

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

2008/2214(INI) - 19/02/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 616 votes to 24, with 17 abstentions, a resolution on the follow-up of the energy efficiency National Action Plans (first assessment), following the European Commission's communication on this issue.

The resolution 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.

**Legally binding targets for energy efficiency:** the Parliament calls on the Commission to make energy efficiency and energy savings the cornerstone of the Energy Policy for Europe and urges it to make the 20% energy efficiency target by 2020 legally binding. The 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 on energy end-use efficiency and energy services.

**More ambitious interim targets:** the Parliament also calls on the Member States to go beyond the minimum national indicative energy saving target of 9% by 2016 in Directive 2006/32/EC and to set clear interim targets to achieve the final target. Moreover, the Commission is called upon to review the Directive on energy services in 2012.

**Energy efficiency requirements of buildings:** stressing that residential buildings are among the most energy-wasteful sectors, MEPs urge that financial support at both national and Community levels for the energy performance of buildings be increased. They encourage Member States and the regions 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, in order to be informed about practices of other EU regions as regards the efficient use of energy.

The National Action Plans should set as a priority the improvement of the envelope quality of dwellings where low income people reside, taking into account the fact that unpredictable fuel prices will seriously aggravate the economic situation of these households and may create serious social problems.

**Developing action plans:** 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. Moreover, the plans should pay special attention to poverty caused by rising energy prices and guarantee suitable protection for those at risk of poverty.

MEPs also consider it indispensable 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.

**Role of SMEs:** MEPs believe that SMEs have an important role to play in improving energy efficiency but that they do not have the same capacity to comply with legislation or new standards in the energy sector. They consider, therefore, that the facilities which will be created by the Small Business Act should handle information and contacts with SMEs concerning energy efficiency.

**Informing consumers and raising awareness:** 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.

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.