Energy: rules for the internal market in electricity. 'Electricity Directive'

2001/0077(COD) - 14/05/2001

The Council held a debate on completing the internal markets for electricity and gas. The Presidency concluded the debate noting the following: - there is a broad consensus on the fact that the market opening concerning both gas and electricity should be actively pursued and accelerated. To this end, the Swedish Presidency, in consultation with the incoming Belgian and Spanish Presidencies, will take initiatives to find ways and means within the existing Council framework to accelerate this process and will come back with appropriate ideas to be presented to the Council; - quantitative measures related to market opening (such as thresholds) and qualitative aspects (such as unbundling, Third Party Access and regulators, potential socio-economic impact) are interdependent; - as always, when deciding on measures to be taken at Community level, the cost of the various options needs to be assessed; - the principle of unbundling meets general agreement, whereas its concrete modalities still havbe to be clarified; unbundling of the gas sector may not necessarily follow the same model/approach as for electricity; - non discriminatory third party access to the grid without transparent and published tariffs is not feasible; public service obligationd need to be taken into account when defining the practical modalities of tarification systems; - to ensure improved security of supply through further integration at Community leve, infrastructure requirements need to be carefully assessed, with particular regard to the revised TEN programme; - benchmarking and monitoring are useful tools for ensuring a proper assessment of progress and follow-up, in particular with respect to public service obligations and security of supply and congestion management, which can be facilitated by increasing the transparency on available interconnection capacity; - a fully functioning single market for gas and electricity can not be achieved without efficient cross-border trade. Rules to that effect should be sought at an appropriate level, which are based on simplicity, non discrimination, transparency and effective reflection of costs, allowing for proper allocation signals and ensuring adequate reciprocity; - when deciding on the most appropriate way to deal with trade (in electricity) with third countries proper consideration should be given to environmental issues, reciprocity and legal implications; - although a legally binding framework is required to address several of the issues raised by the achievement of the internal market, the Florence and Madrid processes have demonstrated their usefulness and we expect them to continue to do so.