The share of renewable energy sources in the European Union: proposals for concrete actions

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Claude TURMES (Verts/ALE) on the share of renewable energy in the EU and proposals for concrete actions. The report emphasised the importance of renewable energies, along with energy efficiency and conservation, in a number of areas: overcoming health and environmental degradation, ensuring sustainable development, contributing to innovation, regional and national development and trade opportunities and creating jobs in line with the Lisbon strategy.

The report stressed the importance of setting mandatory targets for 2020 "to give a clear signal to market actors (....), as well as to national policy makers, that renewable energies are the future of energy in the EU". It recalled that Parliament adopted a resolution in 2004 calling for a 20% target for renewable energies in overall energy consumption in the EU by 2020. MEPs pointed out that new studies showed that a target of at least 25% was feasible. The Commission was urged to draw up an EU medium-term renewable energy strategy for the period after 2010 and to set mandatory targets for such highly differentiated energy markets as electricity, transport fuels and the heating and cooling sector. The EU target should be broken down into both sector and national targets.

The report called for tax cuts as incentives for promoting renewable energies, together with fair and free access to the grid and non-discriminatory tariffs. The Commission was also urged to come up with new legislative initiatives in order to put an end to huge market distortions which penalise renewable energy production, such as insufficient ownership unbundling requirements, ineffective wholesale markets, increased market concentration, direct and indirect subsidies for fossil fuels and nuclear power and the non-internalisation of external costs.

The committee also put forward a number of proposals on the use of biomass which, it said, presented many advantages compared with conventional energy sources and even other renewable energy sources. It regretted the fact that the enormous potential of biomass had not been exploited in line with its technical potential at feasible costs, and called on the Commission and the Member States to use the Structural and Cohesion Funds to promote the use of biomass. Member States should also examine their tax systems and abolish all unnecessary tax burdens for users of biomass.

Lastly, MEPs urged that the upcoming 7th Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Health (FP7) should include "increased funding for renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency".