

# weCARE Activity Report 2025

## 1. Summary of 2025 Activity

1.1 2025 has been a transition year for weCARE. This year has been characterized by an explosion of the number of initiatives taken at EU level, in particular by the European Commission, in the field of Climate and Energy, the focus of weCARE. This has made it more difficult for the team members of weCARE to follow, collect, analyse, digest and react on these initiatives.

1.2 Being invited to join as independent observer a number of meetings and events organised by Nuclear Europe throughout the year has been, as before, helpful.

1.3 A large number of events, conferences, meetings have been attended, organised physically in Brussels (Marc Deffrennes, Yves Crommelynck) or Paris (Marc Deffrennes, Xavier Rollat, Said Abousahl), or remotely (all team members), by think tanks (Friends of Europe, Euractiv, IFRI,...). While the possibilities to intervene to deliver the viewpoint of weCARE are rather limited during these gatherings, it allows the “temperature” in the “Brussels Community” to be taken, helping to build a global understanding of the evolution in the Climate and Energy sphere, and further fine tune messages and actions.

1.4 Marc Deffrennes for weCARE has been invited for the second consecutive year as panellist to the Colloque Passages organised at the French Senate. This allowed the delivery of a quite strong message, well aligned with a number of other speakers.

1.5 weCARE (Marc Deffrennes and Yves Crommelynck) has been invited to attend the ENEF 2025 in Bratislava, with travel costs reimbursed by the Commission. This allowed contacts to be taken (ia with some MEPs, EESC representatives, Clean Air Task Force representatives, Member States representatives,...) and views to be expressed to a wide cross-section of important stakeholders (ia during the break-out sessions).

1.6 The EESC had organised a stakeholders meeting to collect views to prepare its own Opinion on the PINC (Illustrative Nuclear Programme of the Community – Euratom Art 40). Upon its own request at the ENEF meeting, weCARE was further invited to visit specifically the Rapporteur and Co-Rapporteur of the EESC some days before the Opinion had to be released. This contact was very positive.

1.7 weCARE as member of the European Small Modular Reactor Alliance, was invited and participated in the GA and Stakeholder Meetings, and as member of three Technical

Working Groups, participated in the meetings of the TWG1 (Industrial Applications), TWG5 (Public Engagement) and TWG8 (Financing), where there were possibilities to get our voice heard, formally or informally.

1.8 weCARE was invited, thanks to PNC, to attend a meeting in Paris of the Business Alliance for Nuclear (global industry alliance, complementing the Member States Alliance and the Group of Pro-Nuclear MEPs led by MEP Grudler).

1.9 weCARE was invited, thanks to CATF (Clean Air Task Force), to a working group of the think tank CEPS preparing a report on the role nuclear energy may play at EU level - report to be published beginning of 2026.

1.10 A special thanks has to be given to Richard Ivens who, besides attending some meetings, kept track of administrative matters, in particular the continued registration of weCARE in the EU Transparency Register. This is critical to keep access to the EU Institutions and documents.

## **2. weCARE Team and Membership**

2.1 Besides Marc Deffrennes, Richard Ivens and Serge Crutzen (the three Partners at the creation of weCARE), Yves Crommelynck (Brussels based) and Said Abousahl (Paris Based) have joined at the end of 2024. Xavier Rollat (Paris based) joined the team early in 2025. Serge Crutzen, for personal reasons, asked to be discharged from duties, but we are pleased to keep him on board as he might still provide good advice on specific matters.

2.2 On the membership, the Polish member (one person organisation) left weCARE due to personal professional reasons. New members from Portugal (SEEN), Germany (Nuklearia) and Italy (Amici della Terra) joined and have actively participated in the weCARE members' remote meetings. Contacts have been taken to attract new members (Luxemburg, Spain, Poland) but were not concluded. It remains something to pursue in the future (in particular Spain, Poland, Sweden).

## **3. Some key (hot) EU Files (not exhaustive) at the end of 2025, leading to 2026**

3.1 Taxonomy for Sustainable Financing. While open for nuclear, the Taxonomy still considers nuclear as a transitional energy and places a number of limits, mainly in terms of time perspectives. 2026 will see a revision of the Taxonomy - an opportunity to correct some flaws.

### 3.2 Green Deal, Clean Industrial Deal, Net Zero Industry Act, etc...

Globally speaking, while a clear recognition has been made that “green” alone (as has been the sole focus for years) is not sufficient at a time when the European economy is losing ground in the world (listen to the main industry players), this has not drastically changed the general climate and energy policies at EU level.

The climate target of a 90% reduction by 2040 in GHG has been adopted - as compared to the 55% for 2030. Net Zero is still the vision for 2050.

While the target for renewables is 42,5% for 2030, the Commissioner for Energy still plans to propose a renewables target for 2040, even if some Member States are already opposing a new target.

There is a kind of credo in Brussels (Commission, think tanks meetings, lobbies) that:

- (i) we all agree the climate remains a main priority,
- (ii) we all agree that renewables being low carbon are the way to proceed and that much more needs to be done in this field,
- (iii) we realise now that intermittency is a problem to cope with,
- (iv) therefore, in addition to continuing to invest massively in renewables, we also need to invest massively in storage, clean gas and hydrogen, electrical transmission and distribution and gas networks. This will cost an enormous amount of money but it is all good for the economy in the end...

