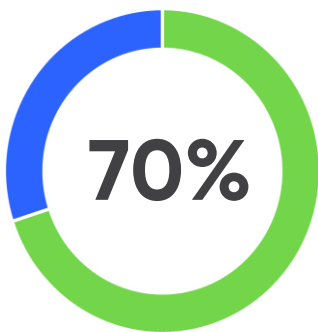
Future sustainability legislation relevant to DSOs:

- Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation
- Revision of Ecodesign requirements for power transformers.
- Revision of REACH Regulation
- Revision of F-gas Regulation
- Further delegated acts setting new technical screening criteria in the EU Taxonomy

Further electrification requires:



Connecting 50m heat pumps in the EU by 2030 according to REPowerEU



of new RES capacity will be connected at distribution level by 2030



50-70m EVs by 2030

Following the adoption of the Circular Economy Action Plan, important EU legislation is currently being revised or drafted. This new regulatory framework will have a major impact on the sustainability of infrastructure (see box on the left). In this context, European DSOs would like to share the following messages:

Eurelectric stands for making the Green Deal a reality with electrification and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. The REPowerEU Plan will require an even deeper transformation of our energy sector and all stakeholders should contribute to this collective effort.

Distribution System Operators (DSOs) are key enablers of sustainability. As the backbone of the digital and energy transition, European distribution grids connect the dots by integrating renewables, enabling the creation of new services for consumers (e.g. EVs) and ensuring a reliable electricity flow.

DSOs have already adopted an innovative and open-minded approach to managing their networks, while being committed to reducing their carbon emissions and making the grid more sustainable.

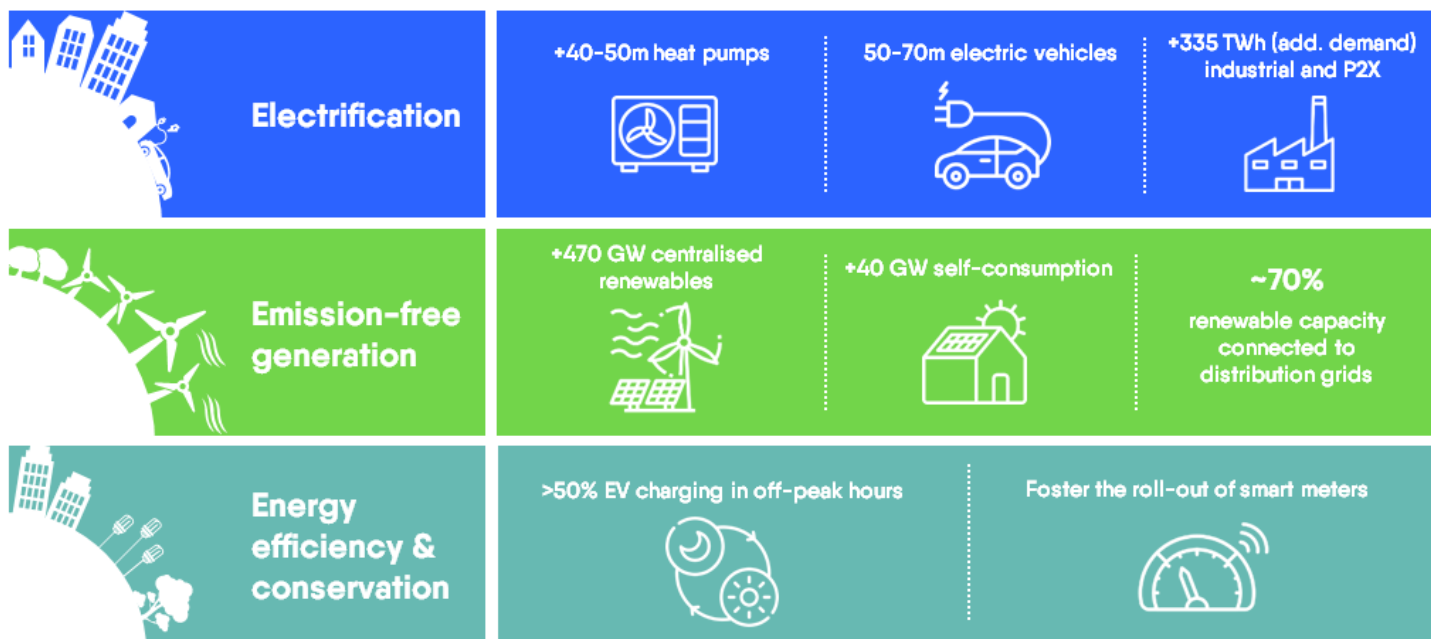
What we recommend:

