A COMPLETELY RENEWABLE FUTURE

COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE BRIEFING

This briefing provides a set of words, phrases, narratives and short paragraphs that can be used to put a convincing and engaging case that "100% renewables" and "zero carbon" are feasible in Europe by 2050. The language is designed to appeal to Greens but also reach across the political centre ground, including social democrats, centrists and the centre right. People with these political perspectives may be convinced climate change is a threat, but still doubt the economy could be run without fossil fuels and nuclear.

USING THE BRIEFING

The briefing is structured around eight concepts, derived from a wide range of sources. Each concept offers a selection of keywords included in the text in bold. The keywords provide the essential building blocks of messaging and operate as "linguistic frames" that embody values and identity. The narratives supplied are only examples of how these words could be used and you should develop your own narratives for specific audiences using the concept and keywords.

BUILDING A NARRATIVE ARC FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

Research shows that cultural values and identity is far more important for forming people's attitudes than data and science. When people's values are challenged or undermined – as often happens around climate change – they react with a defensive opposition or denial. Good communication on renewables is therefore tailored to the existing values of the audience. It validates people's identity, stresses common values, and shows that increased renewables will reflect and strengthen those values.

The narratives are based around a classic narrative arc which appears across the world's mythology, literature and film. It starts with an external challenge that threatens people's values and stability. It leads through a struggle and crisis. It resolves with a defeat of the challenge, a restoration of order and the affirmation of those values.

These approaches can be combined for renewables messaging using the following storyline:

- We are facing real challenges that threaten our values.
- But we are capable, creative and strong. We are proud of who we are.
- Building renewables/taking action on climate change shows us at our very best.
- There are obstacles, but we can overcome them when we work together in our best traditions.
- We will build a new energy system that makes the world more what we want it to be
- And reinforces the values we cherish.

When applying the following narratives, ask: who am I talking to; what are their core values; what makes them proud of who they are; and how is my language and argument validating and reinforcing those values?

GENERAL ADVICE

- **Avoid grandiosity** – try to avoid sensational claims, particularly about what may happen in the future. Research shows that there is widespread public distrust of political claims – a light touch is more likely to be respected.
- **Speak from moral principle** – people respect the Greens for moral principles, but are less trusting of their authority on economics or business. Although the economic case is important, it is better to lead on a positive proposal of a better world.
- **Authenticity** – people yearn for authentic and real politicians, and distrust slogans and slick messaging. Therefore use this toolkit as a guideline but do not overuse it, do not needlessly repeat the keywords, and maintain a natural voice. Apply messages through stories, describe real people, and, in speeches and interviews tell stories from your own life and experience – speaking from the 'I' not the 'We'. Try to always use case studies, show who is talking and avoid anonymous voice-overs in videos.
- **Values and identity** – consider the key qualities that give people in your audience a sense of pride and identity. Incorporate these into your communications: validate and respect them and show how renewables build on their values. Your audience is more likely to respond to language that makes them feel more who they are and the world more the way they think it is.
- **Avoid "insider" language** – environmental advocates consistently use language that is exclusive, or reinforces the prejudice that they do not understand or share common values. For this reason it is even more important to avoid bad language than to apply good language (see section below "words not to use").

PRESENTING FOSSIL FUELS AS TWO SIDES OF THE COIN.

Polarities are deeply embedded in human societies; for example, across different cultures and traditions, light is always representative of life and dark is always death. Fossil fuels and renewables can be presented as a range of opposites. Each time an adjective is used from either side, it reinforces its opposite.

FOSSIL FUELS	RENEWABLES
Dirty	Clean, fresh (air and water)
Dark	Bright (sunlight)
Limited	Abundant, plentiful, forever
Past (but not dead – see below)	New, future, bringing new life, renewal, flourish
Dangerous (working conditions, health and climate change)	Safe (for workers and people)
Wasteful	Efficient

WHO WE ARE

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THE NARRATIVES

CLIMATE CHANGE: CAUSED BY CARBON POLLUTION

CONCEPT:

There are many strong economic or social arguments for renewables as part of the energy mix, but climate change provides the key reason and moral argument for removing all fossil fuels. It is therefore important to mention it, though it may be a lower priority for some audiences. When you do, avoid talking about emissions and greenhouse gases – refer instead to carbon pollution. This frames climate change as a health issue and creates the contrast between dirty fossil fuels and clean safe renewables (see above).

