



Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

2016/2041(INI)

29.4.2016

OPINION

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

Renewable energy progress report
(2016/2041(INI))

Rapporteur (*): Marijana Petir

(*) Associated committee – Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Maintains that reducing greenhouse gas emissions, thereby realising the 2015 Paris Agreement, also depends on achieving EU climate and energy policy goals in the field of renewable energy; stresses, in this regard, that a follow-up policy with a strong, clear and stable long-term regulatory framework is needed, including binding Renewable Energy (Sources) targets that are consistent with the most efficient path towards the Union's long-term climate goals (2050); highlights that the current 2020 energy strategy and energy goals will be insufficient to reach the 2050 decarbonisation target, and therefore calls on the Commission to present a more ambitious climate and energy package 2030 which increases the EU target for renewable energy sources to at least 30 %, to be implemented by means of individual national targets;
2. Welcomes the fact that in 2013 the use of renewable energies enabled the generation of around 388 million gross tonnes of CO₂ to be avoided and led to a reduction in demand for fossil fuels in the EU of 116 Mtoe;
3. Takes the view that the Paris Agreement (COP21) must be accompanied by national emissions plans with clear-cut, verifiable commitments on emissions and energy that ensure the commitment to preventing global warming in excess of 2 degrees;
4. Welcomes the progress towards the EU target whereby renewables are to account for 20 % of gross final energy consumption by 2020, especially in the electricity generation sectors; calls for further measures to exploit the remaining significant potential of renewable energy in the heating and cooling sectors to fully achieve the 2020 goals; calls on the Commission to bridge regulatory gaps in those sectors in the post-2020 renewables legislative package;
5. Urges the Member States to make better use of geothermal-sourced heat and cooling energy;
6. Calls on the Member States to generate district heat and cooling energy in centralised locations in urban areas and to use available waste heat for district heating;
7. Welcomes Member States' progress in meeting specific national renewable energy targets and urges those Member States which are progressing slowly to step up their efforts in order to meet their targets in due time; expects the post-2020 governance framework for the Energy Union to be ambitious, reliable, transparent, democratic and fully inclusive of Parliament in order to ensure that ambitious 2030 climate and energy targets are achieved and to guarantee a level playing field and stable regulatory conditions that foster investor confidence; encourages the Member States to implement and maintain a stable incentives system that facilitates a reliable flow of investment and financing into the renewable energies sector;
8. Considers that the progress made demonstrates the merits of the Union's renewables

policy based on national binding targets, as repeatedly called for by the European Parliament, providing the long-term certainty to industry and investors that is necessary for investment in generation capacity as well as in transmission and distribution infrastructure;

9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to aim to achieve higher targets than those already set in Directive 2009/28/EC on renewables in the light of the more ambitious commitments made in the Paris Agreement and in view of the fact that, taken as a whole, the nationally determined contributions presented on 30 October 2015 will still entail a 2.70C increase in global warming by the end of the century;
10. Expresses its concern regarding all the areas highlighted in the Commission communication for which the percentage figures in respect of the 2020 targets are well below the overall progress achieved, and calls on the Commission and Member States to take decisive action as regards the most critical technological areas;
11. Supports the measures adopted in some Member States to improve support mechanisms for renewable energy sources, which direct these mechanisms more towards their progressive integration into the market, take account of the maturity of the different technologies and ensure that consumers benefit from technological progress;
12. Calls on the Member States to make full use of the opportunities provided by the cooperation arrangements under the Directive on renewable energies through the statistical transfer of surpluses in order to achieve their 2020 national targets and an energy models with strong emphasis on renewable energy sources; stresses that closer cooperation between the Member States would help ensure the efficient provision of renewable energy to the main consumption points in the EU; encourages the Member States to develop additional programmes that ensure the increased competitiveness of such energies;
13. Notes that each Member State is free to choose the renewable energy sources that best fit its geographical and environmental characteristics; recalls that bioenergy will play an important part in decarbonising the EU; calls on the Member States to give priority to the renewable energy sources and technologies with the least damaging effects on the environment and biodiversity, on human rights and on public health, thanks to improved air quality, while capitalising on the advantage of a specific local and regional potentials to secure a beneficial outcome from renewable energy sources, taking into account the cost-effective realisation of renewable energy targets; calls for measures to ensure improved planning for the deployment of renewable energy, including spatial planning and evaluation of environmental impacts, while fully respecting European and national laws and the efficient functioning of energy markets;
14. Stresses that research and development activities play an essential role in the development of renewable energies; calls on the Commission to support research and development activities in the field of renewable energy (including alternative fuels and geothermal and ocean energy), its storage and the related product development, with a view to making the EU's renewable energy industry more competitive, while ensuring that SMEs can also take advantage of research and product development funding; believes that increased funding should be earmarked for new-generation renewable energies, including those that are currently under-appreciated, in the mid-term review of Horizon 2020;

