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CAN EUROPE CALL TO ACTION

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NGOs demand a fully renewable energy system by 2040 in Europe

Governments must secure unparalleled and sustainable growth of solar and wind energy to avoid climate breakdown

We are not on track to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement and avoid the worst impacts of climate change - but it is not too late.

We are confronting the realities of a rapidly heating planet. The growing intensity of deadly floods and heatwaves, inundated cities and other dire impacts serve to ring a collective fire alarm louder than ever before. We need to take immediate action to be able to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C and avert the most dangerous impacts of climate change. In light of its historic emissions and enormous capacity to act, the EU can and must reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2040, while asserting leadership in global joint efforts to achieve the Paris Agreement goal. This requires rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems.

100% renewable energy is key: The transition of our energy system will need to be based on a) strong action to substantially reduce the amount of energy we consume; (b) a rapid phase-out of all fossil fuels; (c) a massive increase of sustainable renewable energy to fully cover the remaining energy demand. It must and can address at the same time environmental and social goals. A fully renewable and fair energy future is our lifeline, as well as the only way to achieve a prosperous, sustainable economy. It will unlock a healthier environment while creating local jobs, ensuring greater self-sufficiency and alleviating energy poverty.

The renewable energy potential in Europe is vast and largely untapped: [Numerous energy scenarios](#) show that Europe has abundant renewable energy potentials. Civil

society's [Paris Agreement Compatible](#) scenario shows we can achieve a 100% renewable energy system by 2040 with proven technologies and available solutions. In this fully renewable energy system, Europe will substantially reduce its energy demand and leave behind burning fossil fuels by phasing out coal by 2030 and fossil gas by 2035. Bioenergy use will see a steep decline. Solar and wind will power our future energy system. A broad range of flexibility solutions will ensure a stable supply at any time, regardless of when or where the sun is shining or the wind is blowing. This entails different storage technologies, a well-connected infrastructure, flexible consumers and flexible renewables such as existing hydropower and sustainable biogas.

Renewable electricity is essential: Alongside energy savings, renewable electricity, mainly from solar and wind, will be the backbone of tomorrow's energy system, driving decarbonisation across all sectors, be it buildings, industry or transport. The direct use of renewable electricity is the fastest and most efficient way to achieve a fully renewable energy system. Therefore, the EU should speed up the transition of our electricity supply to a 100% renewable power system by 2035, thereby making renewable electricity the dominating energy carrier across all sectors.

Unprecedented deployment pace of wind and solar is required: The transition from dirty fossil fuels to renewable electricity is still too slow. In 2020, only 38% of the EU's electricity was generated by renewables, only half of it by solar and wind. Yet, renewable electricity generation needs to increase five-fold from 2020 to 2040 for a fully renewable energy system. Concretely for solar and wind energy, this means at least quadrupling the capacities that are installed every year in the EU compared to the past decade. Europe has the potential, the knowledge, the capital and - last but not least - people's support for this far reaching transition.

On the eve of the UN Climate Change Conference COP26 in Glasgow, **we, as Climate Action Network Europe, with our 185 member organisations, representing over 40 million European citizens, are calling on EU governments to enable and manage an unparalleled deployment of wind and solar energy aiming at a fully renewable electricity supply by 2035 and a fully renewable energy system by 2040.** Building on considerable existing achievements and efforts, local authorities and municipalities, investors and businesses also have a major role to play in this 'race-to-the-top' renewal of our energy system.

The transition will only be successful when it is just, participatory, and inclusive: The transition towards a 100% renewable energy system should go hand in hand with fighting inequalities and ensure that people are active participants and benefit from it, in particular vulnerable and low-income households. People's engagement in the transition, such as self-generators, members of energy communities or investors, is vital and should be strongly supported. With the right policies and measures, adequate funding and sound procedures alongside inclusive planning and governance, the benefits of solar and wind can be both anchored locally and enjoyed widely, creating opportunities for every individual and community across Europe.

Together with the protection and restoration of biodiversity: The climate and the biodiversity crises are two sides of the same coin. Climate change is a significant driver of

biodiversity loss while the loss of biodiversity worsens the climate crisis. The efforts to fight climate change and biodiversity loss must and can reinforce each other. As we transform our energy system, increased renewable energy deployment must be managed with full respect for biodiversity and compliance with associated legislation. Good governance with dialogue and public involvement, proper spatial planning, and applying circular design principles will help minimise negative impacts in sensitive areas and create maximum synergies with nature conservation.

The governments of today, not tomorrow, must have the courage to seize the opportunity, with full respect for social and biodiversity considerations, and propel us into a bright new energy era. This is the decade where we have all the tools and resources for decisive action, and everybody is needed to harvest the benefits of 100% renewable energy. The opportunity is unmissable.

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