

Electricity, internal market: production from renewable energy sources, RES-E

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The committee adopted the report by Mechthild ROTHE (PES, D) amending the Council's common position under the codecision procedure (2nd reading). In particular, the committee wanted to clarify the definition of "renewable energy source" proposed by the Council, which had included electricity from waste incineration. The committee felt that support for renewable energy sources should be consistent with other Community objectives, in particular "respect of the waste treatment hierarchy". In its view, therefore, the incineration of non-separated municipal waste should not be promoted under this directive nor under a future support system for renewable energy sources, and it amended the common position accordingly. On the controversial question of whether national targets for the use of renewable energy sources should be mandatory or merely indicative, the committee adopted an amendment to the effect that, if Member States did not make progress towards achieving their national indicative targets, the Commission should make proposals which could include mandatory targets. The national indicative targets should be consistent with the global indicative target of 12% of gross national energy consumption by 2010 and with the 22.1% indicative share of electricity produced from renewable energy sources in total Community electricity consumption. The committee also emphasised that if, at a later stage, the Commission proposed a common system for promoting renewable energy sources, this should contribute to the achievement of national indicative targets. If the Member States committed themselves to meeting certain targets by 2010, then they must be given the possibility of taking appropriate action until then. They must therefore be given a guarantee that their national support schemes would be able to continue for seven years and so maintain the confidence of investors. The committee agreed that, because of its environmental benefits, renewable energy should have priority access to the grid, and said that Member States must ensure that the charging of transmission and distribution fees did not discriminate against electricity from renewable energy sources.