People across Europe, old and young, left and right wing, share a concern that the climate is changing because of the carbon pollution produced by our outdated dirty energy supplies. And they accept and embrace the new cleaner renewable technologies (1).

Climate change is putting our **health, safety** and **environment** at risk and we want something done about it. The weather is **unbalanced**, with extreme floods and heatwaves, and seasons coming at the wrong times. And our economy is **unbalanced** too, with too much dependence on one volatile product, oil. Our financial system tips that **imbalance** even further, with $500 billion in handouts in subsidies for the fossil fuel industries every year (2). It is simply not **fair** that taxpayer's money should be used to cut taxes for the fuels that damage our air and environment.

KEYWORDS:

pollution, dirty/clean, unhealthy/healthy, dangerous/safe, outdated/new, balanced, fair

Stress an inclusive message that concern spreads across the political spectrum.

Health and safety are strong frames, especially for the political centre.

Balance is a central cognitive frame for people of the political centre and it appears consistently in their language in focus groups and political speeches. This is also a key component of the narrative arc: that renewables can bring the world back into balance and stability.

AN AMAZING EXPANSION

CONCEPT:

Create the idea that we are already on a journey and in the middle of the energy transition. Present the shift to renewables as inevitable and positive progress. Use language that promotes positive notions of building and progressing; presenting renewables as the opposite of declining, contracting or destroying.

We're already in the middle of an **expansion** of clean renewable energy. The expansion is far greater than experts – and even green groups – predicted at the beginning of the century. Renewables are the fastest **growing** part of the energy system. Despite all the expectation and money lavished on the nuclear industry, six times more renewables have been added to the system than nuclear power in the last two decades – faster, more efficiently and cheaper (3).

In just fifteen years, wind and solar have grown into **booming** industries. As they have done so, the costs have plunged lower and lower. Solar power – dismissed as the most expensive of all renewables less than a decade ago – is on track to be competitive with fossil fuels within just a couple of years (4).

When people work together amazing things can happen. **Forward looking** European governments gave renewables support when they needed it and established a **sensible framework for growth**. Business responded with investment and innovation that forced down costs and expanded **choice** for customers. Each sector did what it does best.

Centrists respond well to language that respects balanced and mutually supportive roles for government/business and consumer.

In every country where people have participated in the shift to renewables, there is now overwhelming public support for further **expansion** (5). When people can feel part of these changes they want more.

We **make** and **build** things – it's what we do so well. And when we want to change we can **rebuild** and **rethink** who we are and how we live – it's what we have done many times before. They are called renewables with good reason: we will **renew** our entire energy sector and, with strong leadership, we are **able** to do it.

All cultures have narratives around production, innovation and hard work.

KEYWORDS:

expand, build, grow, construct, choice, booming, able, forward looking, rebuild, rethink

FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE

CONCEPT:

The extraction of fossil fuels has a strong cultural heritage in most countries, and coal mining is especially emotive for the labour movements. Rather than denouncing the fossil fuel past, respect and validate that heritage – and with it the powerful labour history – and show that the transition to renewables is part of an intergenerational journey of improvement.

Fossil fuels built our countries and our modern economy. They are part of our **heritage**. We are rightly **proud** of the **hard work** and **achievements** of the people who extracted them. Their skills are critical for building a clean energy future. We need to support them and their communities in a just transition to a cleaner world.

Now it is time to move on, from 20th century to 21st century fuels. The old fuels are too dirty and polluting to be used in the future. The new, cleaner fuels will be plentiful forever. Europe is blessed with all the **natural resources** that will meet the new energy challenges: The water, wind, forests and sun that supply our people and will continue to do so far into the future.

Dirty energy systems are not suited to the smart cities of the future. It's time to start **updating** our inefficient systems and outdated technologies; to find a new way of doing things. **Smart** technologies and fluid systems opens up **new possibilities** – of integrated, intelligent grids, allowing us to balance supply with demand.

KEYWORDS:

proud, respect, heritage, just transition, move on, updating, smart, intelligent, new possibilities

Change this to be appropriate to the national context. In most countries this will be coal followed by oil and gas.

