

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Session document

A6-0030/2009

27.1.2009

REPORT

on Follow-up of the energy efficiency National Action Plans: a first assessment
(2008/2214(INI))

Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

Rapporteur: András Gyürk

CONTENTS

	Page
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION.....	3
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	4
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT	4
RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE	4

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on Follow-up of the energy efficiency National Action Plans: a first assessment (2008/2214(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Council Resolution of 7 December 1998 on energy efficiency in the European Community¹,
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled Action Plan for Energy Efficiency: Realising the Potential (COM(2006)0545),
- having regard to the Commission staff working documents accompanying the above-mentioned Commission Communication, namely the analysis of the Action Plan (SEC(2006)1173), the impact assessment of the Action Plan (SEC(2006)1174) and the executive summary thereof (SEC(2006)1175),
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled An Energy Policy for Europe (COM(2007)0001),
- having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council of 8 and 9 March 2007 concerning the Council's adoption of the European Council Action Plan (2007-2009) – Energy Policy for Europe (7224/1/07),
- having regard to Council Directive 92/75/EEC of 22 September 1992 on the indication by labelling and standard product information of the consumption of energy and other resources by household appliances²,
- having regard to Directive 2002/91/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2002 on the energy performance of buildings³,
- having regard to Directive 2004/8/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 February 2004 on the promotion of cogeneration based on a useful heat demand in the internal energy market⁴
- having regard to Directive 2005/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2005 establishing a framework for the setting of ecodesign requirements for energy-using products⁵,
- having regard to Directive 2006/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2006 on energy end-use efficiency and energy services⁶,

¹ OJ C 394, 17.12.1998, p. 1.

² OJ L 297, 13.10.1992, p. 16.

³ OJ L 1, 4.1.2003, p. 65.

⁴ OJ L 52, 21.2.2004, p. 50.

⁵ OJ L 191, 22.7.2005, p. 29.

⁶ OJ L 114, 27.4.2006, p. 64.

- having regard to Council Decision 2006/1005/EC of 18 December 2006 concerning conclusion of the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the European Community on the coordination of energy-efficiency labelling programmes for office equipment¹
 - having regard to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Community energy-efficiency labelling programme for office equipment (COM(2006)0576),
 - having regard to Decision No 1639/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (2007 to 2013)² and in particular Chapter III of Title II thereof, concerning the Intelligent Energy-Europe Programme,
 - having regard to Decision No 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013)³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 1 June 2006 on Energy efficiency or doing more with less – Green Paper⁴,
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 December 2006 on a European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy – Green Paper⁵,
 - having regard to the Communication from the Commission on a first assessment of National Energy Efficiency Action Plans as required by Directive 2006/32/EC on energy end-use efficiency and energy services (COM(2008)0011),
 - having regard to the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (COM(2008)0019),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication entitled Energy efficiency: delivering the 20 % target (COM(2008)0772),
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the opinion of the Committee on Regional Development (A6-0030/2009),
- A. whereas the European Union wastes more than 20 % of its energy due to inefficiency and, if the saving objective of 20 % were met, the EU would use about 400 Mtoe (million tonnes of oil equivalent) less primary energy and the CO₂ emissions reduction would be

¹ OJ L 381, 28.12.2006, p. 24.

² OJ L 310, 9.11.2006, p. 15.

³ OJ L 412, 30.12.2006, p. 1.

⁴ OJ C 298 E, 8.12.2006, p. 273.

⁵ OJ C 317 E, 23.12.2006, p. 876.

