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EU summit

EU leaders must resist urge to take a step back into our energy past

Ahead of tomorrow's EU summit and anticipated conclusions on energy policy and prices, Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** said:

"EU leaders must resist the urge to take a step back into our energy past. After all the recent progress we have made away from dirty fossil fuels and risky nuclear power, it would be a massively retrograde step to once again start to promote these energy sources of yesteryear."

"Mooted proposals to revise EU rules on state aid to favour nuclear power are totally wrongheaded. Despite 50 years of being bankrolled by taxpayers, nuclear power still cannot stand on its own two feet. The reality is that the taxpayer continues to serve as financial back-stop for the costly decommissioning of nuclear plants, measures to deal with the problem of nuclear waste and the liability risk associated with nuclear power (as the insurance industry will not). Instead of pouring more public money into this risky technology, we should be looking to promote future-oriented power production sources like renewables."

Green energy spokesperson **Claude Turmes** added:

"The push for regulatory intervention on energy prices is both deluded and misguided: instead of focusing on prices, the EU should be attempting to address energy costs borne by the end-user."

"The EU is massively dependent on oil imports, with no prospect of controlling the price, while gas prices are linked to the oil price, so a direct shift is simply not feasible in the short-term. In addition, artificially tampering with the energy price will undermine efforts to modernise Europe's energy infrastructure - with ageing power plants needing replacement and grid modernisation long overdue. Instead, the EU should be looking to reduce end-user costs and this implies taking more ambitious measures to ensure end-use efficiency, limiting energy wastage, which will bring down energy bills for consumers and industry alike."

"Shale gas is not the silver bullet for Europe's energy policy but rather a dangerous Trojan Horse. Moves to promote shale gas must be headed-off. Quite apart from the indisputable environmental and health risks associated with shale gas extraction, the economics of this energy-intensive technology are highly questionable and based on unrealistic estimates. The boom in the US is already petering out, leaving the long-term problems in its wake. The geographical and demographical situation in Europe is even more unsuitable and we should not make the same mistakes here."

Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** concluded:

"Instead of heeding misleading and flawed arguments of polluting industries, EU leaders should be seeking to promote the readymade solutions we already have. Ambitious measures to improve energy efficiency would bring down energy costs and reduce our dependence on energy imports at the same time. Promoting home-grown renewable energy would be a win-win for Europe, stimulating the economy and creating jobs in Europe. This is the energy policy reality facing EU leaders and they should ignore the smokescreens from Business Europe."

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Claude Turmes

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