



26 March 2020

***Nuclear Energy: a geostrategic challenge
for the European Union***

Dear Ms von der Leyen, President of the European Commission,
Dear Mr Timmermans, Vice President of the European Commission,
Dear Ms McGuinness, Commissioner for Financial Affairs,
Dear Ms Simson, Commissioner for Energy,

Today the Council met and supported strong measures to defend the interests of the European Union in the Covid vaccine saga, following the Commission President's recommendations to restrict the export of vaccines from the EU, if the equivalent is not happening from other regions of the world.

While this domain is not at all within the scope of weCARE (an alliance of NGOs promoting a technology neutral and very low carbon energy mix to reduce CO₂ emissions and limit climate change), it gives us the opportunity, as representatives of citizens, to recall the plea made a few days ago by a group of seven Member States to take a fair and technology-neutral approach when it comes to the important role of nuclear energy in the low carbon energy mix.

You may wonder what might be the relation between the Covid vaccine situation and the role of nuclear energy...

The answer is that both are very geopolitical... an area President von der Leyen was keen and right to flag as a priority for the EU during her introductory speech in 2019 saying that "we need a more geopolitical EU" ... indeed! The demonstration is happening...

The Covid crisis and the vaccines have shown the need to keep critical knowledge, capabilities, technologies and infrastructures inside the European Union, or to rebuild them if we lost them, as a matter of good governance, in order to ensure the protection

of European citizens and the economy... a matter of sustainability in the full sense of the word... well beyond the oversimplified “green” definition of sustainability.

Nuclear energy is, for the European Union, a geopolitical challenge of the same nature. To ensure the welfare of European citizens and the economy, nuclear energy needs to be supported and further developed, as is done in many other parts of the world, if a clean, affordable and reliable energy mix for a sustainable European society is to be delivered. In particular, one lesson of the covid vaccine crisis flags the importance for the European Union to have a reliable indigenous supply of energy for the common good... and since the energy must be very low carbon, nuclear energy is key.

If the European Union does not proactively pursue this route, it will be a recipe for yet another geopolitical failure, and it will not be in the interests of European society as a whole. In the view of weCARE, this is not an option.

While sent in copy to some Member States’ Permanent Representations and MEPs, this letter is specifically addressed to the European Commission. As guardian of the Treaty, the Commission has a duty to defend the letter and spirit of the Treaties. The Euratom Treaty is promoting the development of nuclear energy in the European Union. weCARE already used this argument in previous letters and is very pleased to see that the same argument is strongly expressed by the seven Heads of States who wrote a few days ago to the Commission on the role of nuclear energy.

We remain at your disposal for any further information/interaction you would like to get from/with weCARE, as a representative of civil society.

Yours faithfully,

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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, European Association for Energy Security SK, Institute for Sustainable Energy PL, 18for0 IE, Stichting Energietransitie & Kernenergie NL.

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