

OPEN LETTER TO THE EU COMMISSION ABOUT THE ARCTIC STRATEGY

6th of July 2026

Dear Commissioner Costas Kadis, Commissioner Joseph Síkela, Commissioner Dan Jørgensen, Commissioner Wopke Hoekstra, and Executive Vice-President Teresa Ribera,

We are writing to you in our capacity as representatives of financial institutions, the private sector, civil society organisations, and academia, bringing together a broad and cross-sectoral perspective.

We note with concern that the EU may reconsider its position on Arctic oil and gas development in the ongoing revision of the EU Arctic Strategy.ⁱ

Against this backdrop, we urge the European Union to maintain and reinforce its commitment to protect the fragile ecosystems north of the Arctic Circle from new oil and gas infrastructure.

Oil and gas expansion threatens vulnerable Arctic ecosystems

The Arctic is one of the planet's most vulnerable ecosystems and home to unique wildlife, like whales, seals, birds, and some of the world's largest fish stocks. The region is already under pressure, as it is warming four times faster than the global average.ⁱⁱ

Further oil and gas expansion would add pressure to these globally significant ecosystems, by increasing the risk of oil spills and leakages, which could cause irreversible environmental damage while increased shipping, noise and physical disturbance would further intensify the environmental stress on the region.

North of the Arctic Circle, Norway has opened parts of the southern Barents Sea for petroleum activities and the marginal ice zone extends into licensed areas.ⁱⁱⁱ The ecological value of this zone is not defined by the presence of sea ice alone, but by the ecosystems linked to it. The marginal ice zone is a highly productive transition area where key biological processes occur, connecting ice, water masses and the seabed throughout the year.^{iv}

The Barents Sea supports feeding grounds for whales such as fin and sperm whales, as well as seals and dolphins. Several Arctic seabird species breed on Bjørnøya and migrate through the licensed areas, directly linking oil activities to sensitive ecological hotspots in the wider Arctic system. The region is also a key feeding and spawning habitat for species like Atlantic salmon and Greenland halibut, alongside fragile cold-water coral communities on the seafloor.^v

Oil spills, even small ones, can be devastating, particularly for species unable to escape.

In the event of an oil spill, response capacity in the Barents Sea would be severely constrained. Oil spill simulations for the Wisting field show that only around 7.8% of spilled oil could be recovered during winter. Under polar conditions, characterised by darkness, fog,

freezing temperatures, and rough seas, cleanup efforts may quickly become ineffective, allowing oil to spread towards vulnerable areas such as Bjørnøya and Svalbard, with potentially severe and irreversible environmental consequences.^{vi}

An energy system built on domestic renewables and widespread electrification is more resilient than one reliant on fossil fuel imports

New fossil fuel developments in the Arctic are not a near-term response to the current energy crisis. Project lead times average 13 years on the Norwegian continental shelf and are longer in the Barents Sea due to harsh conditions and limited infrastructure.^{vii} Accordingly, new oil- and gas fields in the Arctic are unlikely to reach full production this side of 2040.

If the EU meets its 90% greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2040, existing gas infrastructure in Norway, the UK and the EU will be sufficient to cover demand.^{viii}

In the unfortunate event that the EU would not reach its 2040 targets, the Barents Sea would not serve as a sound fallback strategy. Rystad Energy estimates of resources worth extracting are 78% lower than the estimates of the Norwegian authorities, and despite decades of extensive exploration activities in the Barents Sea, the findings have been very limited. Furthermore, limited existing infrastructure, particularly for gas export, materially constrains commercial development. Existing LNG capacity is fully utilised for decades, while the commercial viability of new pipeline infrastructure depends on the EU entering into long-term gas offtake agreements spanning 20–25 years.^{ix} This will create carbon lock in long after the EU's net zero target in 2050 and risks crowding out renewable energy.^x

We believe that the most effective way to continue to strengthen the EU's long-term energy security is to ramp up EU's electrification and domestic renewable energy and efficiency measures, not to deepen dependence on imported fossil fuels.^{xi}

