



**Friends of
the Earth
Europe**

Brussels
March 2021

Open Letter: European request for explicit Green party support for Community Energy in Germany

Dear Mrs Annalena Baerbock and Mr Robert Habeck,

I am writing to you as the Director of Friends of the Earth Europe, the largest grassroots environmental network in Europe, uniting more than 30 national organisations including *BUND*, *Friends of the Earth Germany* with thousands of local groups across the continent. We, in Friends of the Earth Europe, are campaigning **to speed up the development of the people-owned energy transition.**

I am writing to you to seek your support to make it a central part of the Green Party's platform this year.

We have noticed with alarm the **slow-down** in the development of Bürger*innenenergie in Germany in recent years. In a country that **was once a shining light for how an energy transition could be popular and local**, we are currently not aware of a single community-owned wind project under construction. The small amount of renewables that is currently being installed is being built by the traditional large renewable developers. Resulting problems with public acceptance are already clear.

Germany is failing to provide secure and sustainable jobs for the future Green economy. We see a huge industry that employs people and contributes to the German economy being allowed to fail. There are politically agreed nuclear and coal phase-outs (coal not soon enough of course). Despite these phase-out plans, the capacity required to meet the coming energy demand is not being built. **This will very soon be a national renewable energy crisis, potentially while you are in government.**

It is in all our interests to avert such a crisis. To be successful the Energiewende must be popular. It is not enough to speak about public acceptance, we need to think about public support and public participation in the transition. A successful energy transition will change much about our everyday lives, about how we consume energy in our homes, how we move and how we keep warm. If these changes feel imposed upon citizens this will not work. A top-down imposed energy transition runs the danger of being unpopular. It will meet resistance and become stalled.

What happens in Germany has a noticeable impact on Europe's energy transition, including beyond Germany's borders, and this is why we are writing to request your explicit support.

Firstly, other countries look to Germany to lead by example. Germany is seen as a forerunner and an innovator, especially in areas related to technology. Where Germany can succeed others will emulate and try to follow. The narrative about what is possible in Germany influences the whole story about what is possible in Europe in general. In Friends of the Earth Europe, we are very concerned that a narrative will start to develop that "Germany tried the Energy Transition and gave up, if it doesn't work there then it won't work anywhere else in Europe". For the overall progress of the European Energy Transition we need an effective, people-led Energiewende.

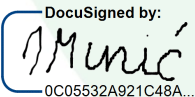
The second major impact Germany has, is as a powerful political force within EU energy policy. The position that Germany takes as a member state in the Energy Council or EU negotiations have a significant impact on the outcome. In recent years we have seen the German position on issues such as energy-sharing and self-consumption playing a negative role on the outcomes of EU level policies. We would like to see progressive German positions on energy, that push the EU towards a faster, popular people-owned transition.

We urge you to make a popular and swift energy transition central to your policy platform for this election. What is missing is a clear and strong commitment from your party to reinvigorate the Energiewende and to put communities and citizens back at the heart of it.

I and my team would be very keen to discuss our concerns and recommendations further with you in a meeting. (*Online in these times*).

We are aware that this is a busy and exciting year for you as you prepare for Federal elections. With this work we wish you every success.

Yours sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Jagoda Munic
Director
Friends of the Earth Europe