This can be the basis of a larger just transition and reskilling discussion.

A discussion of how fossil fuel dependent workers and communities can make the transition is essential for a just and fair narrative.

Another use of the balance frame.

COMPLETE RENEWABLES: THE REALISTIC CHOICE

CONCEPT:

Present complete renewables as realistic and the balanced choice. 100% is not just possible, it is entirely sensible; we face great challenges getting there, but they are surmountable. "100%" is a policy term that does not communicate well with the public – we recommend seeking language around complete, completely, full – each language will have a suitable adjective.

Experts agree, it is entirely **possible** to obtain all of our energy needs from renewable power – we could meet it many times over from sun's power alone, let alone the winds and the sea.

In the old model, we dug energy out of the ground, and burnt it in dirty centralised power stations. In the new, energy could come from a hydro dam in Scandinavia, a windfarm on the North Sea, or the rooftop of a Southern farm, all balanced through an integrated European grid – all giving us reliable power.

We know we face great obstacles. The current energy system is entrenched, and it will take effort to **shift** it. A vocal minority of people are stuck in one way of thinking, and don't believe we can change.

But if we put our minds to it, it can be done. The journey to complete renewables is about **reality**, not hope. **Evidence**, not supposition. We're in the middle of the journey already – and we've got a plan for how we're going to keep going. In just fifteen years time, clean energy could be providing nearly half our energy across the EU – well on the way to our goal (6).

Renewable technologies are changing. The plunge in prices means old assumptions about cost are going out of date fast. The enormous **enthusiasm** with which people in Germany and Denmark grasped the chance to generate their own clean energy has shown how **willing** European citizens are to participate. The way we see energy is also changing. The old approach of wasting our heat and electricity – literally throwing it out of the window – makes no sense at all. In the future we can choose to value it – and wiser use of our resources will make it far easier to meet our goal of complete renewables.

Stress that public support increases with time.

The idea of avoiding waste is a powerful frame for people for both left and right.

KEYWORDS:

possible, real, realistic, evidence, not-centralised, enthusiasm, shift, here and now, choice, already happening

LEADERSHIP AND OPPORTUNITY

CONCEPT:

Present a picture of political leadership and courage; show political leadership that recognises the changes already happening and give us hope for what the future will look like. Present lack of political action as politically irresponsible.

In the political debate there is no longer any argument from either side about the importance of renewables because they are simply **good common sense**. The only remaining question is who will recognise and support the changes that are already underway, and who will hold them back.

Common sense is a key frame and identity for the centre right.

The countries that accepted that challenge and took the lead have already reaped major benefits. In 2013, for example, the Danish wind industry employed more than 28,000 people and brought in €10.5 billion (7). Clean energy will only continue to grow.

But we can go further. We now have a clear **choice** about our future; whether to support the transition to wholly clean energy or whether to continue wasting money propping up declining fossil fuels. The greatest threat is that we hold back when we should be pressing forward.

We need politicians who can articulate what the future could look like, who can give us something to hope for. Shifting to a completely renewable system is a big idea and it means big **change** – and political courage. It will be challenging and needs hard work – it won't be easy, but it's a **goal** worth striving for.

Focus groups show clearly that people want honesty about things being difficult and are prepared to accept a challenge when there is a clear purpose.

KEYWORDS:

bold, transition, leadership, change, goal

QUALITY JOBS

CONCEPT:

To reinforce support on the centre left, especially those rooted in the union movements, talk about the quality as well as the quantity of employment. Present the energy transition as an inevitable and positive progression that will bring better opportunities and working conditions.

Our young people are the backbone of our society. It is a tragedy that so many of them are unemployed Unlike many of the new "macjobs" in the service industry, renewables offer the new jobs that young people leaving schools really want, and need – **rewarding, practical, safe** and **healthy** jobs offering new skills and opportunities in an expanding and long term industry.

Ground arguments in salient public concerns of employment and prospects.

Between 2004 and 2014 – a period encompassing the deepest economic recession since the 1930s – global renewable energy expanded by 50%, providing 3.5 million desperately needed new jobs (8). And it continues to bring new life to old areas and industries. There is an energy revival.

