Renewable Energy, Energy Performance of Buildings and Energy Efficiency Directives: amendments (REPowerEU)

2022/0160(COD) - 30/11/2022 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the report by Markus PIEPER (EPP, DE) on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive (EU) 2018 /2001 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings and Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency.

The committee responsible recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the proposal as follows:

The general context created by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a surge in energy prices across the EU, thus highlighting the need to accelerate energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy in the Union. In order to achieve the long-term objective of an energy system that is independent of third countries, the Union should focus on accelerating the green transition and ensuring an emission-reducing energy policy that reduces dependence on imported fossil fuels and establishes fair and affordable prices for Union citizens and enterprises in all sectors of the economy.

The overall aim of this proposal is to accelerate the procedure to grant permits for new renewable energy power plants, such as solar panels or windmills, or to adapt existing ones.

Integrated multilevel mapping and planning of areas necessary for national contributions towards the 2030 renewable energy target and the climate-neutrality objective

The report stated that by one year after the entry into force, Member States will perform an integrated **multilevel mapping and planning** for the deployment of renewable energy resources on their entire territory in coordination with all relevant national, regional and local authorities to identify the **domestic potential** and the available land, surface, subsurface and sea areas for their deployment. Member States shall also identify the installed capacity as well as the land, surface, subsurface and sea areas needed for the production of energy from renewable sources and their related infrastructure, such as grid and storage facilities, including **thermal storage**, that are required in order to meet their national contributions towards the 2030 renewable energy target and to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

Renewables acceleration areas

Members introduced the definition of ’renewables acceleration area’ to mean a specific location, whether on land or sea, which has been prioritised by a Member State as particularly suitable for the accelerated installation of plants for the production of energy from renewable sources, other than biomass combustion plants, taking into account the assets needed for their connection to the grid and related energy networks.’

By 2 years after the entry into force, Member States will, in coordination with their local and regional authorities, adopt a plan or plans designating, within the areas referred to in the Directive, renewables acceleration areas for one or more types of renewable energy sources.

Member States will *inter alia*: (i) give priority to artificial and built surfaces, such as **rooftops and facades of buildings**, transport infrastructure areas and their direct surroundings, parking areas, **artificial lakes**, inland water bodies or reservoirs, and degraded land not usable for agriculture; (ii) remove administrative barriers and allocate sufficient well-trained staff and administrative resources.

Repower existing installations

On repowering existing renewable energy plants, Members want the permit-granting process to not exceed **six months** for repowering projects in renewables acceleration areas, and one year outside of them. As repowering can reduce the need to designate new sites, projects could also benefit from existing grid connections, a likely higher degree of **public acceptance** and knowledge of environmental impacts.

Faster permit granting process

To speed up the permit granting process and in turn accelerate the deployment of renewable energy projects, Member States will ensure that the permit-granting process will not exceed **nine months** for projects in renewables acceleration areas, including their related energy network elements and grid connection. The permit-granting process for the repowering of plants including those increasing the capacity and the need for related energy network developments without increasing the occupied area and for new installations with an electrical capacity of less than 150 kW, energy storage including power and thermal facilities as well as their grid connection, located in renewables acceleration areas will not exceed six months.

These areas will be marked out by each Member State depending on whether they are able to install renewables at a faster pace. If the competent authority does not respond by the deadline, the permit or request is deemed to be approved. Outside such areas, Members proposed that the process will not exceed 18 months (as opposed to two years as originally proposed by the Commission).

Solar energy equipment in artificial structures

Member States will ensure that the permit-granting process for the installation of solar energy equipment, including building integrated solar installations, in existing or future artificial structures, with the exclusion of artificial water surfaces, will not exceed three months, provided that the primary aim of such structures is not solar energy production. For solar installations below 50kW, Member States will allow a simple-notification procedure. Installing solar equipment would be exempt from the requirement to conduct an environmental impact assessment.

Member States will also establish a roadmap to remove other barriers and to enhance the accelerated deployment of solar energy.