about 860Mt,

- B. whereas energy consumption in combination with the national energy mix, which is mainly based on conventional energy sources, remain the main source of greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union,C. whereas there are increasingly complex risks concerning the security and dependence of supply in connection with the import of energy sources into the EU,
- D. whereas more incentives to invest in energy efficiency during a financial crisis or recession, and in times of volatility and unpredictability in oil prices could help stimulate the economy,
- E. whereas a rise in energy prices can become one of the main causes of poverty; whereas improvements in energy efficiency are the most effective way of reducing the vulnerability of the needy,
- F. whereas improving energy efficiency is also the most cost-effective way to attain the binding emissions reduction and renewable energy targets that the EU has set for itself,
- G. whereas improving energy efficiency and exploiting the possibilities inherent therein is in the common interest of the Member States; whereas it would be advisable to apply different sets of measures to the Member States, so as to reflect their divergent economic and climatic characteristics,
- H. whereas energy efficiency measures can only achieve the desired result if they are applied in all sectoral policies,
- I. whereas, in view of the fact that several Member States have not submitted a national energy efficiency plan, the Commission must take measures to encourage more Member States to implement decisions taken in that area,
- J. whereas the international economic crisis and the increasing volatility of energy source prices are raising the profile of energy efficiency, which may considerably improve the international competitiveness of European enterprises,K. whereas, according to the above-mentioned Commission Communication entitled Energy efficiency: delivering the 20 % target, there is a real danger that the energy efficiency target set for 2020 will not be met,
- L. whereas under the proposal for a directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, Member States are required to promote and encourage energy efficiency and energy savings in order to achieve more easily their renewable targets,
- M. whereas residential buildings offer an energy-saving potential of approximately 27 %,
- N. whereas there are still no legally binding targets for energy efficiency, at EU or at national level,
- O. whereas there is a visible lack of capacity for implementing energy efficiency projects,
- 1. Welcomes the action plans produced by the Member States; is, at the same time,

concerned that the delays in submitting the plans and the contents of a number of National Action Plans point to deficiencies which might endanger the attainment of the EU's energy efficiency and climate protection objectives; stresses that the emphasis must now be on effective implementation of measures focusing on energy efficiency, including the development of best practices and synergies, and better information and advice on energy efficiency to end users;

2. Considers it timely that, as part of the 2009 review of the action plans, the extent to which the legislation and the action plans cover all the possibilities for economising in the area of energy efficiency, should be examined in detail, as should the division of responsibility between the Commission, Member States and the regional and local authorities in terms of implementation and enforcement;
3. Urges the Commission to make energy efficiency and energy savings the cornerstone of the Energy Policy for Europe; welcomes the undertaking from the Commission, in the above-mentioned Communication entitled Energy efficiency: delivering the 20 % target, to prepare a revised EU action plan on energy efficiency; calls on the Commission to make the 20 % energy efficiency target by 2020 legally binding as part of the assessment it must prepare on the progress of the Community towards this target, under Decision No .../2009/EC on the effort of Member States to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to meet the Community's greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments; 4. Welcomes the increase in the Commission's human resources in the field of energy efficiency, which, although still insufficient to be fully operational, has resulted in an acceleration in the preparation of legislative proposals in the areas of, for example, eco-product design, the energy performance of buildings and energy labelling, the transport sector and end user installations; stresses that there is a continued need for legislation in these areas;
5. Regards Directive 2006/32/EC as a good regulatory framework; at the same time, notes that the Directive is limited in application to the period up to 2016 and in any case is too limited in ambition to deliver the goal of at least 20 % energy efficiency improvement by 2020, so that a review in 2012, based on a comprehensive study of Member States' experiences, is called for;
6. Welcomes the fact that energy providers and professional associations in a number of Member States have, on the basis of the Directive, begun improving and coordinating their own smart metering systems; notes, however, that with the present regulatory framework it is unlikely that smart metering will be widely adopted by households; supports therefore the compulsory introduction of smart meters in all buildings within 10 years of the entry into force of the new Directive amending Directive 2003/54/EC concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity; urges the Commission to enforce more rigorously the requirements of Article 13 of Directive 2006/32/EC in order to accelerate the roll-out of smart-metering systems;
7. Considers it necessary for the Commission, to support the compulsory introduction of smart metering, to draw up a comprehensive study of Member States' experiences in the field; considers that future rules should impose a requirement to equip consumers' homes with readable displays alongside the metering system and that the Commission should also devote attention to rules on compatibility of metering systems and on data

communication, differentiated tariffs and microproduction;

