

H.E. Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy

President of France

President of the European Council

H.E. Mr. José Manuel Barroso

President of the European Commission

Dear Presidents Sarkozy and Barroso,

We are writing to encourage you urgently to begin work on creating the new infrastructure Europe needs if we are to make a rapid shift to clean energy.

It is now possible to build an efficient high-voltage direct current (HVDC) "supergrid" spanning the Europe-Mediterranean region. Such a grid would enable us to transmit energy over large distances with very little loss in transmission.

This in turn would enable us to generate renewable energy in the places where it is most abundant, and make it available to the whole region. Southern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East could feed in cheap, reliable and unlimited energy from solar thermal power stations. Iceland, Italy and other areas could feed in geothermal energy. Areas rich in wind energy could provide a more steady supply, as the wind is always blowing in parts of the region. To further ensure stability of supply, wind, wave and photovoltaic energy could be integrated with increased energy storage by pumping water into uphill reservoirs in mountainous areas, as many countries already do.

The urgent requirement to reduce CO2 concentrations in the atmosphere, and the rising price of fossil fuels, mean that Europe will need to go far beyond the 20% renewables goal in the years beyond 2020. A regional supergrid could make this much easier to achieve. The benefits of a steady expansion of renewables include job creation, enhanced energy security, and less pollution.

We urge you to take two steps immediately:

1. Ensure that a strong "solar plan" is included in the initiative for a Mediterranean Union, including cross-Mediterranean transmission links and development of solar thermal power stations in deserts and drylands to help meet the energy needs of people on all sides of the Mediterranean.
2. Initiate a European Commission study of options for implementation of a clean energy supergrid, including: (a) estimated costs and options for cost-sharing, (b) integration of solar, wind, wave, hydro storage, geothermal and other technologies across the region to provide steady and reliable supply, (c) options for incentives to ensure the fastest development of generating capacity in energy-rich areas as the supergrid is built, (d) long-term potential cost savings for the region from using energy sources where the fuel is free, and (e) possible first steps towards implementation.

We believe this could become a flagship project for Europe's leadership in the race to clean energy.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Harms, Dorette Corbey, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Satu Hassi, Anders Wijkman, Graham Watson, Vittorio Prodi, Mechtild Rothe, Paulo Casaca, Claude Turmes, Giulietto Chiesa, Peter Olajos, David Hammerstein, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Ana Gomes, Avril Doyle, Matthias Grootte, Monica Frassoni, Paul Rübig, Angelika Niebler, Robert Musacchio, Jo Leinen, Lena Ek, Peter Liese, Joseph Daul.