



10 June 2020

***Commission's Proposal of 27 May 2020:
The EU Budget powering the Recovery Plan for Europe***

***Need for a technology neutral approach
for all very low carbon energy sources***

Dear Madam, Dear Sir, Dear Energy and Nuclear Representatives of EU Member States in Brussels,

The upcoming discussion at Council level on the "EU Recovery Plan", proposed by the Commission on 27 May, offers a unique chance for Member States open to nuclear energy to form a solid front to impose a more low carbon technology neutral approach for the selection of energy projects which may benefit from the related financing mechanisms. By linking the Recovery Plan to the Green Deal, stakes are high that investments in the energy sector will be targeted on renewables (especially wind and solar), energy efficiency, energy storage and the gas-hydrogen economy; nuclear being deliberately excluded.

Indeed, over recent months, since the start of the new Commission, a number of Communications and Proposals for Legal Instruments have been drafted and are under discussion in the Institutions, underneath the umbrella of the EU Green Deal. One of the most critical cases is the Taxonomy for Sustainable Financing, discussed in Trilogue in December 2019. While the outcome left the door open for a further (real) expert evaluation of the sustainability of nuclear energy to take place, nothing seems to have moved on that front since then... but in the meantime numerous documents have been tabled where the “unsustainable” character of nuclear is just taken as a given and used to justify its sidelining or exclusion. This “unsustainability” of nuclear is not based on evidence nor fact, but is a political statement based on myth and fearmongering of those who want to see nuclear shut down no matter the cost for the European society as a whole.

WeCARE fervently believes that excluding a large current source of very low-carbon energy in the EU is a mistake and will make the energy transition far more difficult to manage and far more expensive. **We therefore urge you to correct this situation during the Council discussions and either include nuclear specifically or at least ensure that all low-carbon sources are included without discrimination.**

WeCARE is very concerned about the ‘business-as-usual’ trend to exclude nuclear at the highest level of policy making in the EU Institutions – starting with the proposals by the Commission, followed by compromises when the documents reach the tables of the Council and the Parliament. Naturally, we fully understand the sensitivity of the “nuclear file”, knowing how views are divergent from one Member State to another. But the principle of free choice of its energy mix by each Member State is enshrined in the article 194 (2) of the TFEU. And, in addition, the other founding Treaty of the EU, the Euratom Treaty, requires the Community in its Article 2c “c) to facilitate investment and ensure, particularly by encouraging ventures on the part of undertakings, the establishment of the basic installations necessary for the development of nuclear energy in the Community”.

Therefore, it is rather shocking that it is always the view of the anti-

nuclear group of Member States which is resulting in the sidelining or exclusion of nuclear energy from important EU energy policy implementation tools, in particular when it comes to financing mechanisms. Because nuclear energy is a unique, very low carbon and fully dispatchable energy source, as recognized by the IPCC and IEA, weCARE believes that the logic should be inversed: a priori nuclear energy should be fully part of the mix under the umbrella of the EU Green Deal, with Member States being free to use it, or not if they do not want to do so for national reasons.

Having said that, we should stress that weCARE is not against renewable sources of energy, but is promoting a balanced, clean, very low carbon, affordable and reliable energy mix for a sustainable society.

Wind and solar would need to do most of the additions in the renewable energy sector since neither hydro nor bioenergy can be increased much in a sustainable fashion. Yet as variable sources of energy, they lose their value at accelerating rate, the bigger their share gets. As we have seen in the last few years, wind and solar has already managed to push electricity's value to be negative over large regions for some periods of time, even as their overall shares of annual electricity (not to mention overall energy use) are still relatively low. This cannibalizes their own, and every other energy source's, value for society, and dealing with it will increase overall costs and risks for grid failures.

Further, their further deployment already faces obstacles of less suitable places available, availability of materials and minerals for all the needed technologies, public opposition on land-use of energy production facilities and transmission, less affordable energy services for the people and industries and overall more reliance on imported fossil fuels in the EU, in particular gas to cope with their intermittency. The high on the agenda hydrogen economy as a magic solution is a route worth to be further studied, but for now it is close to a dream, before technology development and serious cost evaluations can justify massive investments. Including nuclear in the mix mitigates all these problems since it is able to supply clean, affordable, reliable and flexible power and heat. To sum it up, not including nuclear energy in the relevant EU energy mix and climate policies is risky and

irresponsible for current and future generations.

We are sending you this letter because we feel that the upcoming Council discussions on the EU Recovery Plan offer a unique, maybe last chance to help the EU Institutions return to a more balanced energy policy. We sincerely hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity.

We remain at your disposal for any further information/interaction you would like to get from/with weCARE, as a representative of civil society.

Yours faithfully,

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weCARE is a Brussels-based alliance of NGOs campaigning in Europe for Clean, Affordable and Reliable Energy. The weCARE website (<https://www.wecareeu.org/>) describes the aims and specific activities of the alliance and lists the current member organisations: Sauvons le Climat FR, Energy for Humanity UK, 100TWh BE, Ekomodernist FI, Jihocesti TatKove CZ, Institute for Sustainable Energy PL

weCARE is listed in the EU Transparency Register under number 473723535459-78.