

Promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources. Renewable Energy Directive

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This report provides the latest information on progress up to 2017 towards the 20% renewable energy target by 2020 and aims to meet the European Commission's other reporting obligations under Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (RED I) and the Directive on indirect land use change (ICLS).

The EU has made it a political priority to become the world leader in the renewable energy sector.

Progress made by the EU-28

The report noted that in 2017, the EU reached a share of 17.52% of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption, against a target of 20% for 2020, and above the indicative trajectory of 16% for 2017/2018. In addition, the EU as a whole is also above the slightly more ambitious trajectory defined by Member States themselves in their National Renewable Energy Action Plans (NREAPs).

The EU is on track to reach its 2020 target.

With regard to individual sectors, at EU level the renewable energy share in electricity and heating and cooling has been systematically above the levels defined by Member States in their NREAPs, while for transport, the share of renewables is basically following the planned trajectory.

In terms of the absolute consumption of renewable energy, the heating and cooling sector provides the largest contribution with a total of 102 Mtoe in 2017, closely followed by renewable electricity, with a consumption of 86.7 Mtoe, and the transport sector, with a consumption of 23.65 Mtoe.

Projections

The report notes that the rate of increase in the share of renewable energy has slowed since 2014.

In order to assess the feasibility of 2020 target achievement, a modelling exercise has been carried out for the Commission. According to this modelling, current or planned renewable energy initiatives would achieve a share of 18.1% to 20.7% of renewable energy in 2020 at EU level.

While the EU is still on track to meet its renewable energy 2020 targets, efforts should be stepped up in the remaining period until 2020 to ensure this is the case, also in connection with expected higher energy consumption in the future.

In 2017, 11 Member States already have a renewable energy share above their respective 2020 targets. 10 other Member States met or exceeded their average indicative trajectory from the Renewable Energy Directive for the two-year period 2017-2018. There are, however, 7 Member States (Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Poland and Slovenia) that would need additional efforts in order to comply with the average 2017-2018 indicative trajectory towards 2020.

Most Member States are encouraged to:

- continue stepping up efforts to both deploy renewables across the three sectors, while at the same time reducing energy consumption;
- consider the possibility of using statistical transfers, as foreseen in the Renewables Directive, either as a way to ensure target achievement when there is a deficit, or to sell their potential surpluses to other Member States. The Commission stands ready to actively support Member States in this regard and facilitate the necessary cooperation.

The report also notes the usefulness of the work of the Task Force on Energy Efficiency launched by the Commission, alongside the new renewable energy auctions already announced in several Member States for instance in France, the Netherlands, and Portugal, or the wider use of corporate power purchase agreements through which European companies bought a record amount of wind power capacity in 2018.

Going forward, according to their draft 2030 National Energy and Climate Plans, all Member States have already tabled their national contributions to the EU level binding target of at least 32 % which would make renewables the backbone of the Union energy system. By June 2019, the Commission will assess whether these national contributions, and the associated policies and measures, are in line with the EU ambition, and, if appropriate, issue recommendations to Member States.