

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2467/00

by Paulo Casaca (PSE), Isidoro Sánchez García (ELDR), Margie Sudre (PPE-DE), Roy Perry (PPE-DE), Mariotto Segni (UEN) and Jean-Claude Fruteau (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Islands

Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the promotion of electricity from renewable energy sources in the internal electricity market, (COM (2000) 279 final) recently published by the Commission, raises certain questions.

Point 2.4, which deals with grid connection and reinforcement issues, contains the following paragraph:

'It has been suggested, as a general rule, that connection costs of renewable generators should be borne by the grid operator, to facilitate deployment of RES installations. It is doubtful whether this approach can be considered appropriate. In fact, it would lead to a situation where the distance to the grid would be irrelevant to potential investors. Such an approach would thus encourage non-economic installations. On the contrary, to ensure the correct development of the RES sector in the EU, it is important that all relevant investments are fully taken into account, including grid connection costs.'

Does this mean that an entrepreneur who wants to install an RES production unit in an outlying region, especially an island region, will in future be liable for grid connection costs, which in the Community's most outlying and isolated regions are likely to be prohibitive?

By way of example, would construction of a submarine cable between a region such as the Shetland Islands and the Scottish mainland entail payment of connection costs by any undertaking that wished to set up business in Shetland, taking advantage of its wind and wave energy resources?

Does it not seem that such a policy, which would most certainly discourage development of this kind of enterprise, would be in total contradiction with Article 154 of the Treaty and with Article 158 on economic and social cohesion, which also makes specific reference to the islands' situation?