



To: Energy Ministers of EU Member States

Re: Call to immediately end Europe's dependence on unreliable fossil gas and coal, protect its most vulnerable at Extraordinary Energy Council on 26 October 2021.

26 October 2021

Dear Ministers,

The energy crisis is placing millions of Europeans at risk of a cold winter. As you meet to confront the crisis, civil society groups from across the EU are calling for immediate, progressive support for the most vulnerable. We are also calling for an immediate end to policies that led to this crisis: the reliance on fossil fuels – fossil gas and coal – that are unstable for Europeans and inflaming the climate emergency.

There is no doubt that the energy crisis is being caused by Europe's reliance on fossil fuels. Prices for gas have increased by an astonishing [1000 percent](#) over the past year. Coal prices have also risen 500 percent. Over [a third](#) of the EU's energy comes from gas and coal. According to the International Energy Agency it is these [fossil fuel price spikes](#) – [not the cost of carbon, nor the use of renewable energy](#) – that are principally responsible for the EU's high energy costs.

The impact is real, and it is being felt now by people from [Poland to France](#), from [Italy to Romania](#). Even before the crisis, upwards of [one in four](#) EU households were living in energy precarity. This winter, these citizens – and many more – could become even more vulnerable.

There is a short-term solution. European consumers who are most at risk should be [immediately protected](#) from spiking energy costs. Progressive financial help – income support, tax relief, price caps – should be provided to those facing energy precarity. Support for consumers should also be prioritized over support for fossil fuel providers as a more efficient method of protecting the vulnerable without rewarding those responsible for the crisis.

There is also a medium-term solution, but one that requires immediate action: urgently end our reliance on fossil fuels and transition to a just and renewable energy system. If this crisis has taught Europe anything, it is that fossil fuels are unreliable, with prices spiking because we cannot control the [international markets](#) from which we import gas. What we can control are renewable energy sources, like [cheap, quickly-built](#) solar and wind farms located in the EU. And increasing energy efficiency, like improving building insulation, can decrease how much energy we use overall. For every 1 percent the EU improves efficiency, it can cut our gas imports by [2.6 percent](#).

Of course, abandoning support for fossil fuels and switching to renewables and efficiency has the added bonus of investing in the future. Gas and coal are Europe's second and third largest [sources](#) of carbon emissions and the EU needs to [dramatically cut](#) their consumption if we are to keep global temperatures to 1.5°C. We should stop financing yesterday's industrial policy and instead invest in industries that will help us live cleaner, richer lives.

Today you will discuss these issues in an emergency meeting in Luxembourg. At this meeting, we call on you to:

- Provide progressive support to European citizens who will be hardest hit by the current fossil fuel crisis, ensuring that no-one is left in the cold or dark, disconnected from their energy sources – even if they fall behind on their bills.
- Acknowledge that it is Europe's reliance on fossil gas and coal that is the root cause of the crisis.
- Reject – both in any EU emergency packages and in EU legislation currently under review – support for infrastructure supporting fossil gas, “low carbon” gases, and coal that will lock us into decades of additional fossil fuel dependency.

There is a better future for Europe, one you can choose when you meet on the 26th. We are all watching to see if you can live up to our just and safe potential.

Sincerely,

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