On the other side, industry at large (energy and electricity consumers, including AI data storage centres, Eurofer, Eurométaux,... (as weCARE learned while attending events) is now very outspoken on the need to have clean, affordable and reliable energy *now* in order to survive against the global competition.

### 3.3 EU Financing Instruments

EU financing Instruments under the actual MFF (until 2027) have been designed to support the massive deployment of renewables, and are most of the time closing the door for nuclear. This is recognised. It remains to be seen how that will be tackled during the preparation for the next MFF starting in 2027. In this frame, the notion of “level playing field, technology neutrality, etc” is used in EU circles, including by those promoting the use of nuclear energy. This is a concept which needs clarification. What is behind the notion of technology neutrality? Are intermittent renewables and economically optimised baseload nuclear energy “comparable” as they do not provide the same service? Maybe one can consider a certain level of “complementarity”, but are they “compatible”?

### 3.4 PINC

The PINC was issued in June by the Commission and the EESC gave its Opinion in December. The Commission will now issue the final version considering this Opinion. The PINC is certainly much “better” than the previous version of 2017. But the vision for

2050 (mean scenario) is 150 GW of nuclear (large and SMRs – say 60 in LTO, 60 large new builds and 30 SMRs). Considering that electrification will lead to a doubling in electricity consumption, this means that around 15% of the electricity will come from nuclear... and 85% from other sources, mainly renewables... Nothing new versus the Green Deal! Exactly the same figure of 15% nuclear contribution was already in the Commission Clean Planet for All in 2018.

That may be all logical with the global energy policy still developed at EU level (see above) but this is not satisfactory, noting that nuclear energy is providing 23% of electricity today and was providing up to 33% in the early 2000s. The PNC proposes a reduction in the role of nuclear energy in the EU. For weCARE this is not satisfactory.

### 3.5 Grid Package

One of the last, but very important, documents published at the end of 2025 by the Commission is the Grid Package (electricity and gas networks). It basically proposes large investments in electricity transmission lines and gas pipelines (also for hydrogen). The idea behind this is to help cope with the intermittency and decentralisation of renewable sources, by building transboundary connections allowing electricity and gas (hydrogen) to flow around the EU. The document goes as far as to ask Member States to finance the grid infrastructures on their territory (with support of EU mechanisms) but to leave more responsibility to the Commission to handle the flows as required by the different energy (electricity) production profiles of the Member States. This would lead to giving advantage to countries relying heavily on renewables (ia Germany) and disadvantage to countries relying heavily on nuclear (ia France). It could also impact the “price” of electricity towards an EU convergence – penalizing France versus Germany. This will need much more analysis but the French Permanent Representative already strongly opposed the proposal of the Commission during an Energy Council meeting. PNC is particularly active on this file and weCARE will be associated. A first action would be to contact MEPs on this specific topic, but it might be an opportunity to go beyond and raise issues related to the economic optimisation (system costs) of the electricity mix and the market design.

## 4. Some more issues and Perspectives for 2026

### 4.1 Transparency Register

Some questions were asked to weCARE by the EU Administration in relation to its operational “budget”. The reply was that weCARE is not an Association registered in a Member State, has no bank account and budget per say, but that members of weCARE are officially registered organisations in their own country and therefore have their bank account and own budget. weCARE can ask these members to contribute to some specific weCARE costs (renting a room, offering a lunch, limited travel costs) on an ad-

hoc basis as necessary.

This questioning by the Administration of the Transparency Register might lead to some concerns for the future. Richard is following this closely. It is vital for weCARE to keep its place in the EU Transparency Register.

4.2 As mentioned above, weCARE will try to get more members (Poland, Spain, Sweden,...). We were approached by CATF (Clean Air Task Force) to become Associate Members. This was discussed during the weCARE remote meeting in December without conclusion. We will come back to it.

It might also be useful to get in contact with more Unions – as Industry is now clearly coming to the fore on the optimisation of the energy/electricity mix. We already have CFE Energie as an Associate member and this collaboration is very effective and useful. This might be linked to a specific relation with the EESC also.

### **weCARE Message**

It is probably useful here to recall the main weCARE message. It was discussed during the members meetings but always good to come back to it and open for fine tuning.

*weCARE is an Alliance of NGOs established in a number of EU Member States, representing citizens. weCARE promotes an energy (electricity) mix which is clean, affordable and reliable (CARE). This mix must be economically optimised in the interests of society at large (households and enterprises) and not of industry lobbies (nuclear industry, gas industry (including hydrogen), renewables industry, networks, storage actors) or political parties. For this optimisation, all costs (system costs) associated with each energy (in particular electricity) production means must be duly accounted for and properly attributed to each form of energy. This in particular applies to the costs associated with the management of intermittency (via storage, clean gas, specific network costs, system stability and security costs,... even demand side management costs, as this is seen by the Commission as a main way to offer flexibility for intermittency). For this to happen the electricity market design and EU financing mechanisms should be amended to reflect the priorities resulting from the economic optimisation of the energy (electricity) mix.*

Marc Deffrennes

22 January 2026