In the end, it is not just about a policy or a percentage – it's about **people**. Renewable energy means renewing manufacturing, and revitalising careers. We can protect the environment and create jobs at the same time – so why hesitate?

This formula of "both...and" addresses common public concern that choices are "either jobs or environment". It should be expanded on.

KEYWORDS:

safe, healthy, clean, well paid, people, renewing, revitalising, rewarding

AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

CONCEPT:

Security and dependence are powerful psychological concerns that can be addressed through the shift to renewables. These values need to be approached carefully however, as they encourage inward looking defensiveness and a disregard for wider social justice issues. The same arguments can also be used in support of expanding European fossil fuel production, for example fracking.

For too long we have been **locked into** the rollercoaster of global oil and gas prices, **vulnerable** to the **speculation** of markets and the political **instability** in a handful of oil producing countries. Renewable energy in contrast is reliable, safe and stable, producing a dependable supply of energy at a predictable price.

The rollercoaster and other instability metaphors reinforces the "balanced" moderate approach of renewables.

With complete renewables we would no longer be **dependent** on corporate monopolies and centralised power stations. A large portion of our energy would come from decentralised suppliers. Our citizens would have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from community–produced energy. The consumer would receive electricity at the best price through a competitive market.

At all levels, we would have greater autonomy and independence – the **freedom** to generate and sell our own power as individuals and communities, greater **choice** of suppliers and, as a region, **independence** from foreign supplies. Our energy spending could go to supporting European neighbourhoods and businesses, rather than international corporations and repressive regimes.

KEYWORDS:

locked into, vulnerable, speculation, security, dependent/independent, autonomy, stability/instability, freedom/repressive, choice

WE'RE ALL IN IT TOGETHER

CONCEPT:

Presenting climate change as a collective problem and renewables as a collective solution reinforces people's sense of common identity as well as collective values around participation.

Don't we all want cleaner air, purer water, less pollution? It's not **fair** that heavy energy users can dump their carbon pollution in the air we all share. Polluters should be held **accountable**, and should pay for the pollution that they force all of us to live with.

Efforts to solve global problems should be fair, and that means **everybody** should pitch in. And we can all participate. Governments can set a framework, power companies manage a grid. Many people are now also energy producers, generating electricity on their roofs and feeding it into the grid. Across Europe, countries have benefited from each other's experiences in developing these new industries.

Yes we have different ideas about the world we want to see – but there is so much that we can agree on. After all, real progress comes through **cooperation** and **shared** effort.

KEYWORDS:

fair, accountable, co-operate, progress, shared/ everybody

Used in this sense, fairness is a strong value for both left and right.

"The air we share" is a well tested and effective phrase for atmosphere.

In research most people accept personal responsibility only when it is presented in this format of a shared contract.

Recognising debate but stressing common ground and common purpose is a winning formula.

WHAT NOT TO SAY - AND WHY

CONCEPT:

People's opinions on renewables and climate change can be defensive and "reactive". Some stigmatise Greens as dreamers or extremists who want to take away their way of life. It is important in communications to recognise this and avoid language that can fuel the bias. For this reason avoiding the bad language is often even more important than applying the good language.

WHAT NOT TO SAY	WHY	WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
We must	"Must" is a judgmental and lecturing word – better to talk about aspiration.	We choose to...We/our people/our children etc deserve...
Use less, reduce, abandon	Do not feed public suspicion that Greens want to take things away.	Use more wisely, more efficiently, more intelligently
Remove, Replace	People are defensive of the status quo. Language should emphasise a positive narrative of progress.	Renewing,
Corporate corruption. Attacks on climate deniers funded by oil companies.	Experiments show that aggressive language fuels polarisation. If criticising use a light touch and move on.	The debate is long over. We can all move forward.
Political polarisation and conflict; the intransigence of conservatives	Highlighting conflict plays poorly to centrists and potential allies and feeds polarisation.	We are winning the debate. Common sense, common ground. We are working with forward-looking people across all the parties.
Detailed explanation of policy carbon pricing mechanism, heavy statistics	People need just enough detail to convey authority – but no more. Few people comprehend statistics and most are cynical of political claims.	What the policy delivers and what it will look and feel like. Simple figures, examples and stories.
Reducing carbon emissions	'Emissions' are policy talk but do not engage people. Reducing is a loss (see above).	Creating a healthier environment
Jobs versus environment	Addressing this concern (even to challenge it) reinforces a common attitude that these are different and environment is secondary.	A balanced approach that provides both jobs and a cleaner environment.
Target	Targets are the language of policy specialists (and tainted by cynicism of governments). The public wants to know what it means.	Real results – and what they will look like
Atmosphere, emissions,carbon dioxide,greenhouse gases	Avoid technical terms from climate-change policy if there is a more familiar generic term.	Air pollution, carbon pollution, climate changing pollution