- Any sustainability initiative should encompass a life cycle approach involving the entire value chain, from raw materials to disposal.
- Sustainability initiatives should neither threaten the lifetime of assets already in use nor lead to supply issues. This would delay renewable energy connections and therefore jeopardise the achievement of the Green Deal objectives.
- In this regard, measures promoting sustainability should not increase the pressure on raw materials needed to manufacture network assets, such as steel or copper, which are already in high demand for other uses such as e-mobility.
- Investments are essential to make the distribution network fit for the energy transition. Investments should be prioritised where they are most effective in achieving sustainability objectives.

DSOs are committed to:

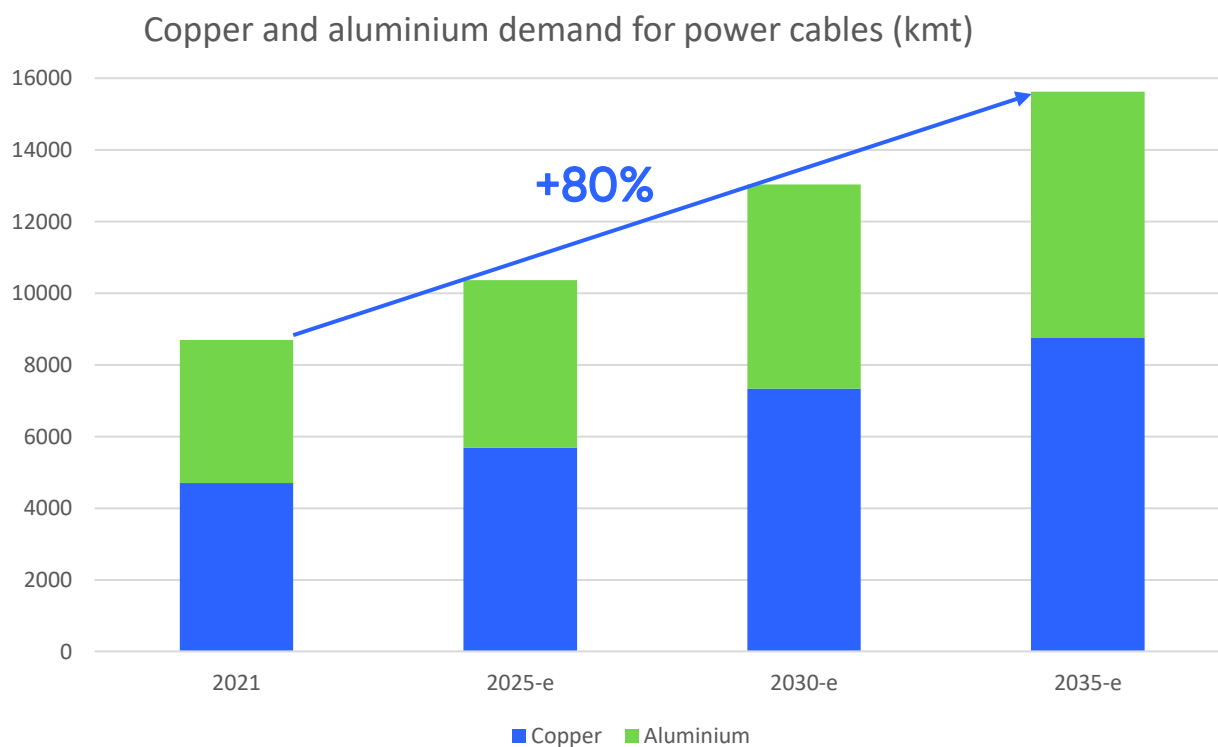
- Being models of sustainability, by managing their networks efficiently, integrating renewables, and facilitating flexibility and EV grid integration.
- When selecting new materials, considering the impact of operations in their overall environmental impact assessment, as well as reparability and the potential to extend service beyond what could be achieved with traditional maintenance.
- Reviewing their processes and technical requirements, qualifying new solutions, updating standards or creating new ones, to make their assets more environmentally friendly.
- Developing business models which fully integrate and value sustainability, for instance by valuing waste and buying less material, so that being sustainable is also a way of reducing costs.
- Including social aspects, community involvement and customer centricity in their definition of sustainability.

Massive energy system changes needed by 2030



Source: Eurelectric Connecting the dots study

Copper and aluminium demand for power cables will increase by 80% in the next 13 years



Source: European Copper Institute