



Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels

Brussels, 16 July 2021

Re: Paving the way for importing hydrogen to Europe

Dear President,

It is our great pleasure to share with you today our non-paper on a hydrogen import strategy for Europe.

Without a doubt, hydrogen will open up significant new possibilities to use, store and transport renewable - and for a transitional period low-carbon - energy worldwide in the coming years and decades. For our European industry in particular, hydrogen represents an important climate protection option and also the chance to safeguard industrial value creation in Europe.

In the near future, it will not be possible to rapidly meet the growing demand for climate-friendly hydrogen at competitive prices solely from European sources. As an example, leading research institutes such as Fraunhofer have forecast a hydrogen import need of 70% for Germany as early as 2030. Imports from partner countries will play an important role, for which preparations should already be made today at the European level. It is a unique chance to preserve our prosperity and to develop new international partnerships.

Our non-paper outlines a strategy for preparing Europe to the much-needed imports. Europe's companies need a secure, clear and stable frame for planning and investment security. A clear strategy and concrete support mechanisms are essential to make the emerging hydrogen era a success story for Europe. The structure and functioning of "H2Global", which is supported by a foundation, might serve as a model for the EU here.

We think in general that cooperation in the energy sector should play a much bigger role in our external policy than today. The "connectivity strategy" should finally yield results, even more since the US administration took up the initiative, also with the idea to present in the developing countries an alternative to China. If Asia and Africa implement their plans to open new coal plants and continue to follow the fossil fuel path to develop their industries, European decarbonization efforts will be almost in vain.

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Since surfaces and prices are much less an issue in many sun- and wind-rich countries in the world than in Europe, we need to make the expansion of renewable energy world-wide a priority and to enhance our instruments ranging from energy market counselling, vocational training, export guarantees and risk capital to support European companies to contribute to the global energy and industrial transformation.

In this regard, we would like to come back to our idea to establish an EU Climate Envoy who will make sure that energy cooperation, the development of renewable energy and a global hydrogen economy as well as hydrogen imports get the priority that is absolutely needed and we lead finally a coherent and powerful external climate and energy policy.

Finally, we are convinced that our non-paper is also a valuable contribution for the planned External Energy Strategy and might help to pave the way towards a strategic energy diplomacy strategy.

We remain at your disposal for discussing this highly sensitive matter.

Sincerely yours,



Markus Pieper



Hildegard Bentele

CC:

Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans
High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell Fontelles
Commissioner Thierry Breton
Commissioner Kadri Simson
Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen
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