

Press release
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Nearly nine out of ten Europeans want to see the energy transition make progress

- In the run-up to the 2024 European elections, Catherine MacGregor, Chief Executive Officer of ENGIE, presents her views and recommendations on accelerating the energy transition.
- Published by French think tank Fondation Jean-Jaurès, this advocacy paper is based on a survey conducted by Institut CSA among European citizens in ten countries on their knowledge and perception of the energy transition.

“On the eve of decisive elections for Europe, we wanted to take the pulse of citizens on the issue of energy transition. Contrary to what the political debate may sometimes suggest, the CSA study shows that, for the vast majority of Europeans, the energy transition is under way and should continue to make progress. But the movement remains fragile due to doubts about its feasibility and fears about its cost. We need to listen to these reservations and we have a role to play in responding to them. Convinced of the possibility of a transition that is affordable and desirable for all, we are proposing a number of concrete measures to European decision-makers to ensure that Europe regains its leadership in energy transition,” says Catherine MacGregor, Chief Executive Officer of ENGIE.

The energy transition: European citizens are well-informed and mobilised

The increasing number of extreme weather events demonstrates the urgent need to make a success of the energy transition. **While 88% of Europeans claim to know the concept of energy transition**, the CSA survey for ENGIE¹ reveals major disparities in knowledge between countries.

The energy transition is mobilising Europeans: 64% say they are already taking action, in particular by limiting their energy consumption for 69% of them.

When asked which players are most likely to be involved in this major transformation, Europeans mention their government first (25%), followed by major industrial groups producing and supplying energy (20%), confirming the essential role played by the private sector.

A movement under way, but raising fears that need to be addressed

Nearly **nine out of ten Europeans believe that the energy transition should continue to make progress**. However, significant disparities emerge. While countries in southern Europe (Portugal, Spain and Italy) or the United Kingdom are keen to go further in the energy transition,

¹Methodology: survey conducted by Institut CSA between 7 and 11 March 2024 among 10,000 individuals aged 18 and over in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium and Romania.

countries in northern Europe (Belgium and the Netherlands) have more reservations. For example, 15% of Germans believe that backsliding may occur.

Europeans consider Europe's climate targets to be over-ambitious, and 48% of them doubt our collective ability to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

The main perceived obstacle to speeding up the energy transition is the financial investment involved (for 47% of respondents). It is seen as an opportunity for the planet, innovation and health, but also as a threat to purchasing power for 30% of respondents.

The surprising exception of France

The French know more about the energy transition than their European neighbours.

In addition, **the French are among the most highly mobilised citizens in Europe. They overwhelmingly agree that the move towards energy transition is irreversible.** Almost 50% also say that there is a need to "go further". Lastly, their commitment is already reflected in concrete action, with 75% having put in place measures to support the energy transition, 11 points above the European average.

Uncertainties about the economic context nevertheless weigh heavily on the French, who are primarily concerned about the effects of the transition on their purchasing power.

"Often the victim of self-imposed clichés, France has shed its usual image of being highly sceptical. Compared with other European citizens, the French know more, want more and do more. On the other hand, the 'end of the world versus the end of the month' dilemma, highlighted by the Yellow Vests movement in 2018, finds its full resonance in the study. Similarly, the French have a twofold lack of confidence: in the future and in political institutions. The stakes have changed. We must now demonstrate that the transition can take place and that the future it offers is a desirable one." says Gilles Finchelstein, Secretary-General of Fondation Jean-Jaurès.

Recommendations for European public decision-makers

ENGIE is convinced that an affordable and robust energy transition is possible if it is based on all the levers for decarbonisation: accelerated deployment of renewable electricity and gas, development of the flexibility technologies and infrastructure needed for a carbon-free system, not forgetting efforts to reduce energy consumption and improve energy efficiency.

Given that **77% of European citizens say that the energy transition will be an important factor in their vote for the European Parliament**, ENGIE is putting forward concrete recommendations for European decision-makers to speed up the energy transition. These recommendations fall into five main areas:

1. Integrating cost optimization into European energy strategy

The price of energy is a decisive factor for the competitiveness of business and the purchasing power of European households. For the transition to be accepted, it must be cost-effective. Considering the impact of European public policies on the overall price of energy must be a reflex action in Europe.

2. Filling the blind spots of tomorrow's energy system

In addition to the investment needed for the widespread development of renewable electricity and gas, investment of several tens of billions of euros will be required each year to deploy the electrical grids and flexibility solutions that are essential to a carbon-free system.

3. Making the energy transition a lever for Europe's reindustrialization and competitiveness

The European Union faces many challenges: stepping up its decarbonisation and strengthening its energy sovereignty while ensuring that its economy remains globally competitive. To this end, a balance will have to be struck between the overall cost of the transition and continued use of European subcontractors, without slowing down decarbonisation.

4. Building a coherent, simple, pragmatic regulatory framework

This framework must provide a realistic outlook for Europe, and enable the development of informed public policy, while ensuring that all the players concerned, particularly industry, are consulted in advance.

5. Better targeting transition supportive financing

Whether in the form of European subsidies or national grants, public funding is scarce. It should be used to accelerate the development and scaling-up of less mature technologies and support changes in the habits and behaviour of European citizens, while leaving no one behind.

Read the CSA x ENGIE study and the advocacy paper in full:

<https://www.engie.com/en/news/make-energy-transition-happen>



About ENGIE

ENGIE is a global reference in low-carbon energy and services. With its 97,000 employees, clients, partners and stakeholders, the Group strives every day to accelerate the transition towards a carbon-neutral economy, through reduced energy consumption and more environmentally friendly solutions. Inspired by its purpose ("raison d'être"), ENGIE reconciles economic performance with a positive impact on people and the planet, building on its key businesses (gas, renewable energy, services) to offer competitive solutions to its customers.

Turnover in 2023: €82.6 billion. The Group is listed on the Paris and Brussels stock exchanges (ENGI) and is represented in the main financial indices (CAC 40, Euronext 100, FTSE Euro 100, MSCI Europe) and non-financial indices (DJSI World, Euronext Vigeo Eiris - Europe 120 / France 20, MSCI EMU ESG screened, MSCI EUROPE ESG Universal Select, Stoxx Europe 600 ESG-X).

About Fondation Jean-Jaurès

First among the French political foundations, the Jean-Jaurès Foundation is both a think tank, a political actor, and a history center at the service of all those who defend progress and democracy worldwide. Its objective, as a recognized public utility foundation, is to serve the general interest. To achieve this, it mobilizes public authorities, politicians, experts, as well as citizens. It encourages the exchange of ideas and the sharing of best practices through its debates, productions, and training actions.

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