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Committee on Regional Development

2007/2091(INI)

25.7.2007

OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on conventional energy sources and energy technology
(2007/2091(INI))

Draftswoman: Francisca Pleguezuelos Aguilar

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. Stresses the long-term importance of conventional energy sources for energy production and regional development in Europe;

2. Stresses the effects of conventional energy sources in terms of employment and income in mining regions (some 300 000 jobs in coal mining alone) and in areas where power plants are located;

3. Stresses the particular strategic importance of coal and nuclear energy (accounting, respectively, for 29 % and 31 % of electricity production in the EU) in the present and future European energy mix; notes the extremely high level of dependency on energy imports from regions with problematic security situations outside the Community;

4. Calls for more efficiency gains in fossil fuel power plant technology, a further improvement in safety standards for nuclear power plants, rapid developments of nuclear fusion technology and corresponding increases in research funding;

5. Calls on the Member States and regional and local authorities to diversify and decentralise energy generation using the most appropriate resources in the various regions throughout the EU and taking account of specific regional characteristics;

6. Welcomes the findings in the Commission's Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion (COM(2007)0273) that areas with the highest level of GDP per capita tend to have the lowest consumption of energy per unit of economic output; however, points to the possibilities for economic growth through innovation and a sustainable competitive energy policy that investment in sustainable energy generation from fossil fuels offers all regions of the EU; therefore calls on the Commission and the Member States to determine what factors might be conducive to supporting such investment and to encourage the exchange of good practice to help bring it about;

7. Urges the Commission and the regional and local authorities to take measures to promote rational use of energy, both electrical and thermal, in particular through more extensive promotion of 'energy-intelligent' building, rational street-lighting systems, proper insulation of thermal energy transmission systems (particularly in urban conglomerations), replacement of outdated energy appliances with energy-saving ones, etc.;

8. Welcomes the European Council conclusions of 9 March 2007 and in particular the decision to set a target for the EU of a 20 % reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared to the 1990 level, or 30 % in the case of agreement with other industrialised countries under international agreements; but recalls its resolution of 14 December 2006 on a European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy - Green Paper[1], which sets a target of 25 % of energy consumption to come from renewable

[1] *Texts Adopted*, P6(2006)0603.

sources by 2020 and calls on the Member States to work in close collaboration with regional and local authorities in drawing up and implementing national plans serving to meet that ambitious target;

9. Reiterates that, because of their geographical and climatic features, the remote and outermost regions have great potential as regards renewables and urges the exceptional opportunities arising from that fact to be exploited to the full;

10. Notes that energy generation from biomass as part of the EU's energy mix has significant potential and could, moreover, help to create many jobs in rural areas; reminds the Commission and the Member States that producing energy from biomass, as well as from fossil fuels, releases significant amounts of CO_2 and that the Member States should also utilise carbon capture technology where possible; notes that any extensive production of biomass should be carried out in a sustainable manner without causing harm to the environment either within the EU or in third countries;

11. Considers that the EU is a world leader in a number of clean, efficient energy technologies making for low carbon emissions, an advantage that could be one key factor in regional development, and urges the Member States and regional and local authorities to encourage investment in these technologies;

12. Urges the Commission, the Member States, the regions, and other stakeholders to utilise the opportunities offered by cohesion policy and to invest in new energy technologies, both in renewable energy sources and in sustainable fossil fuel technologies (‘low-emission power plants’);

13. Urges the Member States and regional authorities to take measures to improve energy security by means of enhanced direct cooperation in the energy sector, particularly in border regions;

14. Believes that it is essential to invest in sustainable energy technologies and maintains that the Structural Funds should be used as one way of financing projects of this kind;

15. Deplores the fact that there are no reasonably detailed and accurate figures at regional level on energy consumption, generation, and prices, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to work together with a view to compiling a Europe-wide study providing the necessary data;

16. Urges the Commission to gauge the territorial impact of its energy policy proposals and to pass on its findings to the Member States;

17. Reiterates that coal stocks are spread very widely throughout the world and that the fact that the EU also has such stocks makes for security of supply; accordingly, welcomes the Commission proposal to invest in demonstration projects focusing on integrated clean coal technology solutions based on CO_2 capture and storage, the aim being to place these technologies, which will enable electricity to be generated from sustainable coal, on a commercially viable footing;

18. Favours the use of sedimentary basins for carbon storage but notes that, according to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Europe has few "highly prospective

sedimentary basins" which could be used for storage of CO_2, most of them being located in the North Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea; emphasises that, in order to transport captured CO_2 from production processes to the regions most suitable for storage, either pipelines or shipping must be used and this should be taken into account when calculating the carbon cost of such projects;

19. Notes that one third of the coal-fired power plants in the EU will reach the end of their useful life before 'sustainable coal' technologies become commercially viable and calls for transitional solutions in the form of environmental legislation and financial measures which are compatible with environmental and economic requirements;

20. Emphasises the fact that, according to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, concentrations of carbon have been shown to increase the acidity of water; believes, therefore, that it is necessary that any underwater carbon storage does not adversely affect the marine environment or food chain and should not be permitted in areas where the marine ecosystem is unusually fragile;

21. Urges the Member States to commit financial resources on an equal scale to R&D and innovation on the one hand and demonstration projects with a view to developing clean coal technologies on the other;

22. Stresses the importance of informing the inhabitants of areas with coal-fired plants of their inherent dangers and points out the value of publishing plans to modernise existing power plants and improve their environmental impact;

23. Calls for more funding for recording environmental impacts and improvement measures in areas with coal-fired plants.

PROCEDURE

Title	on conventional energy sources and energy technology
Procedure number	2007/2091(INI)
Committee responsible	ITRE
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	REGI 26.4.2007
Enhanced cooperation – date announced in plenary	
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Francisca Pleguezuelos Aguilar 7.6.2007
Previous drafts(wo)man	
Discussed in committee	7.6.2007
Date adopted	17.7.2007
Result of final vote	+: 39 –: 0 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	Alfonso Andria, Stavros Arnaoutakis, Elspeth Attwooll, Tiberiu Bărbuleţiu, Jean Marie Beaupuy, Rolf Berend, Wolfgang Bulfon, Bairbre de Brún, Vasile Dîncu, Gerardo Galeote, Iratxe García Pérez, Pedro Guerreiro, Zita Gurmai, Marian Harkin, Jim Higgins, Filiz Husmenova, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Rumiana Jeleva, Tunne Kelam, Evgeni Kirilov, Constanze Angela Krehl, Mario Mantovani, Sérgio Marques, James Nicholson, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Jan Olbrycht, Maria Petre, Markus Pieper, Pierre Pribetich, Wojciech Roszkowski, Elisabeth Schroedter, Grażyna Staniszewska, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, Oldřich Vlasák
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jan Březina, Den Dover, Jill Evans, Emanuel Jardim Fernandes, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Samuli Pohjamo, Christa Prets, Károly Ferenc Szabó
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Thomas Ulmer
Comments (available in one language only)	