A European strategy for offshore renewable energy

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The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted an own-initiative report by Morten PETERSEN (Renew Europe, DK) on a European strategy for marine renewable energy.

A key element of the green transition

The report stressed that tackling climate change with the take up of offshore renewable energy is essential to achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement and meeting the EU's commitment to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 at the latest. The Commission is urged to make offshore renewable energy and other relevant energy technologies **essential components of the European energy system by 2050**.

Members recalled that, according to the Commission, the targets for energy production from offshore renewable energy in all EU sea basins are at least 60 GW by 2030 and 340 GW by 2050 and that the installed capacity of offshore wind should be 70-79 GW to ensure a cost-competitive transition to a 55% reduction by 2030. The report called on Member States and the public and private sectors to **go beyond the 55% reduction target by 2030**.

Members called on the Commission to **revise public procurement and state aid rules** to ensure a cost-competitive transition, supported by a well-functioning market that encourages the take-up of offshore wind. In this respect, they noted that there are areas where offshore energy potential remains largely untapped, such as the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Baltic and Black Seas.

The Commission is invited to carry out an impact assessment that clarifies the economic and socio-economic impacts of offshore renewable energy, focusing on existing and new jobs created by the **deployment of 300-450 GW of capacity by 2050**.

Infrastructure and networks

The report highlighted the **urgent need to improve and expand existing infrastructure** to allow for the increased use of electricity from renewable energy sources. The Commission and Member States are urged to ensure adequate infrastructure, such as **transmission lines**, to integrate and transport electricity generated from offshore renewable energy.

Members stressed the importance of **modern, sustainable and innovative seaports** for the assembly, manufacture and maintenance of offshore renewable energy equipment and the considerable investment needed to upgrade port infrastructure.

Member States' maritime spatial planning plans should be compatible with future developments and should ensure that offshore energy infrastructure can co-exist with shipping lanes, the fishing industry, traffic separation schemes, anchorage areas, naval access and activities and port development.

The report welcomed the Commission's proposal for a revision of the TEN-E regulation and the attention it gives to the needs and priorities of the offshore renewable energy sector. It stressed that the

development of sustainable and efficient hybrid and radial offshore wind assets for generation, interconnection and transmission requires forward-looking **public and private planning** and investment. Regulatory frameworks should facilitate forward-looking investments.

Members also noted that electricity and **direct heating** and offshore renewable energy can contribute to the greening of all electricity end-uses, with a consequent reduction and eventual elimination of greenhouse gas emissions.

Research on multi-purpose interconnectors and their development as well as research and development on floating wind, tidal, wave and tidal turbine stations should be supported.

Marine spatial planning permits and plans

Members noted the current lengthy process for the development of marine renewable energy projects and the urgent need to speed up this process to meet the 2030 and 2050 goals. They called on Member States to put in place a transparent process and to consider introducing **time limits** for authorisation when fully complete dossiers have been provided, with a deadline for a decision. They stressed the importance of shortening procedures where necessary and of taking measures to ensure that deadlines are met.

Members also called for an alignment of maritime spatial planning with national energy and climate plans. The Commission is urged to put in place a **simple monitoring framework** to transparently report on the progress of offshore renewable energy deployment and to report to Parliament on whether offshore renewable energy deployment is on track.

Market conditions

The report called on the Commission and Member States to ensure the best possible framework conditions for a market-driven development of offshore wind energy. Pointing out that uncertainty about the distribution of costs and benefits is deterring companies from launching marine renewable energy projects, Members called on the Commission to speed up the publication of EU guidelines on the **sharing of costs and benefits of offshore hybrid projects**.

Members also called for a review of the current regulatory framework governing EU **electricity markets** to facilitate the uptake of marine renewable energy and to remove artificial market barriers, fixed prices, subsidies and other mechanisms that distort the market and prevent further successful integration of marine renewable energy.

Lastly, stressing that marine renewable energy will play a key role in accelerating the production of **renewable hydrogen**, Members believe it is necessary to support research and development to encourage the industry to adopt renewable hydrogen in the market through large-scale commercial projects.