

Intervention de l'Ambassadeur de France en Norvège

Sommet ONS du 28 au 30 août 2022
French Norwegian Cleaner Energy Forum
Changement climatique et indépendance énergétique

Dear participants,

I am delighted to be with you all today for this forum on clean energy in the context of the ONS Summit.

Currently, European countries face two major issues for our common economic and political future:

- **climate change**
- **energy independence.**

They are closely related and should be treated as such.

On the one hand, latest assessments published in April by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC/GIEC) emphasized the need for global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to decline rapidly after their peak of 2025.

On the other hand, the unprovoked and unlawful Russian attack against Ukraine on February 24th confirmed the relevance of the reinforcement of European sovereignty in all fields, starting with the energy sector.

These are also two emergency situations.

So the question is, how do we align environmental imperatives and energy independence through investments in renewables and other clean energy sources, as well as demand-side measures, like energy efficiency and sobriety. This is the time for governments, companies and consumers to intensify efforts to develop clean energy.

As a matter of fact, France and Norway are already both undertaking major projects in this direction.

Bearing in mind these major priorities, I will focus on these aspects:

- 1) What the French EU Presidency has achieved during the first semester in terms of clean energy with regard to our climate ambitions;
- 2) What the EU and the member states have decided to increase our energy independence.
- 3) What France and Norway are currently doing to accelerate the growth of clean energy in their respective economies.

I) First, on energy transition significant progresses for have been made during the EU French Presidency in the first half of this year

As you all know, the European Union is acting with determination on the path to greening our energy sources, striving to be the first climate-neutral continent. When we prepared the program of our EU Presidency, we stressed that it was

necessary to combine the fight against climate change with an objective of « strategic autonomy », as energy independence and clean energy have to progress hand in hand.

Six main projects have made significant progress in this direction during the French Presidency of the European Union.

1/ First, the European Green Deal, a plan to reach zero emission by 2050.

2/ Then, the “Fit for 55” package of legislative measures, which would lead to a 55% reduction of European countries’ carbon emissions by 2030, in line with the Paris Agreements.

3/ The Council's agreement on a carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM), which was reached during the ECOFIN on March 15th, is also a major result for Europe.

It will accelerate both the decarbonation of our industry and protect it against the unfair competition of companies in continents less active than Europe in terms of carbon pricing.

This is a “world first” and a fundamental element of the “Fit for 55” adjustment package.

4/ Then, the Council's agreement on the Company Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) was obtained at the Competitiveness Council on February 24th.

This directive bears witness to the ambition for a responsible industry and for the ecological transition of our European companies.

5/ Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI) have also made substantial progress, in particular in the energy sector, with a lot of projects that will be financed for hydrogen production.

6/ Last but not least, an agreement during the Council on March 17th, recorded the setting up of a European battery production industry initiative.

Norway joined this initiative on June 27th, and will thus attend ministerial meetings, which opens the door to many collaboration opportunities.

II) EU and EU member states have also addressed the matter of energy sovereignty.

As you have probably seen, in the wake of the conclusions of the Versailles Summit on March 10th and 11th, a RePower EU package was announced on May 18 in this direction: roughly €200 Bn will be invested to end the EU's reliance on Russian oil and gas by 2027.

And you have probably seen as well that an agreement was reached by the Heads of States and Governments at the European Council taking place on May 30 with three main features:

- 1) decreasing by 90% the bloc's oil imports from Russia in six months;
- 2) accelerating the transition towards renewable energy (with an objective of 45% of renewable energy by 2030 instead of 40%);

- 3) reducing energy consumption by more than originally planned (-13% by 2030 instead of -9%).

It was further discussed and confirmed by the Energy Council on July 26 with an agreement of a reduction of gas consumption by 15% between August 1st of this year and March 31st, 2023. We are thus entering a new world, in which ties between democracies and dictatorships will be severed, provoking significant consequences on energy starting with energy prices, particularly, fossil fuels.

It is therefore even more necessary to reduce our use of fossil fuels.

III) **In harmony with the European objectives, both France and Norway have high ambitions for the green transition of the industry, in particular through four priorities: offshore wind, hydrogen, carbon capture and storage and batteries**

This is highlighted by the recent Roadmap for a Green Industry presented by the Norwegian government on June 23rd and by the France 2030 initiative launched in October 2021.

Norway and France have a lot in common as far as clean energy activities are concerned.

1/ Regarding offshore wind, Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre confirmed in this roadmap that Norway would allocate areas for 30 GW of production by 2040.

In France, our similar ambition is to reach 40 GW of offshore wind by 2050.

2/ As for hydrogen production, the production of blue hydrogen will be encouraged and supported by the Norwegian government, thanks to Norway's long experience in gas and in carbon capture and storage.

Green hydrogen too will be a priority in Norway. In the France 2030 plan, we have also set ourselves the goal of being one of the leaders in green hydrogen production, thanks to our nuclear energy that will allow decarbonised electrolysis.

3/ Moving on to the subject of carbon capture and storage, I am impressed to see the strength of the Norwegian government's efforts to encourage the development of the related technologies, for instance through the Longship project together with the Joint Venture Northern Lights (Total Energies, Equinor and Shell).

Besides, France and Norway are currently discussing an international agreement in this important field.

4/ Finally, as previously said, it is also very much welcome that Norway recently joined the European Battery Alliance, which will definitely result in enhanced collaboration between companies of our two countries in this area.

To conclude, the dramatic crisis we are facing in Europe must not oppose our short- and long-term objectives:

- For the short-term, we must get out of our dependence on Russian fossil fuels as quickly as possible. For France it means that we will invest more in renewables and nuclear power.

We will also move towards energy sobriety and continue to protect and support households and firms to cope with rising prices.

- By doing that, we will at the same time move faster towards our medium- and long-term objective to make our continent a carbon neutral and ecological powerhouse.

In this context, it is reassuring to see that the Norwegian and French initiatives and the European measures packages being implemented are all on the same page in the field of clean energy and renewables.

I am convinced that it will contribute to encourage concrete partnerships between French and Norwegian companies in these fields.

Today's forum is a great opportunity in this direction.

I am sure that the panel discussion as well as the pitches of start-ups will give us a lot of examples of what is currently happening in this key sector of clean energy.

Thank you for your attention.