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***weCARE Position Paper
on recent EC/EU energy policy statements and documents***

weCARE, as a representative of European civil society, has analysed recent European energy policy statements and documents. In the present geopolitical, climate, energy and social crisis gripping the EU, we consider that the actions taken at European level need to put the priority where it should be: the wellbeing of the European citizen.

Citizens want energy supplies that are climate-friendly, affordable *and* reliable. In our view, given the current lack of demonstration of large-scale electricity storage, this balance of goals cannot be fulfilled using only intermittent renewables with CO₂-emitting fossil fuels as back-up. Nuclear power also needs to be part of the solution for the short *and* the long term. EU energy policy should therefore be open to *all* low-carbon generating technologies considering their own merits based on science and not ideology. The energy mix should be decided by Member States according to their own circumstances and not constrained by having to meet particular technology-specific targets, ideologically set at EU level.

In this context, weCARE would like to comment on four recent developments.

The first is the draft Delegated Regulation, issued end of February by the Commission, proposing detailed rules for the production of renewable liquid and gaseous transport fuels. In concrete terms this relates to renewable hydrogen made by electrolysis using renewable electricity. We heard from the press (via Euractiv) that the final draft text, after deep discussion (even a deal) in the Council, would open the door to the production of hydrogen using nuclear-generated electricity, in particular through the Art 4 point (2) in bidding zones with a low carbon footprint (thanks to nuclear generation). Our reading is not so optimistic. Indeed, in its point (a) this article uses the wording “by installations generating renewable electricity”. The Art 2 point (3) of the draft Delegated Regulation refers to the Art 2 point (1) of the Directive EU 2018/2001 and therefore defines very strictly the installations generating renewable electricity. One finds there an exhaustive list of possible installations responding to the definition and nuclear is not in the list.

The second development is the reform of the EU electricity market. What we see in the Commission’s proposal is a partial reform, focusing mainly on one particular failure of the market: its inability, as an energy-only market, to give the necessary long-term investment signals for capital intensive installations (be it nuclear or renewable sources). Solutions providing a long-term focus to enhance investor confidence are available but will require some further coordination at EU level. There is however a more central flaw with the existing market, which is the non-integration of the system costs associated with the management of the intermittency and decentralisation of the renewables. These costs are covered (hidden) by subsidies and other taxes, but in fact it all comes from the same pocket of the consumer. Solving this would require more fundamental changes of the marginal pricing or to oblige each electricity generation source to bid as a “dispatchable” package (i.e. including all back-up and system costs). This, in addition to the cost of carbon being added, would particularly enable consumers to benefit from all the advantages of nuclear energy in the mix.

The third development is related to the proposed Net Zero Industry Act. Advanced nuclear systems and SMRs are included. This is a very good signal. It means indeed that nuclear is no longer considered for the transition “only” (as in the Taxonomy). However,

we regret that the entire nuclear sector is not included (like it is in the US Inflation Reduction Act), given its importance in helping to meet CO2 targets and ensuring security of supply. Long-term operation of existing reactors, for example, will be key for the next 10 to 20 years. We are looking to the concrete implementation of NIAZ to follow.

Finally, weCARE welcomes the declaration by 11 Member States, led by France, at the Informal Energy Council in Stockholm on 28 February, that nuclear energy has to be considered as an important contributor to the future EU low-carbon energy mix. weCARE is now expecting strong, highly visible actions by this alliance of pronuclear Member States, to push for the reintroduction of nuclear energy everywhere in EU policies and documents where it applies. To start with, it would be welcome for this group of Member States to act for a full redrafting of the Draft Delegated Regulation on renewable hydrogen mentioned above, where the word nuclear would appear in full letters next to renewable sources each time it is mentioned. Similarly, this alliance of Member States should fight for the inclusion of the long-term operation of existing installations as well as new build nuclear facilities in the Net Zero Industry Act. And last but not least, the alliance should ensure that the reform of the electricity market allows consumers in countries relying on nuclear power to benefit from low electricity prices reflecting the actual low costs of nuclear generation.

In conclusion, weCARE reaffirms it is time to reconsider most of the EU energy related policies by, once and for all, making sure that nuclear energy is properly considered and integrated. While we have seen some lip service in the recent months, this is not sufficient. The EU cannot continue to be shy of nuclear, which is providing around 25% of electricity of the EU today and should be providing more tomorrow. "Technology neutrality" needs to be fully associated with "low carbon neutrality". The word nuclear needs to appear in full in the European energy related documents where it applies. This would simply be in line with the Euratom Treaty. For sure each Member State has the freedom to use or not nuclear energy but seeing some Member States using dogmatic "green" policies to block the development and deployment of nuclear energy in other Member States is just not acceptable.

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, Terraprxaxis 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.

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