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Energy Ministers of Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Mauritania and Jordan.

Cc:

UfM secretariat

Dear Energy Ministers,

[CAN Europe](#) is Europe's leading NGO coalition fighting dangerous climate change in Europe, representing over 180 organisations in more than 30 European countries. [CAN Arab World](#) is a network of more than 120 organisations in 17 countries coordinating the efforts of civil society in the Arab world to promote climate protection and renewable energy, in addition to developing strategies to reduce carbon emissions from facilities across the region. Both coalitions include many members in the Mediterranean region, including your countries. We have recently learnt about the Draft Ministerial Declaration on Energy suggested for the Third Ministerial Conference on Energy of the Ministers of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in charge of Energy to be adopted in its next meeting in Lisbon, on June 14th.

We welcome the efforts in moving forward the partnership, regional dialogue and cooperation between the different Mediterranean countries to advance towards just, climate-neutral energy systems in the region. This is notably important for an area that is particularly vulnerable to climate change and to different environmental pressures that can severely affect the access to water and food. Reliance on sound and well accepted scientific information is key for understanding what is at stake. For this reason we encourage the energy ministers of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to include a mention to the [MEDECC report](#) (endorsed by UfM) in their resolution, to put climate change adaptation and mitigation at the core of the Mediterranean energy policies.

As foreseen by IRENA (the International Renewable Energy Agency) and other studies, the Mediterranean region has abundant potential for the massive development of solar energy and onshore wind; the Mediterranean Sea has as well potential for far greater deployment of offshore wind turbines and ocean renewable technologies. The release of this potential should ensure the opportunity for citizens

and local communities to engage in the energy transition and go hand in hand with biodiversity protection. This is particularly important in less resourced areas, populated by communities with less access to education and infrastructure. These communities need to be included in the planning process from a very early stage, avoiding impositions -particularly when talking about big scale projects- and clearly prioritizing their population in terms of jobs, infrastructures and other economic and non economic benefits (education, projects...). Environmental integrity needs to be ensured when planning these developments, paying attention to impact risk to local resources, particularly effects on water availability for the construction and maintenance of these projects.

While we welcome, with the above considerations, the mention of the increase of these energy developments in the draft Resolution, we are deeply worried about the role fossil fuels still play in the future energy plans, particularly fossil gas. The suggested draft Ministerial Declaration on Energy oddly grants this fuel an outstanding role in the clean energy transition of energy production and consumption modes. This is simply not in line not only with science or the Paris Agreement, but also with the latest revealing forecasts made by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in its recently launched benchmark report "[Net zero to 2050](#)" urging for immediate and permanent cancellation of all new fossil fuel investments worldwide, whether in exploration or infrastructure. This clearly means new gas developments, and particularly mega-projects like the proposed East Med pipeline will be totally unnecessary and if built, become stranded assets with unacceptable environmental, social and economic damages, while hindering the sustainable energy transition at regional and global level.

These updated IEA findings must necessarily be reflected in the region's energy scenarios. For the above stated reasons we urge the Energy ministers to delete from the declaration those sentences recognizing "*the major role of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries as (...) as stable suppliers of natural gas, including LNG; The role that natural gas plays in the clean energy transition of energy production and consumption modes (...)*" or "*the transitory role of lower-emission fossil fuels such as LNG and CNG, in particular when blended with biomethane or e-gas and provided methane emissions are minimised*".

Fossil gas cannot anymore be part of the long-term energy scenarios. The Med region needs to rapidly move away from fossil fuels and incorporate a "Just Transition" concept to support countries, regions and local communities through - inter alia - financial support to deploy renewable technologies, capacity building and technical know-how sharing.

Lastly, we would like to show our deep concern about the prominent role granted in the draft declaration to organisations like the "[Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Energie](#)" (OME) which includes only public and private Mediterranean energy utilities, in particular all the oil and gas majors operating in the region. We raise our concerns around the conflict of interest due to their influence on UfM Energy policies, statements and scenario developments. Of particular concern is OME's exclusive and thus dominant role in managing the UfM Gas Platform, contrary to the arrangements for the other two UfM energy platforms, managed as far as we can ascertain by the UfM secretariat.

OME's current control of the Gas Platform guarantees a strong tilt towards continued UfM-sponsored fossil fuel expansion in the Mediterranean, contrary to the IEA's and MEDECC warnings already mentioned above. This intrusive role in what is supposed to be the secretariat of a multilateral, intergovernmental organisation, must be terminated without delay.

We are confident that you will take this urgent call into due account and approve a joint Declaration that is in line with science and the Paris Agreement objectives. We remain at your disposal to further exchange on ways to accelerate the just transition and climate neutrality in the Mediterranean region.

Yours sincerely,

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