15. Considers that the new systems for renewable energy generation such as own-consumption, combined with new technologies, can play a significant part in achieving renewables goals, taking into account all these benefits when designing payment mechanisms for sales of surplus production and use of the grid; calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the self-production of energy and the implementation and interconnection of local renewable energy grids, to complement their national energy policies; advocates increased consumer participation, on the part of citizens and entrepreneurs, in the local use of renewable energy sources, with the objective of mitigating climate change;
16. Believes that renewable energies can make consumers more aware of their own energy consumption, thus helping to achieve the aim of a creating a consumer-centred Energy Union, and have the potential to boost employment, including in areas of low population density; stresses the need to remove economic, regulatory and administrative barriers in order to empower consumers to take control of their energy use, encourage them to invest in renewable decentralised energy and protect them from energy poverty;
17. Calls on the Member States to develop regulations that are as similar as possible in order to encourage the installation of decentralised renewable electricity generation systems and, especially, to promote own-consumption, both individual and communal, through the establishment of net balance systems;
18. Points to the need for public investment and credit to upgrade electricity grids and adapt them to receive electricity generated using on-site distributed renewable energy resources;
19. Emphasises that financing the development of renewable energy production has entailed disproportionate costs for consumers; takes the view that the Commission and Member States should therefore develop new means of financing based on competitive tendering arrangements and auctions, and create greater certainty for investors by ensuring that retrospective measures are excluded;
20. Underscores the need to decarbonise the heating, air conditioning and transport sectors by electrifying those sectors;
21. Emphasises that a third of the target the EU has set itself for 2020 in the field of renewable energies in the transport sector could be achieved by using biogas from organic waste, while around 2 % of the renewable energies target could be achieved if all organic waste were sent for anaerobic digestion; for this reason, and to further the transition to a circular economy, in which waste is considered a new resource, it is essential that separate bio-waste collection be made compulsory in all EU Member States by 2020;
22. Calls for the partial use of CAP to be maintained and increased in order to support investments in the production and use of renewable energy in the agricultural sector;
23. Expresses concern at the lack of progress in meeting the EU's 10 % target for renewable energy use in the transport sector and draws attention to the importance of reaching that goal from the point of view of lowering greenhouse gas emission levels and reducing EU dependency on imported energy; calls on the Member States to intensify their efforts in order to meet this target in due time; recalls that transport is the only sector in the EU where greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have risen since 1990; points out that renewable

energies are key to achieving sustainable mobility; sees the electrification of transport as one of the most efficient ways to reduce air pollution and GHG emissions in the transport sector; calls on the Commission to consider laying down an ambitious target for renewable energy use in the transport sector and to improve the legislative framework offering prospects for biofuels with high GHG-efficiency, taking into account indirect land-use change (ILUC) in the period after 2020 and, by providing an appropriate incentive to their use, to help open up 'green' jobs while averting the adverse effects of ILUC;

