European Parliament
2014-2019

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

2016/2058(INI)

22.6.2016

OPINION

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

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on an EU strategy on heating and cooling
(2016/2058(INI))

Rapporteur: Christofer Fjellner

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. Welcomes the Commission communication on an EU strategy on heating and cooling (COM(2016)0051) as an integral part of the Energy Union strategy; notes the major importance of the heating and cooling sector in achieving the EU energy and climate objectives by 2020, 2030 and 2050 and achieving the objectives of enhancing security of energy supply;

2. Highlights that EU policy tools and capacities are not yet sufficiently developed to drive the transformation of the heating and cooling sector, to maximise the use of potentials and to deploy solutions for demand reduction and decarbonisation at the required scale and pace;

3. Notes that it is estimated that the amount of heat produced from industrial processes and wasted in the atmosphere or in water, rather than utilised in some productive way, is enough to cover the Union's entire heating needs in residential and tertiary buildings;

4. Notes that measures for developing a comprehensive and integrated strategy for heating and cooling within the Energy Union offer significant opportunities for both EU business and consumers if implemented correctly, in terms of reducing overall energy costs for industry, boosting competitiveness and delivering cost savings to consumers;

5. Recalls that heating and cooling constitute the largest share of the EU's energy demand; emphasises the importance of respecting the technology-neutral principle between the currently available renewable sources and market- and state-based incentives in the transition to a low-carbon and secure energy supply to the heating and cooling sector;

6. Stresses that smart buildings and grids and increased energy efficiency in the heating and cooling sector will be important in order to achieve energy savings, and underlines the need to promote the mobilisation of private and public funding in the energy efficiency market and welcomes the upcoming review of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive;

7. Recalls that two-thirds of the EU's buildings were built when energy efficiency requirements were limited or non-existent and that nearly half of the buildings have individual boilers installed before 1992; notes that private and public buildings account for 40 % of final energy use and 36 % of CO2 emissions and that 85 % of the energy consumption of buildings is used for space and water heating; emphasises the need to increase energy efficiency through renovation and refurbishments of buildings and heating and cooling installations in order to deliver energy gains of at least 20 % by 2020, while acknowledging that the energy efficiency of Member States' building stocks vary greatly;

8. Considers that there is a large untapped potential to increase energy efficiency in the residential heating sector; calls on the Member States to adopt measures increasing heating systems' energy efficiency, as it is a cost-effective way to cut residential CO2

emissions;

9. Recalls that, despite some progress in the heating and cooling sector moving to renewable energy, 75 % of the primary energy supply still comes from fossil fuels; notes that buildings – and the people living in them – are the first consumers of heating and cooling; emphasises that the first priority is to reduce energy bills through renovation; insists that the remaining need for heating and cooling should come directly or indirectly from renewable energy sources;

10. Underlines the fundamental role of a restructuring plan for the building sectors in order to boost the green economy and the potential of green local jobs in the field of energy saving, energy efficiency and renewables in the private and public building sectors;

11. Stresses that research and technological innovation in the heating and cooling sector strengthens the competitive advantage and commercial viability of European business, and contributes to the main EU energy policy goals, including ensuring security of supply, sustainable development of energy production, transportation and consumption;

12. Recalls that investing in energy saving and efficiency offers the highest and fastest financial return in the energy sector;

13. Calls for a cost-effective approach focused on achieving energy savings at system level;

14. Emphasises the active role that consumers can play in the path to a sustainable European heating and cooling system; underlines that an effective outcome of the new regulation on energy labelling, where the scales on the new labels are forward-looking and highlight differences in terms of energy efficiency between products, could help consumers make more informed choices in terms of energy savings and reduce their bills; highlights that specific instruments – such as smart meters and home automation – can improve consumers' consumption behaviour;

15. Notes that EU regulatory frameworks serve to underline broad objectives, but true progress in revolutionising heating and cooling as part of a wider energy system overhaul is essential;

16. Notes that the most effective way of delivering on joint objectives is to empower and support local and regional authorities, in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders, in applying a fully integrated systems-based approach to urban planning, infrastructure development, building and renovation of housing stock and new industrial development in order to maximise potential cross-overs, efficiencies and other mutual benefits;

17. Calls on the Commission to fully utilise the heating and cooling sector to achieve cost-efficient gains in energy efficiency at system level by promoting the use of renewable energy sources and linking heat and power production, industrial processes (such as the recovery of waste gases), waste management and demand-side management, and to examine how the recovery of industrial waste heat and cooling and the sustainable production of biogas can be incentivised; underlines that cogeneration and tri-generation in the abovementioned sectors should be further exploited; emphasises that heat and power production linked to waste management should be consistent with the waste hierarchy as defined in the circular economy, thus avoiding a lock-in into incineration of

resources which can be recycled or reused;

18. Emphasises the importance of a more widespread, synergic and integrated use of all available European structural and regional funds and of the EFSI, which should be accessible to all actors, including SMEs and micro enterprises; calls for the Member States to increase user and consumer awareness of new technical solutions for saving energy, and calls for the Commission to promote the exchange of best practices between Member States;

19. Underlines the importance of preventing a costly lock-in into heating infrastructure linked to high-carbon sources of energy production; stresses the importance of assessing the need for public financial support for district heating infrastructure in the context of the EU's objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80-95 % by 2050 compared with 1990 levels and an orderly transition of the energy economy;

20. Believes that consumers must be at the centre of this strategy, using modern technologies and innovative solutions to shift to a smart, efficient and sustainable heating and cooling system that can unlock energy and budgetary savings for companies and citizens, improve air quality, increase well-being for individuals and provide benefits to businesses and to society as a whole;