WHAT NOT TO SAY	WHY	WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
Global warming	Although some evidence suggests that "global warming" works better with conservatives, it is best to concentrate on the one established term.	Climate change
Ecology, eco–, earth, planet.	"Eco" terms are marginal to most people	Use the word "environment" sparingly. Stress outcomes – such as clean air and water
Green, greening	Coming from the Green party, the adjective green sounds possessive. It undermines narratives of common concern.	Only use 'Green' for the party. Otherwise avoid.
Destruction, collapse, demolish, deconstruct, dismantle	Avoid excessive negativity or violent terms, whether about the impacts of climate change or the shift from fossil fuels.	Construction, building, rebuild
Security and energy security, insecurity	Although resonant for many on the right, security narratives can encourage self–interested values that oppose collective action. Security can also be mobilised for fracking and nuclear.	Stability, reliability
Revolution	Although people talk of the "industrial revolution", revolution is usually a difficult word to use well and sounds too extreme to many people.	Transition, transformation, shift
100% Renewables, total Renewables	Few people can understand statistics, so avoid percentages except for specific evidence and argument. Total sounds authoritarian (it is the root of totalitarianism)	All renewables, completely renewables
Vision	Vision is a politician's word – but it sounds ideological and fanciful. Much better to tell the story without giving it a label of 'vision'.	New opportunities. Show in words and images how the future could be
Unlimited, infinite	Talking about renewables as unlimited or infinite sounds overstated. In reality renewables are limited by our capacity to extract them.	Abundant, flourishing, bountiful
Death, dying, withering	Yes, fossil fuels are dying, but mortality imagery never helps create positive messaging!	Looking forward – positive improvements

REFERENCES

(1) Nine out of ten Europeans support their government setting renewable energy targets, according to the latest 'Eurobarometer' study. National-level studies consistently reinforce the conclusions that Europeans support renewable energy http://ec.europa.eu/clima/citizens/support/docs/report_2014_en.pdf, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/450674/PAT_Summary_Wave_14.pdf

(2) Fossil fuel subsidies amounted to $548 billion in 2013, according to the IEA http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/resources/energysubsidies/

(3) Six times more renewable capacity have been added to global energy systems than nuclear power since Kyoto was signed in 1997 http://www.worldnuclearreport.org/-2015-.html

(4) At the beginning of 2015 investment bank Deutsche Bank predicted solar systems will be at grid parity in up to 80 per cent of the global market by 2017 http://reneweconomy.com.au/2015/solar-grid-parity-world-2017

(5) In Germany for example, 92% of people support further growth of renewables, according to a 2014 survey http://energytransition.de/2012/10/key-findings/. See also reference (1) above.

(6) In a 2014 paper for the Greens/EFA group, Ecofys concluded 45% renewables by 2030 across the EU is "ambitious but feasible". Growth rates for all technologies except geothermal energy would be lower than during the period 2000-2010. Greenpeace's 2015 Energy [R]evolution report, which achieves 100% renewables globally by 2050, suggests renewables reach 40% of global energy supply in Europe by 2030. https://stopclimatechange.net/fileadmin/content/documents/climate%20policy/Feasibility_EFA_Greens_targets_DEF.pdf, http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/publications/Campaign-reports/Climate-Reports/Energy-Revolution-2015/.

(7) https://stateofgreen.com/files/download/6955

(8) Between 2004 and 2014, the global installed capacity of renewables increased from 3800GW to 5800GW. The number of jobs in the renewables sector increased from 3 million jobs to 6.5 million jobs. www.ren21.net/Portals/0/documents/activities/.../REN21_10yr.pdf