



weCARE Annual Report 2020

weCARE is a Brussels-based alliance of NGOs founded in 2019. Its aim is to campaign in EU circles for a European energy mix that is Clean, Affordable and Reliable, hence the CARE. Information about the alliance's objectives, membership and documentation can be found on the website <https://www.wecareeu.org> which is regularly updated. weCARE is registered in the EU Transparency Register under number 473723535459-78.

As for most lobbying organisations in Brussels, 2020 has been a difficult year for weCARE. The Covid pandemic prevented direct contacts with officials from the relevant European Institutions - Commission, Parliament, Council, and Economic & Social Committee. A joint weCARE / EESC conference "EU Green Deal: from Myths to Realities", scheduled for June 18, 2020, was well underway in January / February 2020, but unfortunately had to be postponed sine die. In the meantime, roadmaps, decisions, directives and regulations relating to the climate/energy dossier continue to be proposed by the Commission, discussed and adopted by the Council and the Parliament. weCARE has continued to follow these files, respond to public consultations, and above all, write regularly to the hierarchies of the Institutions to assert its point of view, even if follow-up meetings were excluded. All the documents produced can be found on the "papers" page of the weCARE website.

weCARE promotes a very-low-carbon energy mix that is societally sustainable, and is therefore clean, economical and reliable. weCARE believes strongly that sustainable is not equal to "green", in other words energy policy decisions should not just focus on environmental concerns, but also consider economic and security of supply aspects in equal measure. Furthermore, weCARE does not believe in myths, in particular that 100% intermittent renewable energy sources (iRES) and cheap green hydrogen are just around the corner. In order to reach the objective of at least 55% reduction of GHGs by 2030, it is abundantly clear that we will have to rely mainly on today's technologies – large-scale storage of electricity or commercial roll-out of carbon capture & sequestration will not be possible on this timescale.

Even for 2050, the challenges will be enormous. For weCARE, the ongoing expansion of iRES up to a certain level and in reasonable locations makes sense, provided that the trade-off with system stability and life-cycle cost, with back-up included, is still justified. But what is also clear is that nuclear power – existing and new - must also be part of this low carbon energy mix. This should include large plants as well as small modular reactors, for power and heat generation, installed as appropriate considering the local conditions and the best integration into the energy mix. weCARE believes that it makes no sense to shut down viable nuclear power plants only to replace them by burning fossil fuels, thereby dramatically increasing CO2 emissions and leading to a gas lock-in effect.

In terms of substance, there is always a dichotomy between the claim "open to nuclear" in European policy vision documents and the exclusion of nuclear power when it comes to the implementing texts, including the financing tools. This is particularly true in the context of the enlarged financial means recently made available to Member States by the EU (750 billion euros in addition to the regular budget of 1000 billion over 7 years), the allocation of which will supposedly be aligned with the EU Green Deal and the related Taxonomy for Sustainable Financing currently under discussion. As of the end of 2020, nuclear power is not included in the technologies that can benefit from sustainable financing. The stumbling block is down to whether radioactive waste management does or doesn't cause significant harm to people or the environment. The Joint Research Centre and other expert groups will continue to analyse the situation in 2021 ... but in the meantime the Commission is advancing on the more precise definition of the sustainability criteria. Note that some Member States (January 2021) have just refused the first criteria proposed by the Commission (by Delegated Acts), but for the wrong reason: too penalising for gas! As a result the Commission asked the MS Expert Group (Platform) to fine-tune the concept of "transition" energy.

A second important issue at European level being examined by weCARE is the concept of 'green hydrogen', meaning hydrogen produced by electrolysis using renewable energy - wind and solar. The idea that P2P (Power to Power) - allowing the storage of green electricity in the form of hydrogen in order to regenerate electricity at times when the wind is not blowing - could ever be economic is simply a myth. This has not prevented the iRES and gas industry lobbies from enthusiastically seeking financial support from the EU's post-Covid Recovery Plan - some to have more support for accelerating the installation of wind turbines and solar panels at high %, thanks to the hydrogen storage perspective, and the others to justify gas infrastructure spending on the vague promise of future hydrogen blending, especially to give themselves a green image. Many commentators, including Green MEPs on the EP Environment Committee, have rightly raised concerns about enabling potentially stranded gas investment at a time when GHG emissions have to be constrained.

weCARE has, during the year 2020, clearly expressed its point of view on these dossiers in several letters addressed to the highest level of the Commission, to

European Parliamentarians, and to the Energy Advisers of the Permanent Representations. In early January 2021, a letter was also sent to the EIB and the ECB.

In organizational terms, in addition to Marc Deffrennes and Richard Ivens, weCARE has recruited an additional person in Brussels: Serge Crutzen, engineer and retired European civil servant (Joint Research Centre). weCARE has also expanded to include two additional NGO members, from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and an associated organization Nuclear Voices (Les Voix du Nucléaire). The participation of Czech and Slovak organizations is interesting for the participation of weCARE within the framework of ENEF (European Nuclear Energy Forum), and for having a good representation of the countries of Eastern European (along with the Polish member).

For 2021, beyond continuing to monitor and analyse climate/energy files and sending position papers, responses to public consultations, and letters to European Institutions, weCARE hopes to be able to resume direct contacts with officials of the Institutions as soon as possible. weCARE thanks its French member Sauvons le Climat for translating and making available 200 copies of the book Climate Warming: Good Questions and True Answers. They will indeed be a good way to initiate discussions with the interlocutors, in addition to emphasising the weCARE logo/motto: "We care for Clean Affordable Reliable Energy for Societal Sustainability". The most important among these contacts will be the Energy Advisers of the Permanent Representations - since it is indeed the Council that is ultimately the most important Institution in the final decision-making. WeCARE's goal will be to help build a strong coalition of Member States on the hot issues. The opportunity to relaunch the "EU Green Deal: from Myths to Realities" conference will be considered - with or without the EESC, adapting it to take latest developments into account.

weCARE hopes to be invited to participate in and contribute to the next ENEF - in autumn 2021.

weCARE hopes to add some additional members and associated organizations – discussions have already begun with a Dutch association (interesting for contact with the VP of the Commission in charge of the Green Deal, Frans Timmermans) and with Patrimoine Nucléaire et Climat PNC from France. Interest has also been expressed by an Irish NGO.

weCARE will also try to hire one or two additional people in Brussels, including one for administrative assistance. At some point weCARE members will have to consider the need for a mini operating budget. Indeed a growing set of international associations show interest in weCARE and are open to invite weCARE to participate in international climate/energy events.

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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

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