

# Energy sovereignty and sustainability: a necessary convergence for Europe

Between climate imperatives and the quest for strategic autonomy, can energy sovereignty go hand in hand with sustainability? **Éric de Tessières**, Group Chief Sustainability Officer at Edmond de Rothschild, shares his vision.



**Éric de Tessières**  
Group Chief Sustainability Officer

## How do the goals of energy sovereignty and sustainability converge in Europe today?

These two goals converge due to a simple physical reality: Europe has few fossil fuels, but remains highly dependent on them. The solution is to capitalize on its geographical assets to develop alternative, carbon-free energies. The continent benefits from a vast coastline, mountain ranges, sunny areas in the south, windy areas in the north, and other features that enable it to produce hydroelectricity, wind power (onshore and offshore), and solar power, as well as to explore geothermal energy, biomass, and biogas. Finally, we must not forget nuclear power, which is a form of European “intellectual” sovereignty.

The shift from a fossil fuel mix to a renewable mix raises two major challenges. The first concerns intermittency, which undermines the stability of the networks. Today, the transitional answer remains gas, but in the long term, the goal is to develop electricity storage capacities through the development of batteries and the structuring of the hydrogen sector. The second challenge concerns efficiency: Europe must accelerate the development of all technologies that optimize usage and reduce consumption.

## How do these issues translate into your investment strategies?

We operate at several levels. First, through our infrastructure debt platform BRIDGE, one of Europe’s leading private infrastructure debt players. This platform finances key transition projects, such as green hydrogen with Lhyfe, energy storage with Corsica Sole,





renewable heat with Kyotherm, and solar energy with CVE Green Finance.

On the listed equities side, we have long been invested in Waga Energy, a biomethane specialist, recently acquired by the Swedish fund EQT. We have also recently launched our «Global Resilience» strategy, focused on the vital needs of our societies and reducing strategic dependencies, and we launched recently a strategy dedicated to European sovereignty.

### **What levers can be activated to accelerate this convergence between energy sovereignty and sustainability?**

Regulation must remain a catalyst for green finance and transition, while striking a balance: too many constraints can stifle momentum. In this sense, the Draghi report provides clear direction on the concept of sovereignty, with an inspiring roadmap. Europe could also take inspiration from the US Inflation Reduction Act: beyond the framework, concrete tax incentives can be a powerful lever for triggering investment.

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