8. Considers that provisions which reinforce the exemplary role of the public sector should be supported; considers that, in the light of rising energy costs, energy efficiency criteria should be defined for the public procurement procedures of public sector institutions;
9. Recognises that increasing the energy efficiency of buildings has immense potential for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the fight against climate change, in terms both of adaptation and of tackling the causes of climate change;
10. Encourages Member States to make substantial use of alternative renewable energy sources such as wind, biomass, biofuels and also wave and tidal energy, where possible;
11. Welcomes the Commission's preparations to extend the Directive on the energy performance of buildings and in the standardisation of low-energy-intensive and net zero carbon buildings, and calls for EU-wide requirements on positive energy buildings, as these could reduce costs for end-users; urges that the exact timetable for standardisation and minimum levels of energy from renewables be set down for both new and existing buildings;
12. Underlines that residential buildings are among the most energy-wasteful sectors and therefore urges that financial support at both national and Community levels for the energy performance of buildings be increased and existing financial incentives be compared with the commitments set out in the National Action Plans as part of the Commission's review of Action Plans;
13. Encourages in particular Member States and the regions to use Structural funds to set up on their territories thematic networks in the framework of the Concerted Action provided for by the 2008 Intelligent Energy Europe Work Programme in order to be informed about practices of other EU regions as regards the efficient use of energy and to exchange know-how and experience in this domain;
14. Stresses that energy policies in the National Action Plans addressing the residential sector should set as a priority the improvement of the envelope quality of dwellings where low income people reside, taking into account the fact that unpredictable fuel prices will seriously aggravate the economic situation of these households and may create serious social problems;
15. Welcomes the on-schedule, ongoing additions to the legislation containing provisions on the labelling of equipment and minimum energy efficiency with regard to the Action Plan and the Framework Directive on ecodesign and labelling; considers it important that the range of equipment covered by the legislation be extended, alongside monitoring of consumer habits;
16. Recommends that, in order to reduce the use of standby power, the Commission examine the possibility of regulating external power sources which supply multiple devices; calls on the Commission, in accordance with the provisions of the Ecodesign Directive (2005/32/EC), to ensure that those provisions include the whole life cycle of the product in terms of energy efficiency consequences; in this regard, calls for this Directive to be supplemented with provisions concerning the whole life cycle, product liability and repairability;

17. Considers it important that enterprises not governed by the European Emissions Trading System be involved in increased energy efficiency, in particular where hidden costs or other difficulties hinder the market achievement of energy efficiency; in order to attain such efficiencies, considers it necessary – in addition to the extension of ecodesign – to introduce a ‘white certificates’ system; believes that, to enable this, the Commission should complete the relevant checks as soon as possible; notes the crucial role that energy efficiency can play in helping Member States to achieve their mandatory effort-sharing targets; underlines the particular potential for cost-effective reductions through improved energy efficiency in buildings;
18. Welcomes regulation 2008/xx/EC on the conditions governing carbon dioxide emissions from cars and consultation on further legislation to improve the specific energy efficiency of vehicles; underlines the importance of stringent future emissions targets to be set as soon as possible in the interests of industry certainty; expresses disappointment that the 95g CO₂ limit for 2020 called for by Parliament is not yet confirmed; notes, however, with concern that the new legislation will not offset the increasing energy demand for transport;
19. Welcomes the drawing up of the Green Paper on Urban Mobility (COM(2007)0551) but notes that, in the absence of specific, quantifiable provisions, the efficiency reserves cannot be mobilised; calls on the Commission to examine how the promotion of energy-efficient urban mobility and development of public transport can play a greater role in structural and cohesion policy and how the efficiency of mobility can be assigned more weight in the conditions for Community cofinancing projects;
20. Stresses that the spread of information and communication tools has made it possible to apply tolling methods for road freight transport which cover not only the high-speed road network; urges that the possibilities for uniform monitoring legislation for the internal market be studied;
21. Welcomes the Commission proposal for the promotion of efficient cogeneration, but observes that promotion of this technology may play a role where it can contribute effectively to meeting useful heating needs; notes that in district heating systems the efficiency of the network is just as vital as the efficiency of equipment used on the consumer side; considers that, in allocating structural funding, considerably greater weight should in future be attached to the network efficiency of the existing district heating systems;
22. Continues to find that individual sector policies run counter to the European Union's endeavours to be energy efficient; is of the opinion that the same is also true in the current structure of structural and cohesion support;
23. Considers that SMEs have an important role to play in improving energy efficiency but that they do not have the same capacity to comply with legislation or new standards in the energy sector; considers, therefore, that the facilities which will be created by the Small Business Act should also handle information and contacts with SMEs concerning energy efficiency;

