Road map for renewable energy in Europe

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The European Parliament adopted the initiative report by Britta **THOMSEN** (PES, DK) on the Roadmap for Renewable Energy in Europe. Firstly, the committee calls on the Commission to **present by the end of 2007 at the latest a proposal for a renewable energy legislative framework** to be adopted by co-decision on the basis of Article 175(1) of the EC Treaty. It stresses that this legislative framework should maintain existing legislation for the renewable electricity and biofuels sectors, but must be strengthened and improved and accompanied by ambitious legislation on increasing the share of renewable energy for heating and cooling.

The Commission is urged to propose a sectoral approach within the legislative framework, setting clear and realistic binding targets for the electricity, transport and heating and cooling sectors. It is also urged, in its forthcoming proposal for revision of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), to ensure the better internalisation of the external cost of energy production through the auctioning of ETS credits, so as to create a level playing field for renewable energies and to ensure a fair price for carbon.

Convinced that renewable energy sources are abundant on our planet and of the need to extract energy from them, the report recommends that the revenues generated from ETS auctioning and research funds should be used for research into renewable sources of energy, including promising and challenging sources, such as osmosis energy, tidal energy, wave energy, concentrated solar power, high altitude wind power, laddermill energy and algae fuel technology.

Boosting Renewables: Parliament emphasises the importance of creating and implementing Renewables Action Plans (RAPs) at Community and national levels and stresses that these should serve to contribute to a real Common European Energy Policy. It calls for sectoral targets to be incorporated into the RAPs to encourage investment, innovation and research in all sectors.

The Commission is invited, inter alia, to: i) reach an agreement as soon as possible on assigning the **20% renewables target**, taking into account cost-effectiveness and sectoral analyses of the potential in each country, in such a way as ensures an active commitment from all Member States; ii) contribute to the creation of a market environment that is favourable to renewables in that it actively promotes the decentralised production and use of this type of energy; iii) include energy efficiency scenarios in all RAPs; iv) include in its proposal a clear mid-term target for the proportion of energy to be derived from renewable energy sources so as to avoid delays in the Member States and for reviews of the RAPs to be carried out every three years starting from the date of entry into force of the proposal, so that the Commission can take action before 2020 if any Member State is not fulfilling its obligations. Parliament stressed that Member States which fail to honour their commitments must suffer the consequences.

Parliament also called on the Commission to ensure that the forthcoming legislative proposal concerning renewable energies contains strong measures for the promotion of renewable electricity, with the aim of increasing its share in the EU from the present level to at least double that amount by 2020. It regretted that regional and local authorities in the EU continue to show too little interest in harnessing and using renewable energy sources.

Whilst each Member State must be free to choose the most appropriate renewable energy sources given the differences in potential to develop certain renewable energies, Parliament insisted that the target of 20% of energy from renewables means the contribution from renewable energy sources, not other low-carbon energy sources. It deplored the fact that the EU target of a 12 % renewable energy contribution to the EU energy mix by 2010 will, in all likelihood, not be met.

Internal Market and the grid infrastructure: Parliament regrets that the European Council of 8 March 2007 did not call sufficiently strongly for completion of the internal energy market. It believes that it is indispensable that renewables are rapidly integrated into the internal energy market. It is necessary to ensure equal conditions in every Member States in order for a real internal market for energy to develop. The report underlines that transparent, fair and priority access to the grids is an essential precondition for the successful integration and expansion of electricity generation from renewable sources and that grid access and planning procedures should be further simplified and harmonised. It calls for increased efforts in each Member State to reduce administrative burdens and simplify authorisation procedures including the possibility to create a one-stop shop in order to facilitate the authorisation of renewables. With a view to creating a favourable market environment for renewable energy, the Commission and the Member States are called upon to abolish perverse subsidies and the proactive use of public procurement within the EU to help reduce the cost of both energy efficient and renewable technologies.

Heating and Cooling: the report calls on the Commission to ensure that any proposal for a framework directive for renewables contains strong measures for the promotion of renewable heating and cooling with the aim of increasing its share in the EU from the present level of approximately 10% to at least double that amount by 2020. It encourages the Commission to: i) propose innovative solutions to enable all relevant technologies to achieve a high degree of market penetration; ii) speed up the widespread adoption in all Member States of best practice regulations making it compulsory, at least where existing buildings are substantially renovated and new buildings are built, for a minimum proportion of the heating requirement to be met from renewable sources; iii) develop by the end of 2007 an implementation programme for the large scale deployment of passive and net positive energy houses and buildings in the EU.

Transport and biofuels: the report urges the Member States to set ambitious goals regarding the use of renewable energy sources for public transport, calling for the principle of decoupling growth in transport from economic growth and for a stronger commitment to cleaner modes of transport, demand management and a gradual rise in fuel efficiency standards in the transport sector. It emphasised that the production of more fuel-efficient cars continues to be the best way of reducing CO2 emissions and oil consumption per vehicle and is concerned that the message that the Community sends to the car industry should be less focused on the demand for biofuels and more focussed on the demand for more fuel efficient vehicles. It welcomes, however, the proposal for the revision of the Fuel Quality Directive, provided that strong safeguards are put in place to ensure that these fuels are produced in a sustainable way. Whilst tax incentives are an important instrument for changing consumer choice from fossil fuels to biofuels Parliament believes, that biofuels that do not fulfil sustainability criteria should not be eligible for subsidies or tax exemptions and should not count towards achievement of the biofuels target.

It regrets that the poorest developing countries will be hit earliest and hardest by climate change, even though they have contributed little to the causes of the problem. The EU can play an important role through the transfer of technology to developing countries.

The Commission is called upon to: i) submit measures to promote other alternative fuels that will help to cut emissions from the transport sector; ii) include hybrid electric cars in the Strategic EU Energy Technology plan; iii) develop a mandatory, comprehensive certification scheme, applicable to biofuels both produced within and imported into the EU; iv) seek cooperation with the WTO and similar international organisations in order to secure international acceptance of specific sustainability criteria and the certification system, and thus promote the most sustainable means of production of biofuels worldwide and create a level playing field for all; v) ensure that the EU's bilateral agreements with third countries address trade and investment in renewable energy; vi) ensure that fossile fuels comply with the same requirements as those imposed on biofuels production.

Lastly, Member States are asked to support the purchase of low CO2 emission cars through fiscal incentives.