



**12 October 2024**

***Time for a paradigm shift in EU Energy Policy***

***Dear Madam von der Leyen,  
Dear President of the European Commission,***

weCARE is an Alliance of European NGOs promoting a sustainable energy mix, with sustainability defined as the right balance between three pillars: (i) environment protection, (ii) economics and (iii) reliability of supply (**C**lean **A**ffordable **R**eliable **E**nergy – we CARE for a sustainable European society).

Over the last five years, we have closely followed the evolution of EU energy policy and have expressed our views through several letters and papers<sup>1</sup>. EU energy policy has largely been driven by the Green Deal, meaning that the “green” environmental dimension has received overwhelming attention. The other dimensions, particularly economics and affordability, have received lower priority, impacting the lives of consumers and the competitiveness of industry. As a matter of fact, the total cost of wind and solar electricity (including all induced costs as described herebelow) is higher than the cost of hydro or nuclear. Energy costs in EU exceed those in USA or other

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<sup>1</sup> weCARE letters and papers are available on the website <https://www.wecareeu.org>

parts of the world, creating a major handicap to our industry and all the EU economy. The Draghi Report comes to a similar conclusion.

We hope that, following the European Elections and the signal it gave on the policies pursued by EU to defend the interest of its citizens, the time for a paradigm shift in EU policies and specially on energy policy has come. The European Commission, in addition of being the Guardian of the Treaties, has a main role in proposing an optimized way forward for achieving collectively a very low carbon but also affordable and reliable energy mix in 2050, while respecting the sole right of Member States to decide on their mix.

The paradigm shift we expect on energy policy needs to be based on a deep global energy system analysis. This has not been done till now. Mixing the decarbonization goal with a tool to reach it, setting targets for renewable energy, without first studying deeply all the impacts from a socio-economic perspective, is not the right way to proceed from our perspective. Today the target for renewables is set at 42,5% by 2030. But where do we find reliable cost figures associated with this deployment – including all costs needed to compensate the intermittency of the renewables – be it networks, gas plants (with CO<sub>2</sub> tax, or the full cost of CCS/CCUS), batteries, or other fanciful means such as massive reliance on H<sub>2</sub>/NH<sub>3</sub> and its “economy”? Until now these costs have been decoupled (renewables on one side and the management of the intermittency on the other side) ... but in the end, it is the consumer who will pay through his energy or tax bill. Citizens are becoming poorer, and industries are relocating.

It is time to calculate all the costs associated with one form of energy production, and attribute them to where they belong. And once this is done, then, and only then, will it be possible to look for the optimized mix, keeping as the final objective the deployment of the cleanest, cheapest and most reliable system, for the interest of society at large.

Let us be clear, weCARE is not against renewable energy sources, even the contrary, because they are low-carbon, but they have to be limited in order not to destabilize the global economy and the proper functioning of European society. Nuclear energy is the only fully decarbonized alternative energy source but has been the black sheep

of EU energy policy for decades and even more so under the Green Deal. For sure, we recognise some positive evolution over the last two or three years thanks to the Alliance of pro-nuclear Member States, the Taxonomy (far from perfect nevertheless), the Electricity Market Reform (also not sufficient for a structural reform of the market), and the Net Zero Industry Act. Much more is now needed under the new Commission. The Taxonomy needs to be reviewed so as not to limit the role of nuclear energy only to the transition. The EMR needs to be structurally reviewed so that the merit order is no longer based on marginal costs but on the full system costs of a given production technology. And all the detailed implementation and financing tools need to be reviewed or developed in order to be open to nuclear energy projects, properly in line with the EC's technological neutrality principle.

Considering such a global sustainable energy system approach, weCARE considers that nuclear energy comes out as the preferred option and should be put in a position to provide the baseload electricity needed for the proper functioning of society in those Member States willing to rely on it. For these countries, renewables are also important and necessary but as a second priority, entering the system with their own means (and costs) to cope with their intermittency. The European Union and its Institutions need to make this possible. Member States who do not want to rely on nuclear energy have the full right not to do so, but impeding others to do it should be objected to by the European Commission, as the guardian of the Euratom Treaty.

Dear Madam, we rely on you to launch a deep global system analysis to define the optimized decarbonized energy mix, in order to base EU energy policy priorities on facts, taking into account the socio-economic interest of the EU citizens and industries and not ideology. We hope that you will also ensure that the Commissioners in charge of the files will follow the same approach.

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

Yours sincerely,

Marc Deffrennes, Richard Ivens, Serge Crutzen

weCARE

[marc.deffrennes@hotmail.com](mailto:marc.deffrennes@hotmail.com)

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, Terraprxaxis UK, 100TWh BE, Ekomodernist FI, Jihocesti TatKove CZ, Institute for Sustainable Energy PL, Stichting Energietransitie en Kernenergie NL, 18for0 IE, European Association for Energy Security SK. Associate Members are Voices of Nuclear and CFE Energies

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