24. Calls on Member States to increase their level of ambition and turn their National Energy Efficiency Action Plans (NEEAPs) into a practical tool for delivery not only of their energy efficiency targets under Directive 2006/32/EC, but also for their wider and longer term targets, notably to improve energy efficiency by at least 20 % by 2020 and to meet binding national effort sharing targets for emissions reduction;
25. Calls on the Member States to go beyond the minimum national indicative energy saving target of 9 % by 2016 in Directive 2006/32/EC and set clear interim targets to achieve the final target;
26. Considers it necessary for the National Action Plans to formulate realistic, substantiated binding targets and to specify the measures to be put in place in order to ensure these targets are reached;
27. Regards it as extremely important that the National Action Plans be adapted to geographical, climatic, economic structure and consumer characteristics, which can differ widely between regions;
28. Stresses the relationship between energy and territorial cohesion, as pointed out in the Commission Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (COM(2008)0616), in terms of the positive contribution made by energy efficiency measures to sustainable development and energy security, and the importance of a well-designed spatial strategy, and the creation of long-term solutions for all regions;
29. Considers it necessary for the National Action Plans to reach the energy efficiency targets set in a cost-effective way and to guarantee the value added by State aid;
30. Calls on the Member States to incorporate, in their existing structures for contacts between government agencies and the public, information on energy efficiency, best practice in those areas and consumer rights which have been established in the energy and climate sector;
31. Considers it indispensable that, in contrast with the current practice of a number of Member States, the National Action Plans be prepared with the substantive involvement of local and regional governments, civil organisations and economic partners in order to ensure better grassroots implementation;
32. Considers it important that the National Action Plans pay special attention to poverty caused by rising energy prices and guarantee suitable protection for those at risk of poverty; considers that improving energy efficiency and awareness is a vital and urgent task;
33. Emphasises the importance of Member States including in their NEEAPs appropriate financial instruments for energy saving, as required by Article 9 of Directive 2006/32/EC; considers that these financial instruments should be designed to overcome recognised barriers to energy efficiency improvement such as the cost/benefit split between owner and tenant and the longer pay-back period required when bringing older, hard-to-treat properties up to contemporary energy efficiency standards;

34. Considers it necessary for the National Action Plans to place special emphasis on how governments intend to promote and support energy efficiency investments on the part of SMEs; stresses, therefore, that particular account should be taken of such investments when the National Action Plans are drawn up;
35. Notes with regret that in most Member States the funding allocated to energy efficiency projects is still insufficient and fails adequately to account for regional variances; calls on Member States and regions to focus on the implementation of their respective operational programmes on innovative measures, in order to develop cost-effective energy efficiency solutions;
36. Stresses the need, from now on, for an effective implementation of these measures, including the development of best practices and synergies and the organisation of information exchange and coordination of the diverse and dispersed actors in the energy efficiency sector;
37. Underlines the need for more comprehensive and clear commitments in the second National Action Plans in 2011 in order to create a favourable business environment and predictable investment conditions for market actors;
38. Stresses that the private sector, supported by national measures, should play a prominent role in investing in and developing new, sustainable energy technologies, while also taking innovative actions to adopt an approach more focussed on energy efficiency;
39. Stresses the strategic role of EU public authorities, in particular at regional and local level, in strengthening the implementation of the necessary institutional support for energy-efficiency initiatives, as described in Directive 2006/32/EC; recommends the strengthening of capillary information and education campaigns, for example through the use of easily understandable energy efficiency labels, and of energy-related pilot initiatives and training on the territories of those regional and local authorities who are aiming at raising citizens' awareness and changing behaviour;
40. Calls on the Member States to develop long-term energy efficiency awareness campaigns, focusing on efficiency in buildings, both public and private, and also on convincing the public that energy efficiency can bring them real savings;
41. Calls on the Commission to disseminate a detailed analysis of all the first round of plans submitted so that the reasons for delays are fully known the reasons and to take strong action against further delays and omissions;42. Asks that the Commission examine, at Community and Member State level, the consistency of each sectoral policy with the energy efficiency objectives, considers in this context that a detailed review of Community aid schemes is indispensable;
43. Calls on the Commission to significantly increase the proportion of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund devoted under Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund¹ to improving the energy efficiency of existing housing, and to

¹ OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 1.

require the Member States to take full advantage of this option;

