

European Commission
attn. Mr M. Šefčovič, Vice-President for Interinstitutional
Relations and Foresight
Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

date 12 January 2023

subject European emergency regulation to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy

our reference 172442.01U

Courtesy Translation

Dear Mr Šefčovič,

The members of the standing committee for Economic Affairs and Climate Policy / Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Senate of the States General have taken note with interest of the proposal for a regulation laying down a framework to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy.¹ The members of the GreenLeft (**GroenLinks**), Labour (**PvdA**) and Animal Rights (**PvdD**) parliamentary parties have a number of questions and comments about this proposal in the context of the political dialogue.

Questions and comments of the members of the GreenLeft, Labour and Animal Rights parliamentary parties

The members of the GreenLeft, Labour and Animal Rights parliamentary parties would like to thank the European Commission for the steps it wishes to take to accelerate the deployment of sustainable renewable energy. Like the European Commission, they are concerned about the progress and rapid deployment of sustainable renewable energy as the basis of our energy supplies. At the same time, these members see that biodiversity and the quality of drinking water are already under enormous pressure. In terms of its scope, the biodiversity crisis must be regarded as much more far-reaching than the climate crisis, the first small-scale effects of which are already resulting in many heat-related deaths each year in the Netherlands. In the opinion of these members, it is therefore important to ensure that any steps to accelerate the deployment of sustainable renewable energy are not taken at the expense of the quality of nature or of the quality of the groundwater. They would urge that the care with which the procedures are implemented should not be undermined on account of the desire to speed up the permit-granting process. In this connection, they wish to raise the following questions

¹ COM(2022) 591.

date 12 January 2023
our reference 172442.01U
blad 2

How does the European Commission expect the Netherlands to be able both to meet the objectives and to comply with the legal content of the Birds and Habitats Directives and the Water Framework Directive if the permit-granting process is speeded up? After all, according to these members, the care with which the permit-granting process is carried out in the Netherlands is an important part of the instruments for preventing undesirable developments and thus protecting nature and water quality.²

At the moment, the energy crisis poses a huge social challenge which is exercising the minds of governments throughout Europe. Can the European Commission indicate on what grounds it believes that this crisis is having so much impact on people's lives that it is considering defining sustainable renewable energy as an imperative overriding principle of public interest? Apparently, these members conclude, to such an extent that renewable energy is to take precedence over health and environmental rules which are designed to provide people with the most basic protection.

Does the European Commission agree with the members of these parliamentary parties that the application of Article 16d (overriding public interest)³ for so-called 'go-to' areas for energy from renewable sources will result in more people wishing to refer sustainable renewable energy projects to the courts and will therefore, if anything, slow down the transition? If not, why not?

Does the European Commission agree with these members that hydrogen has yet to prove itself as a fuel when it comes to public acceptance, and that it is therefore very important to ensure that the introduction of this relatively new energy carrier into society is effective and extensive and carried out with proper care? In the opinion of these members, the plan to allow renewable hydrogen to be exempted from careful environmental impact analyses does not send the right message to the general public in terms of gaining their confidence. Would the Committee therefore be prepared to allow the same strict requirements to apply to green hydrogen as to other flammable substances?

The members of the standing committee for Economic Affairs and Climate Policy / Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality await your reply with interest and would be grateful to receive it within **three months** of the date of this letter at the latest.

Yours sincerely,

L.P. van der Linden
Chair of the standing committee for Economic Affairs and Climate Policy / Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

² <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/fluorinated-greenhouse-gases-2021>

³ Article 1 (10), COM(2022) 222.