



Brussels, 12 June 2021

*Dear Minister of Energy of Belgium,
Dear Ms Van der Straeten,*

Subject: Application of the ESPOO Convention to the construction of additional gas capacities in Belgium.

weCARE is an Alliance of European NGOs promoting a very low carbon energy mix to contribute to the reduction of climate change. Such a mix must be sustainable as an integrated system, which means being clean AND affordable AND reliable.

weCARE takes note of the decision of the Belgian Government to phase out the nuclear power plants in the period 2022-2025. This is a political decision taken in a democratic State and weCARE takes it as a given. It is not the purpose of this letter to discuss this.

But weCARE is keen to know if and how the ESPOO Convention is being or will be applied to the announced additional gas fired power capacities foreseen to accompany the nuclear phase out process. Indeed, the addition of thermal capacities is an activity specifically mentioned within the Appendix 1 of the ESPOO Convention as having a potentially significant environmental impact, requiring the full application of the Convention. weCARE wants to make sure that its Members will have an opportunity to contribute to the public consultations which should be part of the ESPOO procedure.

weCARE has also close links, beyond its European members, with pro-climate NGOs in other parts of the world. These NGOs are also keen to get information on the ESPOO process related to the Belgian Government plan to build more gas fired capacities. Indeed, producing more CO₂ will have a global climate change impact, which could justify that there should be no geographical limitation to the public consultations process¹.

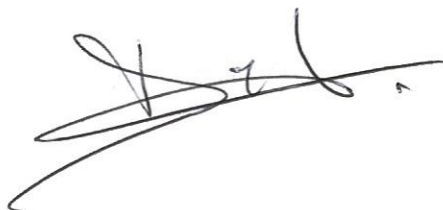
¹ There is a precedent on this with Micronesia having opposed the construction of a fossil fired plant in the Czech Republic using the argument of sea level rise due to climate change resulting from more CO₂ emissions.

Dear Minister, weCARE will be grateful to get the details on the application of the ESPOO Convention to the addition of gas fired capacities in Belgium well in time, so that the procedure can be run smoothly and in good order. In parallel, weCARE Members will start to interact with their national Authorities to determine the opportunity of actions at their national level.

We remain at your disposal for any interaction you would like to get with weCARE, as a representative of civil society at European level.

Yours faithfully,

Marc Deffrennes
Richard Ivens
Serge Crutzen



weCARE

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weCARE is a Brussels-based alliance of NGOs campaigning in Europe for Clean, Affordable and Reliable Energy for societal sustainability. The weCARE website describes the aims and specific activities of the alliance and lists the current member organisations: 100TWh BE, Jihocesti TatKove CZ, Ekomodernist FI, Sauvons le Climat FR, Patrimoine Nucléaire et Climat FR, 18for0 IE, Stichting EnergieTransitie en Kernenergie NL, Institute for Sustainable Energy PL, European Association for Energy Security SK, Terrapraxis UK

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

Copies of this letter are sent to

*The Belgian Prime Minister,
The Ministers President of the Regions,
Ministers in charge of Environment/Climate, Energy at Federal and Regional Levels in Belgium*

*The Vice President for Green Deal, the Vice President for Competition, the
Commissioner for Energy of the European Commission
A number of Energy Counsellors in Permanent Representations of EU Member States*

Via weCARE Members – to appropriate Authorities in their respective country