

EU CHARADE

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Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission
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Dear Madam,

1 September 2026

We, citizens from seventeen European countries, present this open letter to the institutions of the European Union. Our regions are different, but we observe the same consequences everywhere and share the same concerns: our electricity bills are rising, our public finances are weakening, while our health, our heritage and our environment are deteriorating. We address you because we believe that major public policy must be based on verifiable facts, not on convictions that reality has contradicted increasingly clearly for thirty years.

The facts on which we rely do not come from us: they are published by the Energy Institute, a British institution based in London, whose *Statistical Review of World Energy* is the world's uncontested reference for energy data. The latest edition, covering recent data, reaches an unrelenting conclusion: the world — and Europe with it — is not engaged in an energy transition, but in energy addition. Even in Europe, intermittent renewable energies have been added to existing energy resources without replacing fossil fuels, which continue to dominate the mix. The Energy Institute data confirms this without ambiguity.

A dangerous energy addition for Europe

Global energy consumption has exceeded a new record, surpassing 600 exajoules, and all sources — including each of the three fossil fuels — have grown in absolute value. New capacities are added to existing ones, but do not replace them. And most importantly, by being added, they increasingly destabilise the European energy system, both technically and financially.

An expensive illusion

Globally, wind and solar — despite decades of subsidies and triumphalist rhetoric — still cover only about 3% of global primary energy consumption (approximately 20 EJ), while fossil fuels still represent 86% (518 EJ). Three percent: this is the paltry result of thirty years of "green revolution" and investment of hundreds of billions of euros of public money. Far from replacing fossil fuels, these intermittent renewable technologies are added to them — and the Union's energy strategy is built as if replacement had already been achieved.

A European effort with no measurable climate effect

Since the entry into force of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and despite three decades of climate negotiations, global energy-related CO₂ emissions have increased by 67% and reached a new record. Over the past decade, the Union has reduced its emissions by approximately 504 million tonnes, while the rest of the world has emitted 3,008 million tonnes more — more than 5.5 times as much. The European Union today accounts for only 6.9% of global emissions. The arithmetic conclusion is clear: our unilateral decarbonisation, costly as it may be, has no measurable effect on the global climate trajectory. However, it does have a very real effect — on the competitiveness of our industry and the purchasing power of our citizens.

Electricity among the most expensive in the world

The consequence of this situation is visible on every European citizen's electricity bill: European electricity has become one of the most expensive on the planet. For industry, prices reach approximately double those of the United States and are 50% higher than in China; for gas, Europeans pay three to five times more than Americans (Draghi Report 2024; International Energy Agency 2026). This gap ruins our competitiveness, drives our industries out and reduces household purchasing power. It stems in part from a costly strategy: massive subsidization of intermittent renewable capacity — wind and solar — whose intermittency forces us to additionally finance grid reinforcement and regulation, dispatchable reserve capacity and storage. Wind only operates when there is wind, with a capacity factor of only 20 to 30 percent. Zero production without wind. This unpredictable intermittency requires permanently financing backup sources. The accumulation of non-dispatchable intermittent renewable electricity beyond what the grid can absorb multiplies public spending without gaining supply security. What we demand is not to abandon climate protection, but to pursue it without sacrificing either the competitiveness of our industries or the purchasing power of our citizens.

An exorbitant price, paid by our rural areas

Yet this paltry global result has a considerable cost, borne twice by our citizens: as taxpayers, then as residents. As taxpayers, they finance, through tens of billions of euros in subsidies and feed-in guarantees, intermittent renewable sectors that do not replace the dispatchable means they claim to complement. As residents, they see landscapes, rural areas, forests and coasts — which constitute Europe's identity — being industrialised. Huge agricultural and natural surfaces are being artificialised — including ground-mounted solar farms covering hundreds of hectares — biodiversity — birds, bats, insects — is directly threatened, villages are disfigured, and residents' health is being damaged by a range of nuisances: noise and low frequencies, stroboscopic effects, sleep disturbances and chronic stress, with infrasound being only one component. These nuisances are moreover significantly underestimated by official measurement methods (dBA scale): work presented to European institutions has shown that today's giant wind turbines, exceeding 250 metres in height, emit significantly more infrasound — and propagate it far further — than smaller machines on which reassuring studies of yesterday were based. Europe's rural areas must not be sacrificed in the name of a climate stance with no measurable effect on global climate.

Beyond the nuisances associated with intermittent renewable energy production, the precautionary principle must also be applied to pollution from chemical substances — PFAS, microplastics and other persistent pollutants — to which renewable energy installations contribute, contaminating soils, waters and food chains. A recent study coordinated by a European research institute specialising in this area identifies 228 different chemical substances released by renewable energy installations, of which 62 are classified as "priority" according to the criteria of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and appear on lists established by the Water Framework Directive (WFD). These substances have recognised toxicity, persistence in the environment or bioaccumulation capacity at European level. Their potential presence in the environment calls for particular vigilance, in line with the precautionary principle, to prevent potentially lasting or irreversible impacts. Truly sovereign and sustainable energy cannot ignore this health dimension.

A matter of method

We do not dispute the need to protect the environment. We dispute a method: the one that sets political objectives first and then disregards data that contradicts them. As a renowned statistician has summarised: "In God we trust; all others must bring data". Basing ourselves on verifiable data and involving citizens in decisions that affect their living environment is not a favour, but a right: the Aarhus Convention, ratified by the Union and its Member States, guarantees access to environmental information, participation in decisions and access to justice — exactly the principles on which administrative courts have annulled noise measurement protocols without prior environmental assessment and adequate public participation.

Therefore, we ask you to:

- (1) base the Union's energy and climate policy on verifiable data, both European and global, and subject each objective, at full cost, to an honest and public cost-benefit assessment, measured in every euro of public money invested;
- (2) guarantee genuine neutrality in technological choice, by evaluating each energy source on its measured results — full costs, reliability, supply security, environmental footprint — rather than on pre-determined preferences or exclusions;
- (3) demand transparency on the full system costs of each sector — grid integration, dispatchable reserve capacity, storage, grid reinforcement and regulation — so that public decisions are based on the actual cost borne by the consumer, not just stated production costs;
- (4) end the industrialisation of landscapes, rural areas, forests, coasts and natural spaces in the Union, protect biodiversity and residents' environment, and revise wind noise measurement methods to truly integrate low frequencies and infrasound;
- (5) restore to the heart of energy policy the objective of sovereign, abundant, safe and affordable energy, an essential condition for Europe's competitiveness and social cohesion.

The data leave no room for doubt. We demand that these principles be applied with full responsibility.

EU CHARADE

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cc:

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Mrs. Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament

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