Arctic oil and gas expansion represents a security threat to Europe

The changing geopolitical situation has heightened the security risks in the Barents Sea, with oil and gas infrastructure being potential targets for hybrid warfare due to the proximity to Russian territory and the Northern Sea Route. Research shows that expanding oil and gas activity in the Barents Sea would increase these risks further.^{xii} This has also been echoed by statements by the Norwegian intelligence and security services that over the last year have warned of a persistent, heightened risk of attacks on the Norwegian continental shelf.^{xiii} If oil and gas flowing from the Norwegian part of the Arctic becomes crucial for Europe's energy security, it would make the infrastructure even more attractive as targets for sabotage and make the EU vulnerable to such attacks.

For these reasons, we encourage the EU to prioritise environmental protection, long-term energy resilience, and security by upholding the moratorium on new Arctic oil and gas and accelerating renewable energy and efficiency measures within Europe.

Sincerely,

Signatories:

Signatories who signed after 27th of May 2026 are marked in blue

Financial Institutions

1. Sampension
2. Nordea Asset Management
3. KLP
4. Velliv
5. Pensam
6. PBU - Pædagogernes Pension
7. Lærernes Pension
8. P+, Pensionskassen for Akademikere
9. Akademiker Pension
10. Triodos Bank
11. Merkur Andelskasse
12. Cultura Bank
13. Swedbank Robur Fonder AB
14. West Yorkshire Pension Fund
15. Länsförsäkringar AB
16. Ircantec
17. Sarasin & Partners
18. KBI Global Investors

Private Sector

19. Energy Modelling Lab
20. Ecosia
21. Patagonia
22. Norion
23. Terje Osmundsen, Empower New Energy
24. Organic Plant Protein
25. Northern Playground
26. Movement AS
27. European Renewable Energies Federation (EREF)
28. Exponential Roadmap Initiative

Trade Unions

29. NTL Norsk Tjenestemannslag - Norwegian Civil Service Union
30. IDA - Danish Society of Engineers
31. Finansforbundet - Financial Services Union in Denmark
32. DM - Danish Association of Masters and PhDs
33. Forbundet Arkitekter og Designere - Union of Architects and Designers
34. Prosa - Union for IT Professionals
35. Sveriges Ingenjörer/ Engineers of Sweden
36. Danmarks Lærerforening

Public Profiles

37. Dr. Robert Habeck, Senior Arctic Analyst at The Danish Institute for International Studies, former German Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Protection
38. Connie Hedegaard, Former European Commissioner for Climate Protection and former Danish Minister for Climate and Energy
39. Laurence Tubiana, CEO of European Climate Foundation (ECF) and France's former Climate Change Ambassador
40. Eva Joly, Norwegian-French lawyer and former member of the European Parliament for Europe Écologie
41. Jens Ulltveit-Moe, Norwegian business leader and founder of the industrial investment company Umoe AS
42. Lars Bonderup Bjørn, CEO of EWII
43. Mogens Lykketoft, Former President of the United Nations General Assembly, during the adoption of the Paris Climate Agreement and veteran Danish parliamentarian and government minister
44. Dr. Paul Shrivastava, Professor of Management & Organization, The Pennsylvania State University and CoPresident, The Club of Rome
45. Olivier De Schutter, former UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights and Chair of New Economies for Eradicating Poverty (NEEP)
46. Ilona Szabó de Carvalho, Co-founder and President, Igarapé Institute
47. Bill McKibben, Author and co-founder of 350.org
48. [George Monbiot, journalist and author](#)
49. [Nina Jensen, marine biologist](#)
50. [Desmond D'Sa, South African environmentalist and winner of the 2014 Goldman Prize](#)

