



09 October 2024

***Confirmation Hearings by the European Parliament
of the Commissioners Designate for Competition and Energy:
Ensuring their commitment to nuclear energy***

Mister Borys Budka, Chair of ITRE Committee
Madam Tsvetelina Penkova, Vice Chair of ITRE Committee
Mister Yvan Verougstraete, Vice Chair of ITRE Committee
Mister Christophe Grudler, Member of ITRE Committee
Mister Kris Van Dijck, Member of ITRE Committee
Mister François-Xavier Bellamy, Substitute Member of ITRE

Dear Madam, Dear Sir, Honorable Members of the European Parliament and of the ITRE Committee,

Since it is the first time weCARE is addressing you in your capacity as Member of the European Parliament, allow us first to send our sincere congratulations for your election and for having taken a leading responsibility on energy matters as Members of the ITRE Committee. Indeed **clean, affordable and reliable energy** (C A R E) is the lifeblood of a sustainable European Union society.

All low-carbon energy technologies, including nuclear energy, need to be fairly treated on an equal footing, considering their potential contribution to the welfare of European citizens. This includes the availability of affordable energy, in quantity and quality, for consumers, industry, agriculture and services. In delivering a fair treatment, a global system approach needs to be developed, without dogma, based on facts and not myths. All costs related to a given source of energy need to be directly attributed to this source while **optimizing the decarbonized energy mix on economic and reliability grounds.**

To make it clear, while weCARE promotes the recourse to decarbonized, intermittent (or variable) renewable sources, we consider that their contribution to the energy mix needs to be capped, because their intermittency induces major additional system costs. The relevant capping figure depends a lot on the geographic location. For the EU overall, economic studies¹ show a cap limit of the order of 30-40% for electricity production. The only viable, fully decarbonized alternative to renewables is nuclear energy. In an ideal situation, weCARE envisions around 50% electricity production by nuclear, operating mainly as baseload, complemented by an additional 50% coming from renewable sources, hydro where possible, and wind and solar, supported by means to overcome their intermittency (batteries, gas with CCS/CCUS, etc). But the associated costs need then to be properly attributed to these intermittent sources. From there, one can derive that the **nuclear alternative, in fact, is not only an alternative but should be the first priority.** This is far from what has happened in EU Energy Policies over recent decades, lately driven by the **dogmatic Green Deal**, with a biased electricity market giving undue priority access to the intermittent renewables. **The time for a paradigm shift has come.** weCARE would be pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the Nuclear Supporters' Group of MEPs led by Mr Grudler to further discuss and elaborate on these issues.

But for now, an important event is coming: the **Confirmation Hearings** of Commissioners Designate. weCARE, as a

¹ System Costs Studies by OECD Nuclear Energy Agency and MIT.
https://www.oecd-nea.org/jcms/pl_15000/the-costs-of-decarbonisation-system-costs-with-high-shares-of-nuclear-and-renewables?details=true

representative of civil society, is deeply concerned by the team of Commissioners proposed to be in charge of Competition and Clean, Just, Competitive Transition (Mme Ribera Rodriguez as Vice President) and Energy (Mr Joergensen). Both have a history of anti-nuclear standings (particularly true for Mr Joergensen²). We do not understand how President von der Leyen dared proposing this “team” for such a sensitive file at a time when the Green Deal is supposed to become the Clean Industrial Deal... or is it just still a nickname for a “business as usual” Green (Clean Industrial) Deal. This is not the paradigm shift the European Union urgently needs now.

We therefore turn to you, as Members of the European Parliament in charge of Industry, Transport, Research and Energy, to use the Confirmation Hearings to ask **direct and clear questions to both Mme Ribera and Mr Joergensen on their commitment to nuclear energy as a central contributor** to a clean, affordable and reliable energy mix for a sustainable European Union (in line with the promotional dimension of the Euratom Treaty, while respecting the sole right of each Member State to decide its own energy mix).

It will be important to have clarification on how they will ensure that nuclear energy will practically get the treatment it deserves, as a low carbon and reliable technology, not only in general energy policy documents proposed by the Commission, but, even more importantly, in the detailed implementation rules and financing instruments. As we know, most of the financing tools developed over the last five years, including the post-covid recovery plan and REPowerEU, are basically excluding nuclear. This is unacceptable. These **tools need to be revised to include nuclear energy**, at the same time there is a need to revise the Taxonomy, recognizing that nuclear is not there only for the transition - on the same footing as gas - but as a long-term contributor. Nuclear energy fully respects the taxonomy criteria while contributing significantly to the EU energy security. The electricity market design also needs to be structurally improved to ensure the merit order takes full account of **all the system costs** of a given source, and not only the marginal cost as it is the case today. And, looking to the future, all **new documents and tools to be further**

² See in annex a compilation of Statements and Positions by Mr Joergensen at national and European levels.

developed, particularly the financing instruments under the next EU budget, need to be fully accessible for the development and deployment of nuclear energy facilities, be it power plants, SMRs, AMRs, fuel cycle, waste treatment installations, and the supply chain.

Dear Madam, Dear Sirs, weCARE is relying on you to make sure that both the Vice President Designate Ribera and the Commissioner Designate Joergensen, will take clear commitments to treat nuclear energy positively, in the place it deserves in the Commission's policies and implementation tools. It is not for the Commission to restrict the role of nuclear as it has been done over the last decade, even the contrary under the promotional Euratom Treaty. The final decisions on this question are with the Council and the Parliament. The Commission should not preempt the policy instead of the Member States and those democratically elected to represent the citizens. We sincerely hope that under its new mandate the Commission would behave with pragmatism and rational when future policy proposals on energy are elaborated.

We are at your full disposal in case you would like to interact with us on the important questions we address in this letter.

Respectfully Yours,

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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, Patrimoine Nucléaire et Climat FR, Terrapraaxis UK, 100TWh BE, Ekomodernist FI, Jihocesti TatKove CZ, Institute for Sustainable Energy PL, Stichting Energietransitie en Kernenergie NL, 18for0 IE, European Association for Energy Security SK. Associate Members are Voices of Nuclear and CFE Energies

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