

To the European Commissioners,
To the Members of the European Parliament,

The European Platform Against Windfarms, « EPAW » was founded in Paris on October 4th, 2008. It was formed at the initiative of French, German, Spanish and Belgian associations, joined more recently by other associations based in the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, and other countries whose numbers keep increasing. The Platform also receives support from all over the world.

EPAW is favourable to renewable energies, when they efficiently reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and the corresponding CO2 emissions, and when they are socially, economically and environmentally acceptable. In order to reach that goal, it is at least imperative that their installation and development be discussed with the local populations.

EPAW deplores the fact that the deployment of some of these renewable energies takes place in the European Union under the pressure of financial or ideological lobbies with the disturbing consequence that the results don't fulfil the fundamental demands of sustainable development.

EPAW notices that windfarms are the most worrying case, draining for decades most of the public funding dedicated to renewable energies without ever having demonstrated their usefulness. Worse, they have contributed to degrade the existing environment.

EPAW wishes to draw your attention to the fact that windfarms have shown time and again that they are in radical conflict with the European policy of sustainable development:

- the effect of windfarms on the reduction of CO2 emissions is insignificant, because of the need to resort to thermal power plants to regulate the intermittence of electricity generated by wind turbines. For the same reason, wind energy does not significantly reduce the costly, and increasingly sensitive, imports of fossil fuels,
- windfarms make it necessary to reinforce the grid of HT power lines across Europe and to build new regulation facilities, as experience shows that grid stability is threatened by the erratic nature of wind energy. Besides their cost, the new high tension lines cause additional and unacceptable aggressions to the environment,
- windfarms devour colossal amounts of public funds to maintain an artificial market necessary to its very existence, yet wind energy remains economically non-viable after several decades of technical progress. Moreover, the excesses of this artificial market allows scandalous personal fortunes to be built at the expense of taxpayers and consumers without any real ecological benefit, quite the contrary,
- windfarms significantly alter Europe's natural and cultural heritage by their deleterious effect on landscapes and historical buildings. They also have a severe

- impact on property values, which in the case of homeowners often represent the fruit of a lifetime of work,
- windfarms degrade the local residents' quality of life, even altering the health of some of them,
 - windfarms strongly imperil wildlife, and destroy natural habitats that had so far been preserved from the destructive powers of earth moving equipment, concrete, and pervasive human activity.

Confronted with the blatant contradictions existing between the sustainable development objectives of the EU and the alarming results of its present windfarm policy, EPAW solemnly requests from the European Union:

1. An immediate moratorium on all windfarm projects in the EU, including those already authorized.
2. A reality check on the results of EU windfarm policy to date by a group of credibly independent experts, particularly with regards to:
 - Carbon savings:

They shall evaluate the quantities of carbon dioxide emitted during the construction, maintenance, surveillance and dismantling of windfarms. They shall also assess the indirect effects of their exploitation, e.g. the quantity of CO₂ emitted while regulating the intermittence of wind-generated electricity, which requires the operation of fossil fuel power plants 24h/7.

A summary shall then estimate from the above the real level of contribution of EU windfarm policy to the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol.

- Economic impact:

They shall evaluate the direct and indirect costs of the deployment of windfarms, detailing its overall impact on public expenditure and, over the long term, on electricity bills for households, industries, and other consumers.

The cost analysis shall include:

- subsidies, fiscal advantages, and regulated tariffs that benefit the windfarm industry,
- the cost of building fossil-fuel power plants to balance unstable wind power, HT power lines to link the windfarms to the grid, regulating centres to manage the wind's unpredictable variability, and the upgrading of electricity networks.

As windfarms drain considerable amounts of public funds, EPAW demands that an audit be made of the industry's trades and practices. Shall be verified, among other things, the companies' structures and their eventual use of fiscal havens.

- Social impact:

Experts shall investigate the impact of windfarms on human health, with the participation of a representative panel of local residents.

Others shall appraise the evolution of the living environment of local residents, and assess the impact of the presence of windfarms on the value of land and buildings, as well as the tourist attractiveness over time of regions where windfarms have been deployed.

- Environmental impact:

The reality check will include an inventory of natural habitats degraded by the installation of windfarms, and of landscapes sacrificed in violation of the European Landscape Convention, which stipulates: « As a reflection of European identity and diversity, the landscape is our living natural and cultural heritage, be it ordinary or outstanding, urban or rural, on land or in water. »

EPAW considers unacceptable that the European institutions would promote the ruination of the European landscape, and its uniformisation into a brown zone by thousands of windfarms stretching from Lapland to Gibraltar, some of them planted in the heart of natural reserves established at great cost by the EU's Natura 2000 programme.

Ornithologists and biologists, explicitly recognized by EPAW for their impartiality, shall objectively evaluate the effects of windfarms and their HT power lines on wildlife and its habitat.

Finally the reality check shall look into the pollution of ground cover, topsoil, streams and rivers, as well as ground water by the construction and exploitation of windfarms, including accidents such as the spilling of lubricants by leaking or collapsed wind turbines. Other aspects to be investigated:

- the massive use of concrete for the base of wind turbines,
- the construction of access roads causing sedimentation in streams and rivers, with resulting impacts on the reproduction of trouts and salmons,
- the periodic spreading of cleaning agents on wind turbine towers and blades,

- the landslides, as recorded in Ireland,
- the « accidental spills » of used lubricants and other agents into the surroundings.

EPAW stresses the fact that the ill-conceived and poorly implemented EU windfarm policy adds oil to the fire of euroscepticism. Informed EU public opinion have the feeling that European institutions have set their hearts on industrial wind power without taking the time to weigh its exploitation constraints and its real impact on the environment. In the vital context of building the EU's energy base, a choice solely based on the myth of clean wind-produced electricity as promoted by the windfarm lobby is inconceivable to learned European citizens.

It would be extremely regrettable if the European Union would refuse to perform a reality check on its windfarm policy now that the negative effects of industrial wind turbines are known, affecting people, national budgets, the competitive capacity of European businesses, and the environment.

We thank you for your interest in listening to the concerns of EU citizens, and are

Respectfully yours,

European Platform Against Windfarms

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