

Statement - Young Leaders'
Meeting 2026

Our Vision on European Strategic Energy Autonomy

Introduction

This statement sets out Young Liberal Leaders' position on European strategic autonomy, with a focus on strengthening the **European Union's long-term resilience, diversifying and securing its energy supply**, and **safeguarding its economic competitiveness** while upholding **liberal democratic values**.

We, the undersigned, believe that **this must be the ultimate goal of European energy policy**, and hereby affirm our support for the solutions and principles herein articulated.

The statement was drafted during the ELF - LYMEC Young Leaders' Meeting, held on 11-12 September 2026 in The Hague, The Netherlands.

We believe that:

- **Secure, abundant, and affordable** energy is the foundation of an independent Europe. It underpins a **resilient industrial base** and enables Europe's **economy to thrive**.
- True energy autonomy will require a **unified European response** that tackles challenges on several fronts at once.
- Strategic energy autonomy is essential for ensuring a **sustainable geopolitical future** for Europe, **free from influence and control from Russia** and other malign foreign actors, **ensuring that energy cannot be weaponised against Europe** in times of military or diplomatic crises.
- Energy autonomy will not come from a single source. Europe must build an **environmentally responsible energy mix** that is **sustainable, sufficiently reliable, and only uses renewable and nuclear sources in the future**. The makeup of the energy mix is up to the local autonomy and political circumstances.

- Where natural resources are available in Europe, it is better for **domestic providers** to utilise those resources **under necessary social, environmental, and political regulations, rather than importing those resources** from external actors whose human and environmental impacts are under-regulated and more damaging. **Exporting the impact** of European energy consumption and production is **not a solution to the long-term problem.**
- Europe's access to fundamental energy resources is limited, which necessitates a **certain level of import** from third countries. In such situations where this is unavoidable, Europe must take steps to **minimise exposure to malign actors** and **minimise dependency on any single providers.**
- **Renewable energy**, such as wind and solar, are increasingly **cheaper** and more **sustainable** than traditional energy sources. **Investment in these and new technologies is essential** to decreasing European energy dependency and providing long-term energy security to all of Europe.
- **Collaboration between European states and multilateral investment will be foundational to the creation of strategic autonomy** – no single state can hope to build long-term energy autonomy on its own.

- Existing European plans for the expansion of CO2-neutral energy sources and the building of strategic energy autonomy have made progress in recent years, but have **suffered from lack of investment, excessive bureaucracy, and forthright political conviction.**
- Achieving **true European energy autonomy** will be a **long-term project** that is going to span across **multiple state and European governments.** It is therefore vital that plans are constructed with this timeframe in mind and are made, as far as is possible, **resilient to sudden amendments by new governments.**

We call for:

- A **review of existing energy autonomy plans** in Europe, that recognises the realities of the progress made and the challenges that have hampered further success.
- A **continent-wide assessment of the sources of energy resources traded in Europe**, identifying hostile, corrupt, and criminal providers and setting in motion urgent measures to reduce, and eventually remove entirely, any dependency on those sources.

- **Practical and realistic discussion** on how European natural resources can be **responsibly utilised, minimising negative impacts**, as an alternative to exporting those impacts to global communities through resource importation from ideologically unaligned third-countries.
- **The expansion of investment and deployment of renewable energy sources**, such as wind and solar, and their storage and transportation with **collective European funding** under an **overarching European framework**. This should not be limited to large, multilateral projects, but should include **state and community level deployment** of renewable technologies, **encouraged by incentives**.
- The **expansion of nuclear energy provisions** and the **cessation of existing plant closures** where decommissioning is not essential, taking **local technical and political contexts** into account. Europe should **invest in nuclear technology development** and create more **efficient nuclear power plants**, while **cutting red tape** where possible to do so safely, and in the **training and education** of nuclear energy experts.

- A **targeted commitment to the research and deployment of low-carbon and renewable hydrogen**, specifically to **decarbonize hard-to-abate industrial sectors** and ensure a reliable supply of energy from renewable sources. To minimize costs and transport inefficiencies, Europe must **foster localized hydrogen infrastructure** that also serves as long-term energy storage. Furthermore, we call for a **technology-neutral approach to synthesis**: by **leveraging renewable surpluses** and, where applicable, **existing nuclear baseload**, Europe can drive down clean hydrogen production costs and **maximize its zero-emission energy output**.
- European energy grids to be **better connected and integrated**, allowing for states to **share surplus energy** and providing **energy security through collective resistance** to global shocks or targeted attacks on any one state's energy infrastructure.
- The creation of a **European strategic energy reserve**, to be employed in times of emergency when imports of different types of energy become limited or cease completely.

- The strengthening of European energy security through **deeper market integration, diversified supply, and closer cooperation** between European allies. This should happen through **open and competitive energy markets**, facilitating cross **border trade and investment**, while at the same time encouraging European energy producers to supply the European market by **removing regulatory barriers** and improving **existing infrastructure**.

Conclusion:

Strategic energy autonomy is of **fundamental importance** to the advancement of **liberal democracy, our economy**, and the **security** of Europe.

By applying **practical, liberal policies** to the challenges we face, Europe can **minimise the cost of energy to consumers, break our dependencies on hostile actors**, and transform our continent into the **world leader of energy research and development**.

We, the undersigned, believe that **this must be the ultimate goal of European energy policy**, and hereby affirm our support for the solutions and principles herein articulated.



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