Electricity and gas distribution sectors: rational planning techniques

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The need for a legislative framework for rational planning techniques to improve the electricity and gas distribution sectors was acknowledged in the energy and research committee when it adopted a report by Eryl MCNALLY. The EPP, however, would have preferred to see the goal achieved through a recommendation rather than binding legislation. According to the Committee, the directive should contribute to both stabilizing carbon dioxide emissions and improving the competitiveness of the European economy by achieving a reduction in energy use. Because of the dual aim it should be based on Article 100a (internal market) instead of 130s (environment) thus coming under the co-decision procedure. The Commission, however, considers the protection of environment a priority instead of the internal market. The Committee is proposing that competent national authorities with the co-operation of the energy suppliers and relevant consumer groups publish plans evaluating energy resource alternatives. They should also examine whether the measures are being undertaken and review legislation to ensure that companies are able to recover expenditure on energy-efficient programmes offered to customers. These measures should not affect the competitive position of electricity and gas in relation to other energy sources. Another amendment from the committee is seeking to ensure that the member states use regulatory mechanisms so that electricity and gas companies provide energy services at the lowest cost to customers. In addition, customers should have clearly identifiable costings of energy and energy services provision.