A European strategy for offshore renewable energy

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The European Parliament adopted by 518 votes to 297, with 33 abstentions, a resolution on a European strategy for marine renewable energy.

A key element of the green transition

Parliament 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.

Given that **many Member States are lagging behind in the deployment of renewable energy** and the necessary infrastructure, Members consider that all Member States should make considerable efforts to realise their full renewable energy potential.

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. Parliament 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 investments

Parliament highlighted the urgent need to improve and **expand existing infrastructure** - without prejudice to the EU’s Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and EU nature legislation - 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.

The resolution 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.

The resolution also stressed the importance of **ensuring responsible and sustainable development** of the offshore renewable energy sector, taking into account the important role of maritime transport and seaports. Member States' maritime spatial planning should ensure that offshore energy infrastructure can

co-exist with maritime transport routes, the fishing industry, traffic separation schemes, anchorage areas, shipping access and activities and port development.

The investment needed to continue the large-scale deployment of marine renewable energy by 2050 is estimated at around EUR 800 billion, with about two-thirds of this to fund the associated grid infrastructure and about one-third for offshore power generation.

Members believe that the **Next Generation EU recovery plan** offers a unique opportunity to mobilise large amounts of public capital in addition to private investment.

Electricity and **direct heating and cooling** from offshore renewable energy can contribute to the greening of all electricity end uses. Members called on the Commission to analyse best practices in mature district heating and cooling markets for the benefit of emerging markets.

Parliament also called on the Commission, Member States and the private sector to increase investment in **research and development** aimed at the development of circular and nature-friendly offshore renewable energy, as well as in recycling and decommissioning technology for offshore renewable energy installations.

Permits and maritime spatial plans

Members noted that the current lengthy process for launching offshore renewable energy projects and the urgent need to speed it up in order to reach the 2030 and 2050 goals. They stressed the need to shorten the procedures for obtaining a permit and called on Member States to establish a transparent process and to consider introducing time limits for issuing permits where necessary.

Parliament also stressed the importance of increasing the **general public's trust** in the ability of renewable energy to achieve energy independence and secure energy supplies. It encouraged the Commission and the Member States to develop one-stop shops with streamlined information on financing possibilities for demonstration projects for breakthrough offshore renewable technologies.

Aligning maritime spatial planning with national energy and climate plans

Parliament stressed the need to ensure **sufficient space** for the development of offshore renewable energy. It urged Member States to immediately coordinate and draw up plans for offshore development by 2030 and beyond.

Members welcomed the strategy's aim of providing a long-term framework that promotes sound coexistence between offshore infrastructure and other uses of sea space and contributes to the protection of the environment. They called for an EU-wide landfill ban on decommissioned wind turbine blades by 2025 in order to ensure circularity, minimise the negative environmental impacts on soil and oceans and increase the level of soil protection.

Market design

Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the best possible framework conditions for a market-driven development of offshore wind energy. The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) could help mobilise the necessary funds to promote cross-border renewable energy solutions and joint projects in the EU.

Members called for a review of the current regulatory framework governing the EU's electricity markets to facilitate the uptake of offshore renewable energy. They also suggested supporting research and development to encourage industry to adopt **renewable hydrogen** in the market through large commercial projects.