21. Stresses the need to invest more in research and development in order to develop innovative and technological solutions; stresses at the same time that through a wider use of currently available technologies it will be possible to increase the efficiency of heating and cooling systems by 20 %;

22. Underlines that while a large proportion of European buildings today suffer from the wasting of energy because of their poor insulation quality and their old and inefficient heating systems, energy poverty affects nearly 11 % of the EU population;

23. Notes that a significant increase in the energy efficiency of buildings could be a key tool for tackling energy poverty;

24. Notes the Union's varying conditions, considers that the shorter the chain by which primary energy is converted into other forms to generate usable heat, the higher the energy efficiency, and calls on the Commission to promote technology-neutral instruments enabling each community to develop cost-efficient solutions to reduce the carbon intensity of the heating and cooling sector;

25. Calls for plans to be drawn up with a view to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies and channelling financial resources into energy efficiency projects serving to achieve the EU's goals for decarbonisation of the energy sector by 2050;

26. Recalls that some industries or power stations generate heat or cooling as a by-product which could be reused within plants or sold to heat buildings nearby; notes that integrating the production, consumption and reuse of waste cooling creates environmental and economic benefits and reduces the primary energy demand for cooling; emphasises the importance of using waste heat and cooling, and calls on the Commission to promote this use;

27. Notes that 72 % of the heating and cooling demand of single family houses is consumed in rural and intermediate areas; notes that households in rural, remote and isolated locations may therefore require particular attention and tailored solutions;

28. Stresses the key role that a high level of electrification of the heating and cooling sector can have in decarbonisation both in terms of greenhouse gas reductions and in improved urban air quality;

29. Underlines the widespread availability of solid biomass, biogas and geothermal energy and the potential of district heating and cogeneration of heat and power as a cost-efficient means of decarbonising the energy sector while also contributing to security of supply objectives; emphasises that a European gas crisis would constitute a heat crisis; welcomes sustainability criteria for biomass, which must be well balanced so as to promote its environmentally sustainable and competitive use; calls on the Commission to propose without delay a biomass sustainability policy;

30. Stresses that renewable-based district heating prevents the spread of more polluting individual heating systems, which increase air pollution in residual areas and are much more difficult to control than widespread district heating systems; emphasises, however, that infrastructure and climate conditions vary within the Union and that these systems often need modernising in order to enhance their efficiency; calls therefore for an analysis of the need to support district heating infrastructure and of taxation practices as regards renewable energy sources and district heating;

31. Stresses the need to develop specific energy policy for those areas not connected to the natural gas grid;

32. Underlines the importance of increasing the use of renewable heating and cooling technologies, in combination with a strong increase in energy efficiency;

33. Underlines, while stressing the need to safeguard technology neutrality depending on the different socio-economic and geographical circumstances in the Member States, the enormous potential of innovative energy-neutral homes as a cost-efficient means for decarbonising the construction sector and ordinary households;

34. Emphasises that waste-to-energy will continue to play a significant role in heating since the alternative is often landfill and the use of fossil fuels, recalling that there is a need to increase recycling;

35. Calls for a review of existing legislation focused on safeguarding technology neutrality and cost efficiency so as to ensure that it does not promote or discredit one technology over another – renewable energy produced on-site, such as by means of residential solar panels, or near a building should for instance be accounted for when calculating the building’s energy performance, regardless of the source;

36. Welcomes the EU strategy on heating and cooling, which concludes that ’consumers must be at the centre of this strategy’ and intends to enable them to use a variety of ‘modern technologies and innovative solutions to shift to a smart, efficient and sustainable heating and cooling system that can unlock energy and budgetary savings for companies and citizens’;

37. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and local authorities to address the specific problems of rural buildings that tend to be older, less energy efficient, less beneficial to health and provide lower thermal comfort;

38. Recalls the contribution of renewable energies to security of energy supply in Europe, and underlines the high reactivity of hydraulic production to peak demands and blackout risks;

39. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and local authorities, in light of the risk of possible future gas supply crises, to fully integrate the production of biogas from manure processing in the implementation of the circular economy.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	21.6.2016
Result of final vote	+: 45 –: 11 0: 10
Members present for the final vote	Margrete Auken, Pilar Ayuso, Zoltán Balczó, Ivo Belet, Simona Bonafè, Biljana Borzan, Lynn Boylan, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Soledad Cabezón Ruiz, Nessa Childers, Birgit Collin-Langen, Mireille D'Ornano, Angélique Delahaye, Jørn Dohrmann, Ian Duncan, Eleonora Evi, Karl-Heinz Florenz, Elisabetta Gardini, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Jens Gieseke, Julie Girling, Sylvie Goddyn, Matthias Groote, Françoise Grossetête, Andrzej Grzyb, György Hölvényi, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Benedek Jávor, Rikke Karlsson, Giovanni La Via, Peter Liese, Norbert Lins, Valentinas Mazuronis, Susanne Melior, Massimo Paolucci, Gilles Pargneaux, Piernicola Pedicini, Bolesław G. Piecha, Pavel Poc, Frédérique Ries, Michèle Rivasi, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Davor Škrlec, Renate Sommer, Dubravka Šuica, Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu, Nils Torvalds, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Damiano Zoffoli
Substitutes present for the final vote	Renata Briano, Nicola Caputo, Mark Demesmaeker, Herbert Dorfmann, Christofer Fjellner, Eleonora Forenza, Elena Gentile, Iris Hoffmann, Anne-Marie Mineur, Ulrike Müller, Marijana Petir, Gabriele Preuß, Jasenko Selimovic, Bart Staes
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Rosa D'Amato, Edouard Ferrand