24. Calls on the Commission, given the need for greater synergy and consistency in European policies, to lay down sustainability criteria for bioenergy, taking into account a thorough assessment of the functioning of already existing EU sustainability policies and the circular economy policies; recalls that the strengthening of EU energy security should be achieved through the sustainable use of own resources, in line with the objective of improving resource efficiency;
25. Urges caution with regard to the growing trend of use of forest biomass as a leading EU renewable energy source, which can have potentially damaging effects on climate and the environment unless sustainably sourced and properly accounted for; notes that the climate impacts of bioenergy must be accounted for in the long term, given the long periods needed to achieve parity times by harvested forests;
26. Notes that bioenergy already accounts for 60 % of renewable energy in Europe and that its use is set to continue to grow; stresses the need to clarify, as a matter of urgency, the greenhouse impacts of the various uses of forest biomass for energy and to identify the uses that can achieve the greatest mitigation benefits within policy-relevant timeframes;
27. Calls on the Commission, when drafting new legislation on the implementation of the EU's climate and energy policies, to carry out an assessment of the beneficial role played by European forests as carbon sinks; stresses that European forestry is based on sustainable management and long-term planning, and that the criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management must always apply to the sector as a whole regardless of the end use of the wood;
28. Calls on the Commission to consider the introduction of harmonised sustainable forest management criteria at EU level in order to arrive at an international reference framework to guide the sourcing of forest biomass as renewable energy feedstock;
29. Stresses the importance of maintaining hydroelectric power that can be rapidly mobilised and is environmentally responsible;
30. Highlights the lack of cross-border energy transmission infrastructure, and therefore recalls that for electricity from renewable sources to be fully integrated, the development of network infrastructure and a sufficient number of interconnections in a cost-efficient manner is advisable; calls for the removal of unnecessary bureaucratic barriers and for investment that enables the achievement of the 10 % electricity interconnection target by 2020; highlights the need to alleviate impediments of a non-financial nature and calls for a simplification and harmonisation of authorisation, administrative procedures, permit granting and connection for renewable energy generating plants;

31. Stresses that developing the potential of renewable energy should go hand in hand with the development of all infrastructure, including cross-border infrastructure to prevent unplanned circular processes, as the absence of such infrastructure could result in overloading of the network and in power outages; calls on the Member States who are behind with the construction of such infrastructure to complete construction as quickly as possible;
32. Calls on the Commission to ensure both the integration of renewable energies into the markets on a level playing field with conventional energy sources and the adaptation of the markets to renewable energies;
33. Realises that tax cuts are a powerful incentive for making the shift from fossil energy to renewable energy, and urges the Commission to reform the Energy Taxation Directive and the state-aid rules which are preventing these incentives from being used to their full potential;
34. Calls on the Commission to respect the competence of Member States to decide on their own energy mix, while encouraging cooperation between Member States with a view to learning from best practices;
35. Points out that the new model for using energy from renewable sources should be built from the bottom up and be based on the potential of individual Member States, encouraging them to make optimal use of the resources that are available to them without imposing difficult-to-attain targets on them from the top down;
36. Calls for better legislation on environmental impact assessment to be implemented in connection with renewable energy generation projects, with a view to empowering citizens;
37. Considers that renewable energy is a cornerstone of EU climate and energy policy, and stresses that stability and predictability of policy frameworks is a key requirement for the deployment of renewable energy; deplores, in this regard, the abrupt changes in the policy environment for renewables and the continuation of subsidies to fossil fuels;
38. Calls on the Commission to involve and respect the competences of local and regional authorities, while encouraging cooperation between Member States with a view to learning from best practice.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	26.4.2016
Result of final vote	+: 60 -: 4 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Marco Affronte, Margrete Auken, Pilar Ayuso, Zoltán Balczó, Ivo Belet, Simona Bonafè, Biljana Borzan, Lynn Boylan, Soledad Cabezón Ruiz, Nessa Childers, Birgit Collin-Langen, Mireille D’Ornano, Seb Dance, Angélique Delahaye, Jørn Dohrmann, Ian Duncan, Stefan Eck, Bas Eickhout, Eleonora Evi, José Inácio Faria, Karl-Heinz Florenz, Francesc Gambús, Elisabetta Gardini, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Jens Gieseke, Julie Girling, Matthias Groote, Françoise Grossetête, Andrzej Grzyb, György Hölvényi, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Jean-François Jalkh, Benedek Jávor, Karin Kadenbach, Kateřina Konečná, Giovanni La Via, Peter Liese, Norbert Lins, Susanne Melior, Miroslav Mikolášik, Massimo Paolucci, Gilles Pargneaux, Piernicola Pedicini, Bolesław G. Piecha, Pavel Poc, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Davor Škrlec, Estefanía Torres Martínez, Nils Torvalds, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Damiano Zoffoli
Substitutes present for the final vote	Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, Nicola Caputo, Giorgos Grammatikakis, Merja Kyllönen, Gesine Meissner, Marijana Petir, Gabriele Preuß, Jasenko Selimovic, Kay Swinburne, Keith Taylor, Mihai Țurcanu
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Marie-Christine Boutonnet