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ContourGlobal: Bills Decree risks penalizing batteries, especially on the Capacity Market side.

“The fastest and most economically sustainable way to stabilize energy prices and strengthen the country’s energy independence is to accelerate the development of renewables and storage systems,” Antonio Cammisecra, CEO of ContourGlobal, told **pv magazine Italia** .

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Antonio Cammisecra, CEO of ContourGlobal

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pv magazine Italia spoke with Antonio Cammisecra, CEO of ContourGlobal, to understand the British company controlled by KKR's view on the Bollette Decree. Cammisecra calls for regulation that favors purchasing consortia for PPAs, a government rethink on the decree. He also calls for multi-year planning for auctions. ContourGlobal is part of a group of 12 IPPs that published an open letter on the Bollette Decree in several national newspapers last Thursday.

How do you generally perceive the Bollette Decree?

The decree addresses some short-term issues (ETS, price formation), but does not resolve the structural issues: high dependence on fossil fuel generation and exposure to volatile gas prices and the unstable geopolitics of third countries. Structurally reducing energy costs in Italy requires renewables, storage, and adequate regulations. Some measures, if not reshaped, will weaken investor interest and risk slowing new investments in renewables and storage, which are precisely what structurally drive prices down in the short term. We advocate for clear and coordinated guidance (Mase, Mimit, PCM) and multi-year planning for RES and BESS auctions consistent with the Pniec/NRRP.

Why did you join together and not proceed through associations?

The 12 signatory companies (Absolute Energy, BW ESS, ContourGlobal, Encavis, Green Go, Matrix Renewables, Nadara, OX2, Recurrent Energy, Sphera Energy, Sonnedix, and Zelestra Italia) represent independent operators and investors committed to developing new renewable capacity and storage systems. We have spontaneously joined together to rapidly advance four shared operational proposals: a multi-year calendar for RES/BESS auctions, the extension of MACSE to the entire country, the development of market PPAs accessible to SMEs, with a possible supporting role from the GSE, and the allocation of ETS costs proportionate to the actual emissions of individual supplies. This initiative, complementary to the work each company carries out individually in their associations in Italy and at the European level, also serves to raise awareness of the relative importance of independent producers within the system. We maintain a constructive dialogue with everyone and are committed to promoting concrete proposals to unlock immediate investments in new renewables and storage. We believe that a structural reduction in energy costs, achievable through increased investments in renewables and energy storage systems, is the key to making the energy system more stable and less exposed to the volatility of imported fossil fuels. Recent auctions demonstrate that these technologies are already competitive and capable of mobilizing significant private capital. A stable regulatory framework that favors such investments would stimulate electricity demand and the electrification of consumption, while strengthening the competitiveness of the national and European industrial system, the development of the industrial supply chain, and the country's energy independence.

How do you perceive the part of the Bollette Decree on PPAs? What could/should the role of the GSE be?

PPAs are the most effective bilateral and flexible instrument for stabilizing prices and accelerating new capacity. We propose a regulation that favors purchasing consortia (including SMEs), without obligations, and allows the GSE to facilitate SMEs' access to tenders as additional demand and to act as a guarantor of last resort for targeted profiles to strengthen the bankability of projects. We believe it is necessary to foster a culture of electrification of industrial consumption and energy purchasing through instruments that provide companies with competitive and stable prices over time. PPAs are one of the key tools worldwide for the feasibility of investments in new capacity. From the consumer's perspective, they are the primary method for long-term price stabilization, with significant benefits for the economy and national security. It is worth noting that in Europe—not to mention the United States—and in many other countries, the PPA instrument is already widespread.

What role does the residential sector play in the development of photovoltaics in Italy, also in light of the Bollette Decree?

The position of the group of companies signing this letter focuses on the development of industrial-scale plants and investments. Like ContourGlobal, we believe that residential photovoltaics is an important solution for the electrification of consumption and for system resilience. Italy has already done much in this regard in the past, with overly generous incentive instruments.

Yesterday, the Italian Energy Minister said that coal is a strategic resource for the country. How do you perceive the speed of this energy transition in general?

On the one hand, I disagree because if we had done the structural work on renewables, we wouldn't be talking about coal as a strategic resource today. On the other hand, we understand the government's need to ensure security and flexibility in the short term. However, the fastest and most economically sustainable way to stabilize energy prices and strengthen the country's energy independence is to accelerate the development of renewables and storage systems. The renewable energy and MACSE auctions already demonstrate that these technologies are competitive, attract private capital, and reduce exposure to fossil fuel volatility and imports. This is why we believe the priority must be to provide investment certainty, with multi-year planning, stable rules, and to preserve technological neutrality in the Capacity Market. Only in this way can the transition proceed with the speed the Italian energy system requires.

You're calling for the MACSE to be extended to the entire country. Do you find this politically plausible?

This isn't a political issue, but a technical one. The main tool used so far to ensure system adequacy and flexibility was the Capacity Market. However, some aspects of the bill decree risk penalizing batteries, effectively excluding storage from participating in this market. The new rules proposed by Terna for the Capacity Market, through the definition of de-rating coefficients (i.e., the parameters that determine how much of a plant's capacity is considered effectively available for the purposes of the capacity market), would assign a relatively higher capacity value to gas plants than to storage systems. This is why we are calling for the MACSE to be extended to the North: because the alternative instrument to the MACSE, the Capacity Market, risks no longer working for batteries if technological neutrality is not preserved. If this is not addressed, the consequence is quite simple: new storage systems will not be built in the North, precisely in the area of the country where grid flexibility will be increasingly necessary to accommodate the increase in electricity demand, the development of renewables, and simultaneously guarantee system security.

Overall, what role does the ETS play in supporting the development of photovoltaic assets, but also supply chain development?

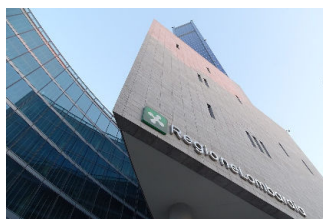
None. From this perspective, I see the ETS as a failure because only about 9% of the revenues generated by the ETS went to finance the transition. Therefore, the higher energy prices determined by the ETS mechanism did not generate any significant investment decisions in new capacity nor did it induce large consumers to enter into PPAs. As signatories to the letter, we share the goal of reducing the impact of the cost of CO₂ on energy prices and correcting some distortions in the marginal pricing mechanism. However, we must avoid an indiscriminate redistribution of the ETS cost across all customers, which would also penalize those who purchase renewables.

Any other considerations?

The private operators signing this letter are ready to support significant investments in new renewable and storage capacity. I would emphasize that this is happening without any need for financial incentives, because renewables are currently the cheapest energy source, as well as being 100% Italian. What we are asking for is a defined auction program for the next three to five years, hopefully with a minimum of 10 GW/year of new capacity plus storage, and stable regulations. Investors in new renewables are not seeking returns or high prices: they are, however, demanding clear and certain conditions that will safeguard the investments made to date and allow for continued investment to structurally reduce tomorrow's energy costs.

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