Academia

51. Katherine Richardson, Professor of Biological Oceanography, Globe Institute, UCPH
52. Michael Mann, Presidential Distinguished Professor and Director of the Center for Science, Sustainability and the Media at the University Pennsylvania, US
53. Arild Vatn, Professor Emeritus, Department of International Environment and Development, Norwegian University of Life Science, Norway
54. Berit Kristoffersen, Associate Professor, UiT - the Arctic University of Norway
55. Peter Birch Sørensen, Professor, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
56. Dr. Martin Sommerkorn, Coordinating Lead Author Polar Regions, IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (2019)
57. Dr. Heidi Mogstad, Senior Researcher Christian Michelsens Institute, Norway
58. Professor Vigdis Vandvik, University of Bergen, Norway
59. Prof. Jean-Pierre Gattuso, Research Professor (emeritus), Ocean Acidification and Warming, ocean CO₂ cycling, CNRS, Sorbonne University, and IDDRI, France
60. Hans-Otto Pörtner, Marine biologist and former IPCC Working Group Co-Chair, Alfred Wegener Institute, Germany
61. Claudia Cheng, Researcher, UiT- the Arctic University of Norway, Norway

62. Erik Gomez-Baggethun, Professor in Environmental Governance at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) and a Senior Research Associate at the University of Oxford
63. Bård Lahn, Associate Professor, University of Oslo
64. Camilla Houeland, Research Professor, Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research, Norway
65. Carlos Nobre, Professor of Climate and Sustainability, University of São Paulo, Brazil
66. Jason Hickel, ICREA Professor at ICTA-UAB working on ecological economics, global inequality, and post-capitalist futures
67. Andreas Rasche, Associate Dean and Professor of Business in Society at the CBS Centre for Sustainability, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
68. Andreas Ytterstad, Professor, OsloMet, Norway
69. Charlotte Wrigley, Researcher, University of Stavanger, Norway
70. Liv Sunnercrantz, Associate Professor, University of Stavanger, Norway
71. Oluf Langhelle, Professor, University of Stavanger, Norway
72. Henner Busch, Associate Professor, Lund University, Sweden
73. Tevfik Murat Yildirim, Professor, University of Stavanger, Norway
74. Cecilie Larsen, PhD candidate, University of Stavanger, Norway
75. Anders Riel Müller, Associate Professor, University of Stavanger, Norway
76. Maja Brandt Andreassen, Postdoctoral Research, University of Stavanger, Norway
77. Juan Antonio Samper, PhD Candidate, Lund University, Sweden
78. Jens Friis Lund, Professor, University of Copenhagen
79. Pete Smith, Professor, University of Aberdeen, UK
80. Peter Newell, Professor of International Relations, University of Sussex, UK.
81. Harro van Asselt, Hatton Professor of Climate Law, University of Cambridge, UK
82. Lukas Slothuus, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Sussex, UK
83. Wim Carton, Associate Professor, Lund University, Sweden
84. Kirstine Lund Christiansen, postdoc, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
85. Susanne Ditlevsen, Professor, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
86. Caroline Kuzemko, Professor in the Political Economy of Climate Change, University of Warwick, UK
87. Daniele Vezzelli, PhD candidate, University of Padova - Centre of Excellence Jean Monnet on Just Fossil Fuel Transitions, Italy
88. Dr Alex Megann, Ocean and Climate Scientist, National Oceanography Centre, UK
89. Richard Williams, Professor in Ocean and Climate Sciences, University of Liverpool, UK
90. Andreas Malm, Associate Professor, Lund University, Sweden
91. Kyla Tienhaara, Associate Professor, Queen's University, Canada
92. Louison Cahen-Fourot, Associate Professor of Economics, Roskilde University, Denmark
93. Sebastian Berghald, PhD Researcher in Polar Climate Variability, KU Leuven & UCLouvain, Belgium
94. Ernest Aigner, Postdoctoral Researcher, Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany
95. Nick Fitzpatrick, Postdoc, Aarhus University, Denmark
96. Rubén Vezzoni, PostDoc at University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

