

Kadri Simson
European Commissioner for Energy
Wetstraat/Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium
22 March 2022

Dear Commissioner Simson,

As you well know, citizens across Europe are facing steep increases in energy prices as a result of many factors, not least the war in Ukraine. Europe's dependency on Russian gas has sharpened the urgency of the need to produce more energy from renewable sources and build a more sustainable energy network. If the EU is to reach its goals of providing 32% of its energy from renewable sources by 2030, and becoming carbon neutral by 2050, more and more renewable plants will need to be constructed.

However, this drive for more renewable energy also opens scope for abuse. Macro-scale energy projects are springing up across Europe, such as wind energy plants in Galicia and photovoltaic plants in Andalucía. These projects often consist of hundreds of thousands of hectares occupied with solar and wind power plants. Many of them have a severe impact on areas of high ecological, agricultural, scenic, social or cultural value. The construction of such plants is often driven by speculation by large investment funds taking advantage of the weakness of local administrations to bypass planning laws and cut corners.

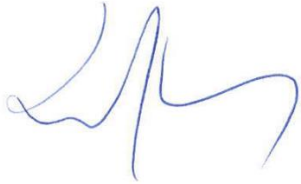
As a result, these models frequently stand in conflict with European legislation that aims to protect natural heritage and biodiversity, including Directives 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habits and wild fauna and flora, 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds, and 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency [specifically, authorisation procedures for energy projects that prioritise the protection of public health and safety, the protection of the environment, land use and siting, and the use of public ground].

What is more, such projects often saturate the networks and block access to smaller initiatives that could be more appropriate to local needs. Distributed generation and small renewable facilities, built close to their centres of consumption, can provide local citizens and businesses with the energy they need without causing large-scale damage to the environment, disrupting the balance and cohesion of the territory, or impacting local development.

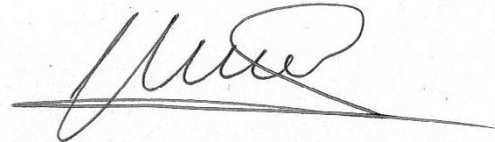
What action is the Commission taking to study the social implications of green energy projects and their consequences for local protected environments, the rural way of life, and agriculture and fisheries? How does the Commission intend to support smaller-scale projects that may struggle to

compete for investment funding and administrative approval, but can provide renewable energy with less impact on the local environment? Going forward, will the Commission introduce a proposal for common criteria to limit the size of new photovoltaic and wind projects and promote a more orderly expansion of Europe's energy network in a manner that respects the needs of local communities?

Yours sincerely,



Lorena López de Lacalle
President, European Free Alliance



Jordi Solé i Ferrando
Secretary for International Affairs and
Member of the European Parliament,
Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya



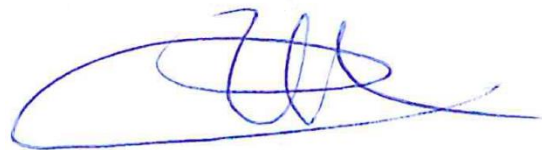
Ana Miranda Paz
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