

Heating and cooling from renewable energy sources

2005/2122(INL) - 14/02/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Mechthild **ROTHE** (PES, DE) with recommendations to the Commission on heating and cooling from renewable sources of energy. (Please see the summary of 26/01/2006.) Under a rarely-used procedure (Rule 39 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure), Parliament requested the Commission to submit a legislative proposal on increasing the share of renewable energies used in Europe for heating and cooling.

Parliament pointed out that directives to promote renewable sources of energy in the fields of electricity and transport have resulted in, or boosted, sustainable development in the Member States. Market developments in renewable energies in the individual Member States, which vary enormously from one to another, are due for the most part not to differences in potential, but rather to different, and in some cases inadequate, political and legal framework conditions. Parliament felt that the promotion of a renewable energy market would help to achieve the new Lisbon objectives by increasing employment in the Member States and by increasing the Member States' and the EU's research and innovation effort. It noted that the use of waste heat from electricity production processes or industrial processes and free cooling contribute to reducing demand for conventional energy. Accordingly, Member States should identify the potentials for utilisation of these resources, show how they could be exploited more effectively, ensure legal clarity, better information for the public and an increase in research efforts.

Parliament set out detailed recommendations on the content of the proposal. The main points are as follows:

- The objective of the proposal requested is to evaluate and exploit economic potential with the aim of increasing the share of renewable energies used in heating and cooling in the EU from the present level of approximately 10% to a realistic and ambitious figure of at least a double that by 2020.
- The directive is intended to set the framework conditions for national support schemes, with due respect for the principle of subsidiarity and existing European rules in the energy and environmental spheres.
- Effective national targets, which take into account current differences in the share of renewable heating and cooling in the Member States and their regions and the potential of each of the relevant technologies and associated analyses, should contribute to reaching the EU target.
- At the latest one year after the entry into force of the directive, Member States should be required to agree on action plans to attain the objectives on the basis of their national potential and target for exploiting renewable sources for heating and cooling. The Member States' action plans should be renewed every three years and submitted to the Commission.
- Parliament made recommendations on dismantling administrative barriers and on national support schemes.
- Financial incentives should, as a matter of principle, be provided by the Member States, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. Such support schemes must comply with certain prescribed principles in attaining their objective, such as limiting support in time and gradually reducing it. Where renewable

technologies had not yet achieved a high degree of market penetration at competitive prices and development, Member States might consider incentive mechanisms, such as tax advantages/derogations for RE systems and associated heating and cooling networks and direct investment aid.

- Parliament also outlined a number of accompanying measures which the Member States should take: informing the public, inter alia by the publication of studies on the benefits to consumers; encouraging the public sector to give priority to heating and cooling from renewable energy sources as part of procurement policy; and giving due importance to renewable energy technologies in training. The EU, for its part, should encourage the use of the structural and cohesion funds to support and promote renewable energy for heating and cooling and ensure that eco-labels for heating and cooling systems are developed at European level.