

Follow-up of the energy efficiency national action plans: a first assessment

2008/2214(INI) - 21/01/2009

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted an own-initiative report by András **GYÜRK** (EPP-ED, HU) in response to the Commission Communication on the follow-up of the energy efficiency National Action Plans (a first assessment).

The report welcomes the action plans produced by the Member States but notes with concern 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.

Member States are called upon to increase their level of ambition and turn their National Energy Efficiency Action Plans (NEEAPs) into a practical tool for delivery of their energy efficiency targets under Directive 2006/32/EC and, in particular, to improve energy efficiency by at least 20% by 2020. They are also called upon 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.

MEPs regard 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. They also consider it essential that 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. In this context, they stress the need for 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.

According to MEPs, the National Action Plans should pay special attention to poverty caused by rising energy prices and guarantee suitable protection for those at risk of poverty. The Plans should also place special emphasis on how governments intend to promote and support energy efficiency investments on the part of SMEs, which have an important role to play in improving energy efficiency but do not have the same capacity to comply with legislation or new standards in the energy sector.

Stressing the strategic role of EU public authorities, in particular at regional and local level, the report calls on the Member States to: (i) 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; (ii) 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.

MEPs call on the 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.

The Commission is called upon, inter alia, to:

- support the compulsory introduction of smart metering systems;
- 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;

- 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;
- encourage those Member States which have not yet adopted their national energy efficiency plan to implement decisions which have been taken in that area.