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Delors backs 'enhanced cooperation' on energy

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Published: 06 April 2010

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Not all EU countries are ready to embark on a common EU energy policy just yet. But a smaller vanguard of countries could decide to go ahead without delay, according to former European Commission President Jacques Delors.

Europe's existing energy policy is "suboptimal," states Delors in a [policy paper](#) published by Notre Europe, a think-tank founded by the iconic former Commission chief himself.

In his foreword, Delors laments that despite a dramatic increase in regulatory activity designed to establish a broad European energy market and fight climate change, the European Union has struggled to develop a common energy policy.

"The national solutions adopted by member states [...] have proven inadequate to the task and have increased the risk of diverging and even conflicting responses to common challenges," Delors writes.

Without naming Russia, Delors says that to ensure that no "third country" can engage in targeted reductions of energy supplies, the EU must present a single interface in its relations with its external partners.

"In the wake of the recent difficult treaty revision process, not all EU states may be ready to embark upon this route just yet. If this proves to be the case, those states wishing to move forward without delay must be able to do so."

A differentiated approach of this kind is not without precedent, Delors continues. It has been used, in the past, to make major strides forward in the European project, including the Schengen area and the single currency, he writes.

Delors, who is often referred to as one of the 'fathers of Europe', was one of the architects of the euro currency during his term as Commission president (1985-1994). The Schengen agreement of 1985 was signed independently of the European Community framework, between ten of the then twelve members. The Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 subsequently incorporated Schengen into mainstream EU law.

"Efforts to build a coherent and effective common policy must get under way now," declares Delors, suggesting that this could be done within the framework of enhanced cooperation defined by Article 20 of the Treaty on European Union.

Delors spells out the priorities for countries that wish to move forward as follows:

- Developing ambitious economic instruments to finance common research and development projects on alternative energies;
- deepening and structuring cooperation in Europe-wide energy networks, and;
- setting up oil and gas purchasing groups to facilitate procurement from foreign suppliers, thereby strengthening and focusing EU foreign policy in this field.

Although these steps may appear technical and limited in scope, they will lead to decisive changes, paving the way for greater cooperation and solidarity in the energy field, Delors writes.

LINKS

NGOs and Think-Tanks

- Notre Europe: [Policy Proposal by Jacques DELORS: Towards a European Energy Community](#)

Press articles

- EurActiv France: [Le think tank de Jacques Delors plaide pour la création d'une Communauté de l'énergie](#)

Letters To The Editor

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Javier Garcia Brega,
Spanish Renewable Energy Producers Association (APPA)

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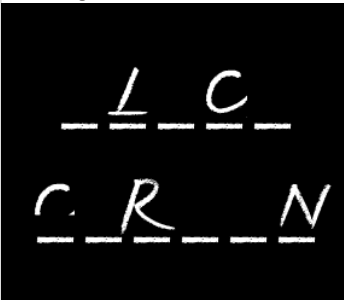
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