

WHY AND HOW EUROPE SHOULD BECOME THE WORLD LEADER OF RENEWABLE ENERGY?

OPEN LETTER TO THE EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL DECISION MAKERS

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If some decide to stay in a dirty past, Europe must move to a cleaner future. We need to embark on a collective project to become the world leader in renewable energy by 2020. Achieving this would go a long way to address key challenges facing Europe today: use innovation to boost on industrial competitiveness, create new quality jobs, lower energy dependence, democratise the energy sector while making it more environmentally sustainable. This tribute was published by the [Huffington Post](#).

Europe is in need of ambitious and challenging projects that will create a feeling of belonging and pride for European citizens and their governments. One such project is **to make Europe the world leader of renewables by 2020.**

Promoting and completing this project is a **win-win venture for all**: it brings to all citizens a better control of a clean energy consumption, it offers the industry and services a genuine industrial and innovation policy creating jobs and new opportunities in Europe and it creates a substantial welfare by reducing the fossil fuels import bill, green house gas emissions and air pollution.

This project is a major structural reform and a centrepiece of the modernisation of the European economy. It is in line with **the ability of the European industry to deliver the innovative products and services** that such ambition implies, building on energy efficiency and the power of digitisation. Besides many other examples, the recent completion of a world-tour by Solar Impulse, the exclusively solarpowered plane, expresses the ability of European researchers and industries to demonstrate the potential of clean technologies. It is now time to deploy already existing and proven technologies for the benefit of all.

Europe made the Paris Agreement possible. Time is now for action. If some decide to stay in a dirty past, we must move to a cleaner future.

The **Energy Union** proposed by the European Commission and often only mildly supported by the Member States **is nothing else than the path to the energy transition to a modern low carbon and digital economy** driven by the empowerment of consumers, the new decentralised and abundant sources of energy like wind, solar, hydro and biomass, leading to the optimisation of these resources through interconnections across Europe and digitisation.

To be the world leader in renewables, Europe should implement immediately the following **five steps and policies.**

First, there must be a **clear and longlasting political will**, expressed at the highest level in order to lead the players to invest in renewable sources of energy and energy efficient solutions. They are asking for clear legal frameworks to know in which direction to invest. It is for the European Council, legally backed by the Council and the European Parliament on the basis of Commission's proposals, just tabled, to provide the needed stability and predictability and then for the Member States to implement the necessary measures.

Second, there must be a **financial and fiscal framework** which is offering to citizens, corporations and cities the right conditions to invest in renewable and to deploy the most innovative technologies.

Third, there must be at **European and national levels strongly coordinated and forward looking innovation and industrial policies** encouraging the discovery, the development and the deployment of all sources of energy which are renewable, with a view to make them competitive on the market.

Fourth, European Union must promote and support a wide range of tangible and well coordinated initiatives, making use of all instruments and leverages that are available. Concretely, it should **make all European islands and notably Member States like Cyprus and Malta, now dependent on oil, the best examples of entirely renewable powered territories**. Worldwide, it should **design the biggest public and private project to put an end to the scandal of 1,2 billion people of our planet having no access to electricity (600 millions in Sub-Saharan Africa, 200 in India!)**. This scandal is one of the reason of the important economic migration affecting Europe. The COP 22 held in Marrakech showed the importance

of integrating the needs of the African continent in future plans of the European Union.

Fifth, a **European wide inspirational campaign promoting renewable in all Member States** should be launched as the glue that binds together all the elements above. A roadmap for European renewable energy leadership should be adopted together with the next State of the Energy Union due early 2017.

If it is to be serious about its ambitions to be the world leader in clean energy transition, as targeted by President Juncker in its political guidelines in July 2014, it is now time to gear up and to mobilise all the available resources to become again the leader once admired and eventually more successfully imitated. The European leaders should convince and engage the citizens on this path.

European citizens expect their leaders to show longer term vision and determination in tackling the fight against climate change while creating jobs and steering innovation to secure a better future for all.

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