97. Teja Šosterič, Research Associate at LMU Munich and editor-in-chief of Environmental History Now
98. Joseph Christopher Proctor, Post-Doctoral Researcher, The Institute for European Policymaking, Italy
99. Mine Islar, Associate Professor, Copenhagen University
100. Vigdis Vanvik, Professor, Biology, University of Bergen, Norway
101. Caroline Anna Salling, Postdoc, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
102. Christian Seiler, Assistant Professor, Queen's University, Canada
103. Graham Whitelaw, Associate Professor, Queen's University, Canada
104. John P. Smol, Professor, Queen's University, Canada
105. Pierre Wokuri, Junior Professor in Political Science, Rennes Institute of Political Studies, France
106. Gaurav Madan, Research Scientist at the National Centre for Atmospheric Science, University of Reading, UK
107. Maja Essebo, Researcher, Lund University, Sweden
108. Federica Ammaturo, PhD Candidate, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Germany
109. Bue Rübner Hansen, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, GAIA/SDU Climate Cluster, University of Southern Denmark
110. Richard Allan, Professor of Climate Science, University of Reading, UK
111. Professor Lyla Mehta, Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, UK and Norwegian University of Life Sciences
112. Inge Røpke, Professor, Aalborg University, Denmark
113. Bo Elberling, Professor, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
114. Torben Røjle Christensen, Professor, University of Aarhus, Denmark
115. Helge Ryggvik, Senior Researcher, University of Oslo
116. Thijs Van de Graaf, Associate Professor, Ghent University
117. Daniele Codato, researcher, University of Padova - Centre of Excellence Jean Monnet on Just Fossil Fuel Transitions, Italy
118. Peder Ressem Østring, PhD Candidate, University of Oslo, Norway
119. Fergus Green, Associate Professor, University College London, UK
120. Ella Gilbert, Climate Scientist & Presenter, UK
121. Jason Glynos, Professor of Political Theory, University of Essex, UK
122. Alex Pazaitis, Postdoctoral Researcher at Ragnar Nurkse Department of Innovation and Governance, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia
123. Juan C. Rocha, Associate Professor, Stockholm University, Sweden
124. Judit Gébert, Associate Professor, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary
125. Naja Dyrendom Graugaard, Associate Professor, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
126. A Siri C Paulsen, PhD-Fellow, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
127. Marte Hofsteenge, Postdoctoral Researcher, Utrecht University, Netherlands
128. Ida Due, PhD Student, Department of Environmental and Resource Engineering, Technical University of Denmark
129. Zsófia Benedek, Senior Research Fellow, ELTE Centre for Economic and Regional Studies, Budapest, Hungary
130. [Angela Carter, Canada Research Chair and Professor, Department of Political Science, Memorial University, Canada](#)

131. Gail S. Fraser, Professor, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University, Canada
132. Anna Zalik, Professor, Global Geography & Environmental Studies, York University, Canada.
133. Amy Janzwood, Assistant Professor, Political Science & Bieler School of Environment, McGill University
134. Julie MacArthur, Canada Research Chair and Professor, School of Interdisciplinary Studies, Royal Roads University
135. Sarah Greene, PhD-Fellow, Balsillie School of International Affairs, University of Waterloo
136. Prof. Kevin J. Flynn – Marine Plankton Ecologist, Professor
137. Dr. Ken Anthony – Marine Ecology, Nature Assets Consulting
138. Katie Kung – Environmental Sciences
139. Professor Chris Hilson – Professor of Law, Director of the Reading Centre for Climate and Justice
140. Prof. Bill McGuire – Professor Emeritus of Geophysical & Climate Hazards, University College London
141. Dr. Pia Carazo – Professor of Public International Law, University for Peace
142. Professor Erika Gubrium – Professor of Social Policy, OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University
143. Professor Dag O. Hessen – Professor of Biosciences, University of Oslo
144. Dr. Anwesha Dutta – Senior Researcher, Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway
145. Professor Iver Neumann – Professor II, Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo

Think Tanks:

146. Carbon Tracker Initiative
147. CONCITO
148. Klimastiftelsen
149. ECCO

Civil Society:

150. Nordic Center for Sustainable Finance, ActionAid Denmark
151. WWF-Norway, WWF European Policy Office
152. ZERO
153. Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
154. Fair Finance Guide International, Fair Finance Guide Sweden
155. Centre of Excellence Jean Monnet on Just Fossil Fuel Transitions
156. Tara Ocean Foundation
157. SAGA, Danmarks partineutrale ungdomsorganisation
158. Nettverk for samfunnsansvar 2.0
159. Italian forum for sustainable Finance
160. Eurocadres
161. Forests of the World

