In March 2020, the Commission committed itself to come forward with a sustainable built environment strategy, in the new circular economy action plan and in the new industrial strategy for Europe.

The built environment, which corresponds to everything people live in and around, such as housing, transport infrastructure, services networks or public spaces, requires vast amounts of resources. It accounts for around half of all extracted material. In particular, the construction sector is responsible for over a third of the EU's total waste generation. Furthermore, greenhouse gas emissions (GHGe) resulting from material extraction, manufacturing of construction products, construction and renovation of buildings amount to around 5-12% of total national GHGe.

In this context, the stated aim of the strategy will be to increase material efficiency and to reduce climate impacts of the built environment, particularly promoting circularity principles throughout the life cycle of buildings. The strategy is expected to ensure coherence across policy areas related, for example, to climate, energy, management of construction and demolition waste, digitalisation or skills. The Commission has already pointed out that it would:

• revise the Construction Product Regulation, taking this opportunity to improve the sustainability performance of construction products, possibly introducing recycled content requirements for certain construction products;
• promote circular economy principles for buildings design and the development of digital logbooks for buildings;
• use Level(s), which is the European framework for sustainable buildings, to integrate life cycle assessment in public procurement and the EU sustainable finance framework;
• consider a revision of EU waste legislation, focusing on material recovery targets for construction and demolition waste, and its material-specific fractions (the concerned waste streams are still to be defined);
• promote soil-related initiatives, aiming to reduce soil sealing, rehabilitate abandoned or contaminated brownfields and increase the safe, sustainable and circular use of excavated soils, as confirmed in the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 released in May 2020.

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