44. Encourages Member States and the regions in particular to use Structural Funds to set up on their territories thematic networks in the framework of the Concerted Action provided for by the 2008 Intelligent Energy Europe Work Programme in order to be informed about practice in other EU regions as regards the efficient use of energy and to exchange know-how and experience in this domain;
45. Asks the Commission for the next programming period of the Structural Funds to support energy-efficiency objectives, to reinforce priority criteria related to such objectives and to support the implementation of concrete measures and technologies for saving energy and fostering its efficient use, including through the promotion of partnerships in projects such as renovating buildings, modernising street lighting and ecological transport, modernising installations for urban heating and producing heating and electricity;
46. Calls on the Commission to adopt the measures needed to equip Member States with the institutional capacity to prepare and implement effective National Action Plans, including official monitoring and quality control of individual measures, inter alia those arising from obligations relating to the energy certificates of buildings, and for supporting public education and training programmes in energy efficiency; calls on the Commission to establish a public database of Member States' energy efficiency measures and/or of critical elements of their application;
47. Calls on the Commission to establish minimum requirements for a harmonised template, methodology and evaluation process for NEEAPs; notes that this will reduce the administrative burden on Member States, ensure NEEAPs are well-founded and facilitate comparative analysis; believes that this harmonised template and methodology must require chapters by sector and must make a clear distinction between policies and actions on energy efficiency previously adopted by Member States on the one hand, and new and additional policies and actions on the other; points to the relevant provisions of the Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources; stresses that the checking by the Commission and if necessary rejection of the national action plans at the moment of their submission would ensure a better quality of implementation downstream; calls for the coordination of National Action Plans and reports provided for under different legislative instruments linked with climate change objectives; calls on the Commission to cross-check the NEEAPs with other such National Action Plans and reports, including those submitted in connection with the Kyoto Protocol and the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) documents of the Structural Funds;
48. Calls on the Commission to develop common principles on methods to measure energy savings with due respect to the subsidiarity principle; notes that the need for quantification and verification of energy savings resulting from energy efficiency improvement measures is not only of interest within the scope of Directive 2006/32/EC, but also in relation to measuring the achievement of the 20 % energy saving objective for 2020 and any other future energy saving objectives;
49. Urges the Commission to ensure that NEEAPs present a clear and joined-up approach,

and in particular that the requirements of Directive 2002/91/EC, including any subsequent recasting, are fully integrated into the NEEAPs so that the NEEAPs propose measures that are genuinely additional to energy efficiency improvements already required under existing national and Community legislation;

50. Urges the Commission to insist that the NEEAPs clearly state how the obligation under Directive 2006/32/EC for the public sector to play an exemplary role is to be fulfilled and if necessary to make a proposal for Community legislation which will ensure the leading role of the public sector in the area of energy efficiency investments;
51. Invites the Commission to examine possible ways of reinforcing public procurement procedures with a set of energy efficiency conditions, to be achieved by giving priority to 'green' products in public contracts, including mandatory application of energy efficiency standards and mandatory inclusion of life cycle energy costs in the evaluation of investments, stresses that public authorities at all levels should be the first to set an example through the implementation of Green Public Procurement in their procedures;
52. Calls on the Commission to study the Community resources dedicated to research and development in order to boost the resources dedicated to improving energy efficiency in the next seven-year financial perspective;
53. Considers that the Commission should encourage those Member States which have not yet adopted their national energy efficiency plan to implement decisions which have been taken in that area;
54. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission and to the governments and Parliaments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

General remarks

The European Commission's document entitled 'Action Plan for Energy Efficiency: exploiting the possibilities' clearly shows that Europe's citizens waste billions of euros by not making efficient use of the energy available to them. Energy efficiency should, therefore, be one of the main pillars of the EU energy policy which is being developed. By improving energy efficiency we would strengthen the security of supply in Europe. The lack of substantive measures means that Europe's dependence on imported energy, currently around 50%, might well increase to 70% over the next 20-30 years – and some Member States may experience an even higher level of dependence. More sensible energy consumption might also reduce the burden on our environment. Improving energy efficiency is one of the most effective ways of reducing greenhouse gases and therefore ensuring that the ambitious EU climate policy plans are realised. The measures taken in this area might, at the same time, have a considerable influence on the competitiveness of European industry and, therefore, the attainment of the Lisbon objectives. Improving energy efficiency might also reduce the burden on the most vulnerable consumers and thus may prevent the development of energy poverty.

