

weCARE Activity Report 2024

Brief recap of what happened at EU level on the Energy file in 2024

For the first six months of 2024, main outcomes are the adoption of the Electricity Market Reform and the NZIA (Net-Zero Industry Act). Both include nuclear energy resulting from a strong push by the Alliance of pro-nuclear Member States, led by France. This complements the opening of the Taxonomy (even if not perfect).

Discussions on the Gas Directive, in particular on the issue of Hydrogen (green vs low carbon) are still open, with FR and DE at odds.

UvdL was reconducted as President of the European Commission in the summer and she proposed her team of Commissioners designate in October, with Mrs Ribera as Vice President for Transition and Competition, and Mr Joergensen as Commissioner for Energy. Both have had a negative standing on nuclear in their past. They showed a neutral position during the hearings at the European Parliament and were accepted with the full team proposed by UvdL. After the hearings, Joergensen asked UvdL to modify his Mission Letter by adding work to fix 2040 targets for decarbonisation and renewables. This led to strong reactions by FR and the pro-nuclear Alliance, indicative of a concern on the impact that increased renewable targets (at EU level) may have on the economic deployment of nuclear in countries wishing to have it. To be noted that the Greens who do not “have” a Commissioner, succeeded to have the former Green MEP P Lamberts (Belgian Ecolo) nominated as the special advisor of UvdL for the Transition.

Recent outcomes of meetings at Council level show continued battle between the pro-nuclear Alliance and DE (and al) on the role nuclear should play. In particular, DE officially declared recently that EU funds should not be provided for technologies not supported by all Member States. This is particularly concerning knowing that the discussions on the next EU Budget (for 2027-2033) will soon start in 2025.

Sweden and Norway also came out in December on the impact that the DE Energiewende has on the electricity supply and prices in neighbouring countries – even declaring (Norway) that the Energiewende is a “shit” (sic)... something weCARE has written and said a diverse occasions in the past (ia presentation at the EUSEW in June 2024 see below – and slides on the weCARE website), but more “politely”...

weCARE interaction with the EU Institutions

Direct interactions with the Institutions have been limited in 2024, as the first six months were the last of the previous Commission and the last two months were the first of the new Commission, after a break of four months.

weCARE Letters were sent in October to the President of the Commission and a set of MEPs (with leading positions in ITRE Committee) in preparation for the hearings of the Commissioners designate (Ribera and Joergensen). A reply was received from the Commission – Unit Green Deal of the Secretariat General. Worth reading.

weCARE cosigned a Letter to the European Commission and the European Parliament in November with a number of other organisations.

These Letters can be found on the weCARE website

Events, Conferences and Meetings that weCARE attended

weCARE attended and participated to a quite large number of Events, Conferences and Meetings over the course of the year, some physically, some in remote. These are means to collect information, exchange views and defend weCARE points.

- weCARE was invited to official events, in particular the Nuclear Summit of Brussels in March, and the yearly ENEF (European Nuclear Energy Forum) in Prague in October.
- weCARE was invited by DG ENER to participate in a Panel during the EU Sustainable Energy Week in June – slides are available on the website.
- weCARE was invited by the Commission to some SMR Alliance Meetings (weCARE is formally part of the Alliance in the category NGO and participates to a number of Technical Working Groups), and to a NZIA event organised by the Commission in July – to discuss priority low carbon technologies (nuclear was not on the list – which weCARE (alone) strongly objected at the start of the meeting).
- Some events were organised by weCARE Members (100 TWh, SLC, PNC) where weCARE could present the EU perspective. weCARE was also invited for a Panel in March during a Colloque held at the French Senat.
- Some events were organised by think tanks: Euractiv, Friends of Europe, IFRI, ...
- Last but not least, weCARE maintains good working relationship with NuclearEurope, and is allowed to attend a number of their meetings in an observer status.

weCARE Team and Membership

- The Brussels weCARE team was “doubled” with the incoming of Yves Crommelynck and Marc Beyens, both retired from ENGIE, and soon Said Abhousal, retired from the EC JRC. This will allow increased activity in 2025.
- Contacts have been taken with NGO type Associations in PT, DE, LU, PL, IT, NL, CZ,... to increase the weCARE membership. A number of them are preparing their files and meetings will be organised with actual Members to decide on this increase in Membership.

Plans for 2025

Beyond the continued activities as former years, weCARE plans to activate physical meetings with EU Institutions in the course of 2025. In particular a meeting with the Alliance of pro-nuclear Member States (via the French Perm Rep), a meeting with the Group of pro-nuclear MEPs (Grudler’s Group and ITRE) and a meeting/event with the EESC (co-organised as already done twice in the past) ideally close to the Opinion EESC will have to give on the PINC (once produced by the Commission).

For sure we expect to be invited to ENEF and to continue the participation in the SMR

Alliance.

weCARE also plans to organise and moderate a Panel during the EU Sustainable Energy Week in June 2025, with participation of representatives of the EU Institutions and industry, on the critical role nuclear has to play in a sustainable mix.

Needless to say, the Brussels weCARE team would be more than pleased to support weCARE Members in case they want to organise an interaction/meeting with EU Institutions (ia national MEPs or Perm Rep).

The weCARE website will be revisited, updated and made more attractive.

Marc Deffrennes

3 January 2025

<https://www.wecareeu.org>