Trans-European energy networks: guidelines

2001/0311(COD) - 20/12/2001 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to present a proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision 1254/96/EC laying down a series of guidelines for trans-European energy networks. CONTENT : this proposed revision of the Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Networks (TEN-Energy) is based on an assessment of the operation of the Guidelines currently applying to them (cf. Report on the implementation of the guidelines for Trans-European Energy Networks in the period 1996-2001, please refer to COD/1994/0009 dated 20/12/01). This proposal takes account of the developments that have taken place in the energy market since 1996, and in particular the implementation of the Directives on liberalising the markets for electricity and natural gas, the trend towards increasing dependence on imported energy and the setting of higher targets for the penetration of renewable energy sources. The proposal also takes into consideration the action plan on the northern Dimension adopted by the European Council of Feira in June 2000 and reflects the progress made in the enlargement process and places specific stress on electricity interconnections with candidate countries. Essentially, this proposal is aimed at amending the TEN-Energy Guidelines by identifying a distinct category of priority projects among the projects of common interest. The category will include a restricted number of energy network projects which have very important impact from the point of view of the essential criteria of energy policy, i.e. completing the internal market and reinforcing security of supply. With regard to funding, in order to efficiently support those projects for which increased financial support is key to their completion, the Commission considers that, for priority projects, it will be necessary to provide for the possibility of raising the maximum rate of funding under the TEN Financial Support Regulation from 10% to 20%. The Commission will introduce this amendment in the revision of the TEN Financial Support Regulation which is underway. The proposal also aims to amend the TEN-Energy Guidelines as follows: - rearranging the priorities for TEN-Energy policy in the light of the developments which have taken place since 1996; - defining the projects of common interest more broadly (10 thematic projects instead of the current 90 detailed projects); - incorporating the detailed project definitions into the project specifications already provided for by the Guidelines; - making it clear that project identification does not prejudge the assessment of their environmental impact; - updating the provisions relating to the committee procedure without making any fundamental change; - extending the reporting period for the implementation reports from 2 to 4 years, given the submission of the Annual Report on the TENs which covers the three sectors. The measures in force concerning information and consultation with the public in the framework of Community environmental legislation will be respected.