

EREF Open letter: Hydropower as key energy source for climate neutrality and the preservation of biodiversity in Europe

Brussels, 1 March 2023

Dear Ambassador Lars Danielsson, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the European Union,

Dear MEP Markus Pieper,

Dear MEP Christian-Silviu Buşoi,

Dear Commissioner, Kadri Simson,

Dear EPP Frans Timmermans,

Dear Commissioner, Virginijus Sinkevičius,

Cc: MEP Nils Torvalds, MEP Pascal Canfin, Shadow rapporteurs from the ITRE Committee for the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive,

We thank you very much for your support so far for the hydropower sector. On behalf of EREF's Small Hydropower (SHP) Chapter, we ask you to continue your support by taking the following points into account in the upcoming Trilogue negotiations:

- No further restrictions or tightening of the existing regulations for hydropower. The Renewable Energies Directive (RED) must promote all kinds of renewable energies.
- No technology should be discriminated, as only the mix of **all renewables** leads to security of supply. The restrictions of Article 29b for hydropower as proposed by the European Parliament should therefore be deleted.
- Hydropower, like all other renewables, must become part of the acceleration areas (or go-to-areas). Discrimination and splitting off such an important renewable energy from the other renewables is counterproductive to the EU goals of decarbonisation.

The European Commission's REPowerEU proposal regards, among others, the acceleration of the deployment of renewable energy by designating go-to areas for renewable projects as main tool to increase Europe's energy independence and to speed up decarbonisation.

The potential exclusion of hydropower from the so-called “go-to” areas would go against the principles set out in REPowerEU and undermine the success of a carbon-neutral EU. Such an exclusion would also expropriate an important local and regional contribution towards the energy system transformation towards a 100% renewable energy-based society. It would be a systemic error to discriminate some renewable energy technologies “cum grano salis” and undervalue their important social and environmental benefit for the local integrated system change, also under the current acceleration quest.

Hydropower currently supplies around 32 % of renewable electricity in Europe, contributing directly to replace coal, gas and nuclear power and enabling the integration of other renewables into the electricity system. Hydropower has also an important economic impact. More than 70% of the world’s hydropower technology comes from Europe, and every country in the EU (but not only) has its own plant manufacturers, creating thus also jobs for local communities.

We thank in you in advance for your consideration and support.

With best wishes,

Prof. Dr. Dörte Fouquet
EREF Director

Ghislain Weisrock
Spokesperson of EREF’s SHP Chapter