



*Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe is Europe's leading NGO coalition fighting dangerous climate change. With 200 member organisations active in 40 European countries, representing over 1,700 NGOs and more than 40 million citizens, CAN Europe promotes sustainable climate, energy and development policies throughout Europe.*

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## **CAN Europe Input to Informal Energy Council 4-5 September**

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Dear Minister,

As you gather for the Informal Energy Council to deliberate on the future of the EU's energy system beyond 2030, among other key topics, the meeting takes place in the aftermath of the deeply problematic EU-US trade deal. This deal locks the EU into additional volumes of costly and methane-intensive LNG imports from the United States over the next three years. From both a climate and energy security perspective, this direction is gravely troubling.

It is therefore essential that discussions remain focused on ensuring that Europe's energy transition is ambitious, affordable and just, firmly aligned with the objectives of climate neutrality and energy security.

In this context, we would like to contribute four key considerations to help inform the discussion:

- **Post-2030 EU Energy Policy Architecture:** The energy transition must be anchored in a clear and ambitious direction, leading towards a fully efficient and renewables-based energy system by 2040, underpinned by binding post-2030 targets for energy savings and renewable energy. These targets are essential to deliver policy predictability for investors, lower energy bills, enhance energy security, accelerate decarbonisation, and phase out fossil fuel imports. The post-2030 framework should firmly support renewables-based electrification, coupled with energy efficiency, as they offer the most cost-effective and reliable pathway to achieving climate neutrality and strengthening Europe's energy security. By contrast, fossil-gas based hydrogen and technologies such as nuclear, small modular reactors (SMRs), and carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) must not be mislabelled as 'clean', as they are costly, risky, slow to deploy, and divert resources away from proven, affordable, and scalable solutions. The revision of Europe's energy architecture must reflect these realities and guide the EU toward a truly sustainable, affordable, and secure energy transition.
- **Electricity Grids:** A significant level of public financing needs to be leveraged at national and EU level, both for transmission and distribution. However, grid congestion, renewables curtailment, and connection queues are already being faced today. Grid capacity needs to be boosted in the short term to prevent a stalled transition. With long lead times for some grid projects, a parallel approach is required, whereby new grid expansion starts today while national Rapid Capacity Plans work alongside to fill the gap. These plans should seek to quickly deploy grid enhancing technologies, storage and demand flexibility solutions, and prioritise the connection of electrified demand such as heat pumps. The urgency to expand grids does not need to come at the expense of the environment and communities - digitalisation and more staffing should be harnessed

to speed up requests and project developers should follow the Pact for Engagement to keep the public at the heart of planning.

- **Phasing out Russian gas imports:** CAN Europe fully supports the key priority of the Danish presidency to work towards fully phasing out Russian gas imports by ending short and long term contracts until 2027. However, phasing out Russian gas imports should not be an argument to focus only on diversification of gas supplies and increase LNG imports from the US or other countries under short-sighted fossil lock-in trade deals. On the contrary, the EU should put in place binding measures that ensure a continuation of the gas demand reduction curve observed in the EU over the last two years. These measures could for example be anchored in the national diversification plans currently being discussed under the gas import ban proposal, building on the gas phase out plans proposed in the revised CISA guidelines. Together, these can serve as the foundation for a much-needed EU gas phase-out framework.
- **Affordable energy:** Tripartite contracts offer the opportunity to provide investment visibility and can have the potential to reduce energy prices. Along with renewable energy, tripartite contracts for Affordable Energy for Europe's industry also need to prioritize energy efficiency to address current challenges to bring down energy bills, increase energy security, and combat climate change. In particular for energy efficiency, tripartite contracts should be used as tools to fill the NECP gap. The public sector should play its role in these contracts by requiring industries to increase their ambition in line with the climate agenda. Governments must use their weight to ensure consuming industries commit for more energy savings and energy producers to provide energy coming from renewables, also in a way of promoting electrification.

We strongly encourage Ministers to use this informal Council to help shape a coherent and forward-looking energy policy that accelerates the shift towards a secure, resilient, and affordable energy system based on renewable energy and energy efficiency. Providing a clear direction at this stage is essential.

We remain at your disposal for further exchange on these important matters

Yours sincerely,

Chiara Martinelli,

Director of Climate Action Network Europe

