

## **Agnès Pannier-Runacher**

### **At last, a Minister of Energy to whom we can say Thank You!**

In May 2022, Madame Agnès Pannier-Runacher was appointed Minister for Energy Transition in Madame Borne's government. For the first time in many years, energy and its long-term challenges were under the responsibility of a full-fledged Ministry, with no direct reporting to the Ministry of Ecological Transition, the Ministry of Industry or the Ministry of Economy.

This appointment and positioning came a few months after the Belfort speech in which the French President, by reaffirming the place that nuclear power should hold in an electricity production that will have to be carbon-free, seemed to be putting an end to the 100% renewable energy myth and initiating a return to reason in France's energy and climate policy regarding electric power, the main forthcoming energy vector.

Skepticism was nonetheless in order, both as to the real political will to correct the damaging trends of the recent past, and as to the new Minister's ability to resist pressure and free herself from Euro-Germanic dictates on these issues.

Undeniably, Madame Pannier-Runacher has succeeded in removing any doubts by taking determined action that has turned the tables at a number of levels.

First of all, France has at long last reoriented its prospective studies on the future role of electricity with a return to reason and economic, ecological and technical coherence. In the past, many studies were tainted by the desire of government agencies and departments to please politicians by formulating the conclusions they wished to see, even if this meant distorting certain realities. Shamelessly, and against all common sense, the demand for electricity was projected to decline in the near future. Against all technical reality, the services rendered by the various means of electricity production were blithely equated, ignoring the realities of intermittency and the need for dispatchable means. More realistic scenarios of future needs are finally coming to the fore (Sauvons le Climat's Negatep scenario had shown the way, preaching in the desert of ideological blindness since 2007).

Secondly, thanks to the courage and perseverance of Madame Pannier-Runacher, the European doxa, which had been dominated for years by German and Austrian views, soon counterbalanced German hegemony and integrated the visions of France and other European countries. Clearly, nuclear power, abhorred by both the Germans and the Austrians but at last asserted as a key element of French policy, has ceased to be ostracized in Brussels, and is now included among the technical solutions for tomorrow's low-carbon energy.

Madame Pannier-Runacher's action has undeniably been more than positive in turning French and European policies around for the benefit of the country's and Europe's energy future and global climate preservation.

With the new government, France is turning its back on the principle of an independent Ministry of Energy, placing energy issues under the control of Bercy. This organization also has its logic, but it will de facto deprive the country of 2 major assets:

- A Minister who is entirely dedicated to these issues, and who, particularly in Brussels, can devote the time needed to push through the solutions favorable to France's interests in the face of European obstacles.
- A person committed to her mission, with a thorough grasp of the issues at hand, and who demonstrates courage, perseverance, moderation and efficiency.

The Minister's excellent work was far from completed, and while progress is undeniable, much remains to be done. Without questioning anyone's motivation, we can only regret that she is not being kept in her position to continue her work.

Thank you, Madam Minister, for your distinguished service to French energy and climate policy.

There is no doubt that you will do excellent work in your new position.

We wish your successor as many constructive achievements as yours, along the lines you have mapped out.