

**Question for written answer P-010921/2013
to the Commission
Rule 117
Richard Falbr (S&D)**

Subject: Modifications to the national scheme to support renewable energy sources (RES)

I am writing to you with regard to the notification of the Czech Act on supported energy source No 165/2012 Coll. (POZE), and specifically to the possibility of further changes being made thereto.

The national budget significantly subsidises purchase prices – which last year amounted to CZK 44.4 billion – to the tune of 26 %. The remainder of CZK 32.8 billion is paid by all consumers in the form of a uniform payment. This charge of approximately EUR 23/MWh of electricity consumed is rising continuously, and its overall proportion of the end price of electricity is also increasing. Such a huge cost of payment is having a profoundly destructive effect on the Czech energy market; it is becoming (macro-) economically unsustainable and represents an ever-increasing competitive disadvantage to the Czech Republic's overwhelmingly export-oriented industrial sector, especially in the energy-intensive commodity branches. This not only affects competitiveness outside Europe, but also within the EU.

In older EU Member States with high levels of support for renewable energy sources (Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, etc.), energy-intensive industries pay reduced fees or a low fixed annual payment. The other older EU Member States have not reduced charges for industry; however, in such countries the level of support for renewable energy sources is much lower. The Czech Republic is an exception in this regard, as it provides a high degree of support for RES (highest proportion of RES per capita and per unit of GDP) but does not protect its industrial base.

The notification of Czech Act No 165/2012 Coll. should have taken place by March 2013. However, this has not occurred and is not expected to happen earlier than autumn 2013. Some other Member States – not coincidentally, these were smaller Member States – encountered similar delaying tactics from the Commission in the first six months of 2012 as they attempted to defend their existing RES support schemes (Slovenia) or to notify an entirely new RES support scheme (Austria). The Commission also launched an investigation into Germany two years after that Member State introduced differentiated electricity prices for large consumers. However, after a minimal amount of time had passed, the Commission stated that Germany must not make any changes to its protectionist system for at least the next 18 months. So far no investigation has even been launched into France, which also protects its industry from having to pay RES charges.

I therefore put the following questions to the Commission:

1. How and when does the Commission (DG Competition) intend to ensure that the financial burden imposed on consumers and industry (major consumers) to support RES is the same in all EU Member States?
2. How will a non-discriminatory approach and equal conditions be guaranteed until such a time as point 1 is truly achieved?