Measures taken in the area of energy efficiency might promote the attainment of numerous overall EU objectives. We consider that the 2006 EU Directive on Energy Consumption sets out measures which are both achievable and sensible. We consider it advisable for the Member States to summarise, in National Action Plans, their planned measures for improving energy efficiency. The right decisions can only be made if the institution responsible for drawing up National Action Plans submits documents with appropriate government support, in cooperation with market and social stakeholders and after conducting a thorough assessment.

National Action Plans

The main requirement concerning National Action Plans for energy efficiency is that these be drawn up with due consideration being paid to the different geographical, economic and social circumstances in the Member States. The principle of subsidiarity will certainly need to be applied, as the diverse characteristics may dictate that measures be listed in a different order of priority. For example, in some Member States the share for public transport is currently still favourable but is showing a rapid decline, so that action should be taken as soon as possible in this area. In other countries, by contrast, the state of the distribution network or consumer demands require substantive action. In addition to the above, documents must set realistic objectives. This is indeed a relevant consideration in the area of energy efficiency, since changes in circumstances (such as the cost of energy carriers or climate change) might have a considerable impact on the reasonable extent of the measures. At the same time, the Member States must possess means which are appropriate to the targets. It is a deficiency of a number of National Action Plans that the ambitious plans are not accompanied by clearly visible practical steps. In addition, it is vital that the energy efficiency plans contain guidelines for each important sector. This requires a flexible institutional framework and a variety of regulators.

Special attention should be paid in National Action Plans to the transport sector. Whilst there is agreement among decision-makers and experts on this, we find that this area is dealt with comprehensively in only a few countries, a failing which is not contradicted by the documents which have so far been received by the Commission. Apart from a few technological regulations, only half-baked measures have been taken to ensure the external costs of transport are borne by emitters. This question needs to be dealt with because transport as a whole will in future remain left out of the EU's emissions trading scheme. Effective legislation in the Member States is therefore essential.

The action plans must place special emphasis on the role played by SMEs in the area of energy efficiency. This is all the more necessary because price rises are hitting these enterprises, which have less lobbying power, the hardest. There might be a perceptible impact on achieving the objectives if the SME sector did not identify itself with the issue of energy efficiency. The action plans must also include ideas on the energy efficiency requirements of buildings. There is a particularly good opportunity here for the new Member States. Excessively extravagant blocks of flats are a sad testament to energy wastefulness. Any decision taken with regard to such buildings must take into account the citizens living there. Efforts in the area of energy efficiency cannot be separated from social policy. Developing the proper legislative background depends not only on the above but also on taking into account the structural characteristics and the ownership structure of the building stock.

Since a significant amount of energy consumption is connected to the service sector, the action plans must also set out clearly what regulations a particular administration is planning for the coming years.

Action plans should set out a proper division of tasks between the public sector, enterprises and citizens. The public sector must play a leading role in improving energy efficiency. Consideration might, therefore, be given to introducing certain energy efficiency requirements into public procurement. This has appeared in only a few action plans so far. Governments also have a fundamental responsibility in terms of providing information. Information campaigns – even energy efficiency websites or information points – could make a significant contribution to shaping consumer behaviour. Over and above this, it is the task of governments to conduct a real dialogue with the civil sector, which has a large fund of experience.

One of the tasks falling to governments in the Member States is to reduce the level of energy poverty by promoting energy efficiency. It is therefore very important that governments inform the population about the close connection between the size of energy bills and the measures set out in the action plans. Increasing financial support to promote investment among the population can be effective, in terms of both energy and social policy. This is even true if a number of Member States use a large proportion of resources to directly subsidise energy prices. Improving energy efficiency is not, however, exclusively the task of governments, and there is a need for the active participation of market stakeholders and the population.

EU law-making

The European Commission has recently produced a number of legislative initiatives concerning energy efficiency. These might justifiably be expected to bring the EU's energy efficiency requirements into line with its sectoral policies and support schemes. Sadly, however, this is not the case at present. For example, no substantive progress can be expected in energy efficiency in the transport sector until the support scheme of the EU, from which it benefits considerably, takes into account the requirements – again, of the EU – concerning energy efficiency.

Reinforcing the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) not only contributes to achieving the EU's climate policy goals but can also have a beneficial effect on the energy efficiency of Europe's business sector. In the case of emitters which do not fall within the scope of the ETS, there should be strict requirements on the part of Member States to reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency.