162. ARTPORT_making waves
163. Oxfam Denmark
164. The Danish Society for Nature Conservation
165. Nyt Europa
166. Natur og Ungdom
167. Bellona Europa
168. Klimabevægelsen i Danmark
169. Naturvernforbundet - Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature
170. Seas At Risk
171. Future in our hands North (Norway)
172. Urgewald
173. Framtiden i våre Hender
174. AbibiNsroma Foundation
175. Justice Institute Guyana
176. Quest For Growth and Development Foundation
177. Mothers Rise Up
178. Stand.earth
179. Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society (JACSES)
180. Food & Water Action Europe
181. Rinascimento Green
182. AnsvarligFremtid
183. Oil Change International
184. ReCommon
185. Corner House Research, UK
186. Public Citizen
187. Miljøagentene/Eco Agents
188. Changemaker
189. Greenpeace Nordic
190. Besteforeldrenes klimaaksjon (Grandparents Climate Campaign Norway)
191. Milieudefensie
192. Strategic response on environmental conservation
193. The association for international water studies
194. REScoop.eu
195. Spire
196. Reclaim Finance
197. Save the Children Europe
198. WILPF Norway
199. Oceana in Europe
200. Conexiones Climaticas
201. Jubilee Australia Research Centre

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- i [“EU rethinks opposition to Arctic Oil and Gas drilling”, 2026, Financial Times](#)
- ii [“Unburnable carbon in the rapidly warming Arctic: Mapping spatial relationships among oil and gas development, ecologically sensitive areas and Indigenous Peoples’ lands”, 2026, Daniele Codato et. al](#)
- iii [”Forvaltningsplaner for Norske havområder – Stortingsmelding nr. 20 \(2019-2020\); «Kampen om Iskantsonen» 2024 WWF Norge](#)
- iv [“Iskantsonen”, 2026, Norsk Polarinstitutt](#)
- v [“Geranium. Decision support and visualisation tool for the Arctic Seas Conservation Planners”, WWF; Bear Island, 2023, Ramsar Sites Information Services; “Key Biodiversity Areas factsheet: Bjørnøya \(Bear Island\)”, 2026, Key Biodiversity Areas Partnership: IUCN et al.; «Innspill til PUD II Konsekvensutredning på Wisting», 2022, WWF et al](#)
- vi [“»Miljørisiko – \(MRA\) og Oljevernberedskapsanalyse \(BA\) for Wisting-feltet i Barentshavet», 2022, Equinor Energy AS; “Kunnskap om vind, bølger, temperatur, isutbredelse, siktførhold mv.”, 2012, Iden et. al, Researchgate](#)
- vii [«Notat: Ledetid på norsk sokkels», 2023, Offshore Norge; «Assessing the Economic risks of new oil and gas investments in the Barent Sea”, 2026, WWF Norway](#)
- viii [«EU Gas Insight» 2025, Strategic Perspectives; “Analytiker: Norske gassplaner for Barentshavet risikerer å bli et tapsprosjekt» 2026, Energi og Klima](#)
- ix [«Assessing the Economic risks of new oil and gas investments in the Barent Sea”, 2026, WWF Norway](#)
- x [“The expansion of natural gas infrastructure puts energy transitions at risk” 2022, Kemfert et. Al, Nature Energy](#)
- xi [”Boosting Electrification in Europe», 2025, Strategic Perspectives; «Schockproof: How electrification can strengthen EU energy security, 2025, EMBER; Europe’s energy security on the path to climate neutrality”, 2025, Agora Energiwende](#)
- xii [«Barentshavet i spill. Sikkerhetspolitisk risiko for olje- og gassvirksomhet i Arktis», 2026, Norsk Klimastiftelse](#)
- xiii [«Nasjonal trusselvurdering», 2025, Politiets sikkerhetstjeneste \(PST\)](#)