

José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 13 May 2014

OPEN LETTER

Dear President Barroso,

Europe's dependence on fossil fuels exposes it to both volatile fossil fuel prices and geo-political risks, of which the on-going crisis in Ukraine is merely the most recent example. As representatives of the renewable energy industry in Europe, we welcome the European Commission's recognition of the problem and its commitment to develop a strategy on energy security.

It is our belief that such a strategy, and surrounding debate, should not stop at diversification of supply routes and better cooperation and fuel storage, as these do not sustainably tackle Europe's reliance on energy imports. The EU's strategy must, therefore, take into consideration the broad portfolio of renewable energy solutions, and in particular the rapid deployment of domestic renewable energies, the related integration technologies, not least infrastructure, and strong energy efficiency policies.

Renewable energy sources from the sun, the wind, ocean, hydropower, biomass and geothermal energy provide an immediate and durable solution to replace natural gas, coal and oil in the residential, tertiary, and power sectors, as well as for industrial processes, for both power and heat supply. This renewable combination can relieve Europe's economic and political reliance on imports of gas, coal and oil in the most sustainable manner. According to the Commission's own analysis, the EU's dependence on energy imports comes at a significant cost: €545 billion in 2012¹.

In 2010 alone, the use of renewable energy avoided import fuel costs of €30 billion in the EU, especially in the electricity and heating sectors². But Europe can go much further. An ambitious and clear-sighted approach on the increased use of renewable sources is essential to shift Europe's energy balance towards domestic, clean and abundant resources.

As stated in the European Commission's Impact Assessment for the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework, a 30% renewable target would mean 26% less gas imports than today, and a higher target would mean even lower imports. The Commission's proposed minimum share of 27% would reduce imports by just 9%.³

What is more, ambitious objectives for renewable energy would significantly reduce Europe's trade deficit, improve economic stability, boost employment and secure cost-effective energy supplies both in the short and long term.

Today, the price of some renewable energy sources is already cost-competitive or sometimes even lower than that of conventional fuel generation, while for the other renewable technologies prices are rapidly approaching cost-competitiveness. It is high time to remove the remaining barriers in Europe's energy system to fully exploit this potential.

¹ European Commission, 2014, Energy Economic Developments in Europe, European Economy 1/2014,

² European Commission, 2014, Energy Economic Developments in Europe, European Economy 1/2014, p. 118

³ European Commission, 2014, Impact Assessment accompanying the Communication "A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 up to 2030", p. 68

Therefore, we strongly encourage you to heed the signal that the crisis in the Ukraine is sending and push more ambitious political objectives on renewable energy, so as to put Europe on track to reach a sustainable and affordable energy supply.

Sincerely yours,

AEBIOM

Jean-Marc Jossart
Secretary General



ESTELA

Marcel Bial
Secretary General



EGEC

Philippe Dumas
Secretary General



ESTIF

Pedro Dias
Secretary General



EPIA

Frauke Thies
Secretary General (ad interim)



EUREC

Paola Mazzucchelli
Secretary General



EREF

Director
Dörte Fouquet

EREF
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Ocean Energy Europe

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Dirk Hendricks
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