A number of positive examples can be mentioned with regard to the EU regulations currently in force. Experience shows that EU legislation on the energy consumption labelling of equipment has a considerable influence on consumer product choice. It would be worth extending the legislation to other products and adapting this to technological progress. If, however, a category contains too many products, the labels might lose their guiding function.

An important role is also played by the Community legislation on the energy consumption of buildings. Here it would be a welcome development if the legislation in question had broader application to buildings. Reinforcing the Ecodesign Directive and continuous adaptation to technological development might also contribute to the success of the energy efficiency policy.

The proposal on emissions from motor vehicles also prompted a major debate in the European Parliament. We must certainly not be indifferent to future regulations concerning cars. In addition to energy efficiency considerations, the legislation in question is also of crucial importance for climate policy efforts. The European Commission's plans for energy efficiency legislation on tyres are to be welcomed. Since the mileage and number of cars is increasing, there is a need for measures in the field of transport which go beyond those currently being applied. This is well illustrated by the fact that, although there was a 12.4% increase in fuel efficiency between 1995 and 2004, this was not sufficient to compensate for the increase in traffic and vehicle size, and carbon dioxide emissions from road traffic rose by 26%.

In addition to the above, we cannot stress too highly the fact that promoting research and development can achieve considerable energy savings. If, to complement the efforts of Member States, this is also coordinated at Community level, far more spectacular results could be achieved. It is worth emphasising that, as a consequence of measures introduced following the oil crisis of the 1970s, the sector-specific energy intensity of European industry fell dramatically. Paying more attention to R&D might accelerate the appearance of energy-efficient products and services on the European market.

The European Commission's tasks

The energy efficiency policy might achieve success if the EU's law-making procedures and the National Action Plans agreed on the direction to be taken. The European Commission must play a central role in ensuring that this happens. It is vital that the Commission conduct a more thorough, scientifically based analysis of the National Action Plans. Special attention must be paid to examining whether the Member States have sufficient institutional capacity to undertake the commitments made. We can assume that no detailed analysis has taken place so far principally as a result of late submission on the part of many Member States. The Commission must also examine whether the support schemes are coordinated with the energy efficiency objectives. This is needed at both Community and Member State level.

The Commission must study the Community funds intended for research and development in order for energy efficiency to be afforded a more extensive role in the forthcoming seven-year financial perspective. There is also a need for the Commission to find out the reasons for the delays in submitting the action plans and take strong action to prevent further omissions.

5.12.2008

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on the follow-up of the energy efficiency national action plans : a first assessment
(2008/2214(INI))

Rapporteur: Emanuel Jardim Fernandes **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Highlights the significant potential for energy efficiency across a broad range of sectors; stresses that only through higher technological innovation and the adoption of a holistic, coordinated approach involving local, regional, national and Community policies can a visionary, long-term strategy ensuring consistency between projects and producing the best results be implemented;
2. Underlines the fact that energy efficiency needs to be treated as an European and global priority, taking into consideration the increases in the global demand for energy, the rising prices of oil and gas and the impact of climate change;
3. Stresses the relationship between energy and territorial cohesion, as pointed out by the Green Paper on territorial cohesion, in terms of both the positive contribution of energy efficiency measures to sustainable development, energy security, the importance of a well-designed spatial strategy and the creation of long-term solutions for all regions;
4. Calls on the Commission to work together with the Member States and other relevant actors in the framework of the energy efficiency national plans in order to ensure that, when presenting measures that should ensure greater energy efficiency, adequate attention is paid to responding to the specific characteristics and challenges of all regions, including island, mountainous and outermost regions and the regions of the new Member States;
5. Notes with regret that in most Member States the funding allocated to energy-related projects, in particular energy efficiency projects, is still insufficient and fails to adequately account for regional variances; given that cohesion policy offers a framework for financing projects relating to energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy and also energy infrastructure, calls on Member States and regions to focus in the implementation

of their respective operational programmes on innovative measures in order to develop cost-effective energy efficiency solutions; stresses that the private sector, supported by national measures, should play a more prominent role in investing in and developing new, sustainable energy technologies, while also taking innovative actions to adopt an approach more focussed on energy efficiency; believes that this can only bring about a win-win situation for both the public and the private sector;

