



Subject: Informal Energy Council: Protect people now and build lasting energy security

Dear Minister O'Brien,

Ahead of the Informal Energy Council in Dublin, the Stop Climate Chaos coalition and the Environmental Pillar welcome the Presidency's focus on energy affordability, electrification, and European energy security and cooperation.

These discussions come at a critical moment. After another summer of extreme heat, drought and wildfires, Europe is heading towards winter once again exposed to volatile fossil fuel prices and geopolitical instability. Households, businesses and public budgets continue to bear the cost of an energy system that remains largely dependent on fossil fuels. Europeans should not have to pay twice for this dependency: through worsening climate impacts and through unaffordable and unpredictable energy bills.

The lesson from successive fossil fuel crises is clear: **Europe needs to protect people from immediate fossil fuel price shocks while tackling the structural fossil fuel dependence that causes them.**

We therefore urge Energy Ministers to use the Informal Council to advance the following priorities.

1. Affordability: protect people today and make polluters pay

We welcome the Presidency's focus on how governments can address energy affordability as part of Europe's wider cost of living crisis. With increasing energy costs following the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, doing nothing is not an option. But we cannot tackle high energy prices by reinforcing the very dependence that makes Europe vulnerable to price shocks: fossil fuels.

We call on Ministers to:

- **Address the root cause of high energy prices** and ensure governments' responses are carefully designed not to prolong fossil dependence or subsidise fossil fuel production and consumption.
- **Make full use of national and EU resources, in particular the Social Climate Fund**, to protect vulnerable and low-income people from unaffordable bills while preserving incentives for energy savings. Ireland should finalise and publish Ireland's National Social Climate Plan to allow access to vital funds that directly support vulnerable households, communities suffering from energy poverty and those hit hardest by the ongoing energy crisis. Ireland should also prioritise energy poverty measures for marginalised groups, expand the Warmer Homes Scheme to include HAP tenants, on the condition that a long term lease is offered, and create a targeted retrofit scheme for rural homes that rely on solid fuel, oil or gas boilers, enabling their transition to heat pump systems powered by local solar PV and battery storage.

- **Ensure that those profiting from the energy and climate crisis contribute to paying for the response.** Fossil fuel profits should be captured through permanent profit taxation and revenues recycled towards targeted household support and investments that permanently reduce dependence on fossil fuels and encourage the shift to renewable energy. In recent Ireland Thinks polling, 3 in 4 people thought the introduction of a new EU wide tax on the excess profits of energy companies should be a priority for the Irish EU Presidency, with 42% saying it should be a top priority.
- **Coordinate these efforts at EU level**, building towards a permanent differentiated corporate tax framework for fossil fuel companies. This would also help to finance adaptation and rising climate damages.

2. Reduce energy demand and accelerate renewables and RES-based electrification

Reducing Europe's energy demand is one of the fastest and most cost-effective ways to strengthen energy security and affordability, and to curb dangerous greenhouse gas emissions. [Energy efficiency](#) reduces dependence on fossil fuel and exposure to price and supply shocks, structurally lowers bills for households and businesses, and strengthens industrial resilience. Without the efficiency improvements achieved over the past two decades, EU energy consumption would be around **29% higher today**, while further efficiency gains are projected to reduce the EU's fossil fuel import bill by [€33 billion in 2030 and €70 billion by 2040](#).

We call on Ministers to:

- **Lock in structural reductions in energy demand** by accelerating building renovation, improving efficiency across industry and transport, and enabling demand-side flexibility. Full implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive and Energy Performance of Buildings Directive is therefore essential. Ireland is projected to miss its 2030 EED Final Energy Consumption target, and under current projections will even miss the 2030 target a full 10 years later in 2040. Ireland has reported reductions in energy emissions recently, but electricity imports and total energy demand continue to grow. This is not only at odds with Ireland's EED obligations but with international climate obligations to stay within the Paris Agreement's warming limit.
- **Address luxury uses** with adequate taxation of private jets, frequent flyers and luxury yachts, which in member states still benefit from preferential treatment.
- **Ensure that energy efficiency, renewables and renewables-based electrification advance together.** This requires rapid investment in grids, storage and flexibility, but also the right price signal.
- **Ensure the revised TEN-E framework prioritises people's needs** over national grid operators' interests. To achieve nature-positive renewable electrification based on transparent, climate-aligned EU-wide grid planning.

