

Civil Society Position on Future Energy Cooperation between Norway and Germany

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Europe is facing ramifications of the Russian war against Ukraine that fueled an **ongoing energy crisis** with unknown supply shortages, massive price jumps and rising energy poverty. States are currently reshuffling their energy security strategies to accommodate **new realities** while climate concerns and the sustainable energy transition are taking a backseat.

An alliance of German and Norwegian environmental organizations therefore calls on governments to **provide clean, affordable energy** to all, and to not support hydrogen produced from fossil fuels.

We expressly share the German Government's goal to rapidly become independent of Russian energy imports that currently bankroll Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Since the beginning of the war, civil society has made numerous proposals on how a **more efficient and economical use of energy** can contribute to this goal in the short term. However, the German Government fails to react in a targeted manner and instead creates a long-term oversupply of natural gas by constructing new gas import infrastructure. This jeopardizes climate goals and the transition to a green hydrogen economy at the expense of taxpayers and more sustainable investments such as in energy efficiency. In Norway, electricity prices have skyrocketed due to low temperatures, high consumption, and near full utilization of production capacity at the power stations. At the same time, both countries face hurdles with the expansion of wind energy installations.

Germany and Norway have a long history of trading energy, mainly because Norway exports oil and gas to Germany and Europe. Europe relies on Norway to keep up the supply during this energy crisis. In addition, since 2021, the NordLink interconnector connects the Norwegian power market with the European Single Energy Market, thereby providing stability for the grid.

An alliance of Norwegian and German environmental organizations **supports the [joint initiative of Norway and Germany](#)** to develop a common hydrogen market, increase shares of renewable energy, transform industry and create new green jobs. Such a partnership of Norway and Germany holds great potential for a successful energy transition in all sectors.

However, the alliance asks that future energy cooperation between Norway and Germany **focuses solely on renewable electricity and green hydrogen and exclude any plans for blue hydrogen or liquid natural gas**. The ramp-up of a green hydrogen economy builds upon renewable energy installations and electrolyzers while blue hydrogen would rely on continued and new gas extraction – often in high-risk arctic environments – as well as on CCS and CO₂-infrastructure. The risk of stranded assets and a **lock-in into gaseous fuels and greenhouse gas emissions** outweighs any advantage of availability supposedly associated with blue hydrogen.

Regarding economics, green hydrogen will likely be more competitive than blue hydrogen and available on similar time frames.¹ **Only a green hydrogen ramp-up comes with green technologies**, the necessary progress in renewable energy shares and incentives for energy efficiency, which are the pillars of our future energy system. Blue hydrogen is only a bridge to continued fossil dependencies and therefore no transition fuel.

We ask the German and Norwegian Governments to focus future cooperation instead on the expansion of renewable energies like **offshore wind projects**, in accordance with nature conservation areas in the North Sea, and on power-to-gas technologies. Green electricity and green hydrogen are prerequisite to achieving climate goals and the industrial transformation. We therefore support the planned feasibility study on a **hydrogen pipeline** delivering hydrogen from Norway to Germany so long as the hydrogen transported will be green. Such a project has the potential to boost a green hydrogen market across both countries once sufficient renewable energy capacities are available and direct-electric applications are being decarbonized.

A strong energy partnership between Norway and Germany can offer **long-term and sustainable solutions** to challenges of the energy transition as well as to the ongoing energy crisis. Norway cannot deliver sufficient gas volumes to replace Russian exports to Europe. This would be no sustainable solution anyhow. We therefore **strongly oppose any plans of new gas extraction fields** offshore. We must not solve one crisis by exacerbating another, but aim at the most sustainable solution for both climate and energy security.



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¹ IEEFA.org, May 2022, *Russia Sanctions and Gas Price Crisis Reveal Danger of Investing in “Blue” Hydrogen - Gas-derived Hydrogen Increases Imports and Prices, Adding More Risk to Europe’s Security of Supply*, available (22/06/22) at <https://ieefa.org/resources/russia-sanctions-and-gas-price-crisis-reveal-danger-investing-blue-hydrogen>;

Longden et al. (CCEP), March 2022, *‘Clean’ hydrogen? An analysis of the emissions and costs of fossil fuel based versus renewable electricity based hydrogen*, available (22/06/22) at <https://crawford.anu.edu.au/publication/ccep-working-paper/18648/clean-hydrogen-analysis-emissions-and-costs-fossil-fuel-based>