6. Encourages Member States to make substantial use of alternative renewable energy sources such as wind, biomass, bio fuels and also wave and tidal energy, where possible;
7. Calls on the Member States to develop long-term energy efficiency awareness campaigns, focussing on efficiency in buildings, both public and private and also on convincing the public that energy efficiency can bring them real savings; also invites the Commission, the Member States and the regions to encourage the deployment of national and regional programmes to develop mechanisms stimulating Structural Funds investment both in multi-family and social housing sectors and in innovation and research projects for energy efficiency and energy service companies in order to promote green technologies and local sustainable economic development;
8. Encourages in particular Member States and the regions to use Structural funds to set up on their territories thematic networks in the framework of the Concerted Action provided for by the 2008 Intelligent Energy Europe Work Programme in order to be informed about practices of other EU regions as regards the efficient use of energy and to exchange know-how and experience in this domain;
9. Asks the Commission for the next programming period of the Structural Funds to support energy-efficiency objectives, to reinforce priority criteria related to them and to support the implementation of concrete measures and technologies for saving energy and fostering its efficient use, including through the promotion of partnerships, in projects such as renovating buildings, modernising street illumination and ecological transport, modernising installations for urban heating and producing heating and electricity;
10. Stresses the strategic role of EU public authorities, in particular at regional and local level, in strengthening the implementation of the necessary institutional support for energy-efficiency initiatives, as described in Directive 2006/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2006 on energy end-use efficiency and energy services; recommends the strengthening of capillary information and education campaigns, for example through the use of easily understandable energy efficiency labels, and of energy-related pilot initiatives and training on the territories of those regional and local authorities aiming at raising citizens' awareness and changing behaviour;
11. Highlights the key role of the transport sector in reducing energy consumption and promoting energy efficiency;
12. Considers that public authorities at all levels, according to their financial circumstances, should be the first to set an example through the use of energy-efficient equipment on their premises, the implementation of Green Public Procurement into their procedures and the promotion of energy-saving practices in their daily activities.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	2.12.2008
Result of final vote	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;"> + : 41 - : 0 0 : 0 </div> </div>
Members present for the final vote	Emmanouil Angelakas, Stavros Arnaoutakis, Jana Bobošíková, Wolfgang Bulfon, Giorgio Carollo, Antonio De Blasio, Bairbre de Brún, Petru Filip, Gerardo Galeote, Eugenijus Gentvilas, Monica Giuntini, Ambroise Guellec, Marian Harkin, Jim Higgins, Filiz Hakaeva Hyusmenova, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Gisela Kallenbach, Tunne Kelam, Evgeni Kirilov, Miloš Koterec, Constanze Angela Krehl, Florencio Luque Aguilar, Jamila Madeira, James Nicholson, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Jan Olbrycht, Maria Petre, Wojciech Roszkowski, Grażyna Staniszevska, Catherine Stihler, Margie Sudre, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, Oldřich Vlasák
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Brigitte Douay, Emanuel Jardim Fernandes, Ramona Nicole Mănescu, Samuli Pohjamo, Jürgen Schröder, Bart Staes, László Surján, Iuliu Winkler

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	21.1.2009
Result of final vote	+: 49 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Šarūnas Birutis, Jan Březina, Philippe Busquin, Giles Chichester, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Den Dover, Lena Ek, Nicole Fontaine, Adam Gierek, Norbert Glante, András Gyürk, Fiona Hall, David Hammerstein, Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, Mary Honeyball, Ján Hudacký, Romana Jordan Cizelj, Werner Langen, Anne Laperrouze, Eluned Morgan, Angelika Niebler, Reino Paasilinna, Atanas Papanizov, Aldo Patriciello, Francisca Pleguezuelos Aguilar, Anni Podimata, Miloslav Ransdorf, Vladimír Remek, Herbert Reul, Teresa Riera Madurell, Mechtild Rothe, Paul Rübig, Andres Tarand, Patrizia Toia, Catherine Trautmann, Claude Turmes, Nikolaos Vakalis, Alejo Vidal-Quadras
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Pilar Ayuso, Ivo Belet, Zdzisław Kazimierz Chmielewski, Matthias Groote, Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Toine Manders, Vittorio Prodi, Esko Seppänen, Silvia-Adriana Țicău
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Marian-Jean Marinescu