



20 April 2022

The REPowerEU Communication: missing an opportunity

Dear European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen,
Dear Vice President Frans Timmermans,
Dear Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis,
Dear Commissioner Kadri Simson,
Dear Commissioner Thierry Breton,

WeCARE welcomes the Commission's REPowerEU Communication of 8 March 2022 as a timely reminder that the EU needs to do more to reduce its dependence on imported fossil fuels, particularly Russian gas, oil and coal in the context of the war in Ukraine.

While the short term actions proposed by the Commission in the REPowerEU plan, ie to find alternative gas supplies and support measures to reduce the social impact of the energy price crisis, are understandable and welcome, the proposed mid to long term actions are less convincing. Indeed the decarbonization priority, which should be the highest priority following the last IPCC report, should really discourage the recourse to fossil fuels. In addition, great care needs

to be taken not to put the EU at risk of another dependency.

Accelerating the intended transition to intermittent wind and solar electricity without a credible policy for ensuring security of energy supply and system stability, while abandoning natural gas, is not going to work. Moreover, the required scale and high cost of renewable hydrogen in a Power-to-Power process should rule this out as an option for massive balancing of the intermittency. The answer has to be more nuclear energy - both extended operation of existing plants and accelerated building of new ones. WeCARE is very surprised the EC's communication makes hardly any mention of nuclear, which in our view is a necessary component of any plausible long-term electricity decarbonisation strategy, while guaranteeing reliability of supply.

Lessons need to be learned from the failed German Energiewende. The dash for intermittent renewables, combined with the nuclear phase out, has resulted in a dash for fossil fuels - dirty coal for the mid-term and gas via the North Stream pipeline(s) for the mid to long-term. As a consequence, the German population will pay 500 billion euros over 20 years in subsidies for renewables with nearly no benefit in terms of CO2 reduction, and all European citizens are facing higher electricity prices, since the electricity market system accentuates the booming price of gas. The Energiewende is not delivering on neither of the three conditions for a sustainable energy mix: it is not clean, it is not economic, it is not reliable. It should serve as a model of what NOT to do.

weCARE welcomes the Commission's intention to assess options for optimizing the electricity market design. The current market does not give the right signals for capital-intensive investments, which will be massive in the coming decades. This reform of the electricity system will be a hard and long endeavor, but it has to start now, having as its unique objective to deliver clean, affordable and reliable electricity to consumers, households and industry, with a clear link between costs and price.

For the near future, the Commission should complement REPowerEU, in line with the promotional obligation of the Community under the Euratom Treaty, by (1) strongly supporting the long term

operation of all existing nuclear plants (when safety conditions are met), (2) putting financing mechanisms in place to facilitate investments in new generation III nuclear plants, including SMRs using proven technologies and their supply chains, (3) increasing the research and innovation budgets for the demonstration of generation IV nuclear plants, including for closing the fuel cycle for better use of resources, and (4) pushing Member States to accelerate the implementation of the solutions for the safe management of nuclear waste. All this would make a good content for a PINC, showing that the Commission is taking its full responsibility at critical times for the European Union.

We remain at your disposal for any further information/interaction you would like to get from/with weCARE.

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, Patrimoine Nucléaire et Climat FR, Terrapraaxis UK, 100TWh BE, Ekomodernist FI, Jihocesti TatKove CZ, Institute for Sustainable Energy PL, 18for0 IE, European Association for Energy Security SK, Stichting Energietransitie en Kernenergie NL.

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