- **Ensure taxation stops making electricity more expensive relative to gas** and instead incentivise the switch from fossil fuels to renewable electricity, while protecting essential consumption and energy-saving incentives.
- **Ensure network tariffs are fair** to allow consumers to benefit from demand flexibility, to lower overall system costs, without shifting grid costs from large industry and data centres onto households.
- **Ensure the post-2030 energy framework reflects this direction**, through [ambitious and binding renewable energy and energy efficiency targets](#), **robust national accountability and effective delivery mechanisms, and a framework that accelerates renewables-based electrification and fossil fuel phase-out**. Weakening the framework in the name of simplification would increase uncertainty precisely when Europe needs investment and delivery at scale.
- In Ireland, **impose a moratorium on new data centres** connecting to the grid until the electricity system has fully been decarbonised. Prohibit connections between data centres and fossil fuel generation in the proposed Private Wires Bill.

3. Make ending fossil-fuel dependence the foundation of Europe's energy security

Europe's energy and climate security as well as Member States' fiscal sustainability should start with reducing the fossil fuels it needs, rather than diversifying import sources that are creating new dependencies. Every building renovated, renewable project connected, heat pump installed and investment in grids, storage or flexibility reduces Europe's dependence, vulnerability and energy bill.

We call on Ministers to:

- **Move energy security beyond an approach dominated by gas supply and storage** and make [structural fossil-gas demand reduction a core security objective](#). It should be accompanied by a clear and just pathway for the managed phase-out of fossil gas. Ireland should invest in renewable energy infrastructure to achieve a 100% renewable power system by 2035 and drive down gas demand over the next decade to near zero.
- **Ensure energy partnerships with third countries should support this direction rather than create new fossil fuel dependencies**. Cooperation with neighbouring and like-minded countries should prioritise **renewable energy, electricity interconnection, grids, flexibility, energy efficiency, green technologies and sustainable supply chains**, while avoiding new fossil infrastructure and long-term gas commitments that risk locking Europe into another generation of dependency. Ireland should commit to no new fossil fuel infrastructure, including no LNG of any kind.

- **Fully implement the EU Methane Regulation**, integrating methane abatement measures across the EU's main gas suppliers could recover around [20 billion cubic metres \(bcm\) of gas](#), otherwise lost in avoidable methane releases, leaks or venting and flaring events.
- **Join the call for a negotiating mandate on a global fossil fuel treaty**, to promote an urgent, fair and funded phase out of fossil fuels in which no country, community or worker is left behind.

Europe faces a choice. We can continue responding to every geopolitical shock with emergency subsidies, new fossil fuel suppliers and short-term fixes, or tackle the structural vulnerability of our energy system.

The **most durable way to make energy affordable** is to **reduce people's exposure to volatile fossil-fuel prices**. The most **secure energy policy** is one that **ends Europe's dependence on fossil fuels**. And the **strongest competitiveness strategy** is one that gives households and businesses **access to an efficient, flexible, affordable, and renewable energy**.

We therefore call on Ministers in Dublin to put Europe firmly on this path: **protect people now, accelerate energy savings, renewables and renewables-based electrification, and plan the phase-out of fossil fuel dependence**.

Europe should **make this fossil fuel crisis its last one**.

Yours sincerely,



Sara Hurley, Coordinator, Stop Climate Chaos coalition

Stop Climate Chaos is a coalition of 45 civil society organisations campaigning to ensure Ireland does its fair share to tackle the causes and consequences of the climate crisis.



Karen Ciesielski, Coordinator, The Environmental Pillar

The Environmental Pillar is the advocacy arm of the Irish Environmental Network, comprising 36 national environmental organisations, and recognised as one of the five pillars of social dialogue