

Resolution on access to energy in developing countries

2016/2885(RSP) - 01/12/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Development on access to energy in developing countries

Members recalled that **1.2 billion people lack access to electricity and half of those live in Africa**. They noted that from an electricity-access point of view **sub-Saharan Africa's situation is the worst worldwide**, but as this region's power sector evolves it is likely that by 2040 sub-Saharan-Africa will consume as much electricity as India and Latin America combined did in 2010.

At the same time, Members indicated that more than 70 % of Africa's total energy consumption comes from renewable sources, but almost all of that is from traditional uses of biomass. Huge opportunities for including other sources remain, especially in terms of solar and wind energy.

Members also recalled that access to energy **accelerates development** and that energy governance, while also difficult to implement, is essential.

They supported the Commission's '**Energising Development**' initiative to provide access to sustainable energy for an additional 500 million people in developing countries by 2030 through programme elements such as the creation of a Technical Assistance Facility, drawing upon EU experts to develop technical expertise in developing countries, and to promote capacity building and technology transfer. This initiative must be fully aligned with the EU development policy objectives stated in the Lisbon Treaty.

The relevant provisions in the DCI regulation represent a sound basis for EU development assistance in the energy area. Parliament recalled that these provisions focus on access to energy and emphasise local and regional renewable energy and on ensuring access for poor people in remote regions.

Parliament asked the Commission to regularly report on its website what progress has been made towards achieving the target of its 'Energising Development' initiative, to specify what proportion of the total funding for energy in developing countries has gone to renewable energy, remote regions, staff training, the creation of local know-how and skills and to local and off-grid solutions.

Renewable energy resources in Africa: Members highlighted the high potential of renewable energy resources in Africa in terms of solar and wind production for ensuring access to energy for all, especially in rural areas. They urged that the EU and its Member States facilitate technology transfer for its deployment in developing countries.

They noted that Africa has about 10 % of the world's theoretical hydropower potential, and noted also that the poor, other vulnerable groups and future generations are likely to bear a disproportionate share of the **social and environmental costs of large dam projects** without gaining a commensurate share of the economic benefits.

Parliament recommended that financing agencies (bilateral aid agencies, multilateral development banks, Export Credit Agencies, and the EIB) ensure that any dam option for which financing is approved complies with World Commission on Dams guidelines. It stressed, in particular, that any planning of dams should be evaluated according to five values: equity, efficiency, participatory decision-making, sustainability and accountability.

Parliament recalled that bioenergy is a complex energy source interconnected to agriculture, forestry, industry and which impacts on the ecosystems and biodiversity. The development of biomass for energy poses new threats, i.e. in terms of food security, land tenure security, deforestation and degradation of lands.

Parliament also called for the EU and its Member States to provide support and technical assistance in the implementation of the Action Plan of the Africa Clean Energy Corridor initiative, which seeks to meet half of total electricity demand from clean, indigenous, cost-effective renewable resources by 2030, thereby reducing carbon dioxide emissions. It supported the use of blending where this represents the most efficient use of funds and it called on the Commission to carefully avoid granting funds to any project which would be viable without these funds, even if a private investor applies for them.

End fossil fuel subsidies: Parliament called for the phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies and encouraged allocation of these freed-up funds to efficient social policies and to actions for eradicating energy poverty in developing countries. It emphasised that the only ultimate measure of success of the EU's actions is the size of the contribution they make towards the attainment of universal access to energy, with minimum greenhouse gas emissions.