

Towards a new European Energy Community

Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity. Robert Schuman, 9th May 1950

Almost sixty years ago, six European states created the European Coal and Steel Community. Their purpose was to replace conflict with cooperation, and antagonism with prosperity. Today, energy is still on the political and economic agenda, but the rules that ensured equal access to common resources no longer exist.

In this new decade of the 21st century, Europe faces several major crises – in the field of energy, environment, and above all the economy – which call for new priorities and reduce the available options. These challenges also offer us opportunities. The development of sustainable and affordable alternative energy sources is the key to a new industrial revolution that will contribute to Europe's emergence from the economic crisis.

To meet these challenges, we need a radical shift in the way we produce and consume energy. We believe that Europe needs a stronger, deeper, common energy policy. An energy policy which guarantees access to energy at reasonable and stable prices, which maintains our industrial competitiveness, and which promotes sustainable development and the transition to a low-carbon society. A policy which mobilises investments in order to unlock the business opportunities of tomorrow, and which ensures the security of supply for all Europeans.

Existing policies - to liberalise energy supply, improve energy interconnection and protect the environment - have been successful and continue to have an important role to play, but they are not enough. This is a multifaceted problem whose scale requires a bolder new approach, based on more ambitious goals and deeper integration.

A unique challenge requires a unique response. We believe that the next chapter in the history of European integration has to involve the creation of a European Energy Community, a new EEC. A Community designed to deliver a strong and effective common energy policy. Major strides in the European project can and, if necessary, should be made by an initial core group of dedicated Member States - states which can use enhanced cooperation to move forward. Now is the time to take such a stride.

The creation of such a coherent and integrated common energy policy calls for a number of measures. The completion of the European markets for energy must be built on upgraded Europe-wide energy networks. Our energy mix should be diversified by greater reliance on renewable energies and by greater investment in research and development in new green technologies. Energy efficiency both in the production and end-use should be a core value of our policies and help promote a change of our habits and our way of life. The European Union must present a single interface in its relations with its external partners, both the producer and transit countries. The EU must have the ability to pool its supply capacities and to engage in coordinated energy purchasing, should the need arise. In the long term, if we are faced with a major energy crisis, common strategic reserves must be available, and managed throughout the continent in a spirit of solidarity.

Europe cannot afford to wait indefinitely, if its citizens are to continue to believe in the European ideal. On the eve of our European birthday, let us have the courage of our convictions. Let us now create a European Energy Community.

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Brussels, 5 May 2010¹

¹ To support this joint declaration and provide an in-depth review of the challenges it addresses, the Think Tank *Notre Europe* has published its report "Towards a European Energy Community: A Policy Proposal", April 2010.