Energy statistics

2007/0002(COD) - 10/01/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a common framework for the production, transmission, evaluation and dissemination of comparable energy statistics in the Community.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: the development of Community policy and legislation on energy highlights the need for comprehensive and comparable European statistics on a range of energy related issues. Directives with clear quantitative targets and deadlines on energy in the EU implicitly require the need of monitoring the energy situation in order to verify if and how well such goals are met. The Kyoto protocol imposes high quality requirements on the inventory data of greenhouse gasses, for which energy consumption is extensively responsible. The EU policies on intelligent energy and on renewable energy require detailed quantitative monitoring to measure progress towards targets.

At the Hampton Court Summit the Heads of State called for a European Energy Policy. In response to that the Commission prepares a package of measures as they are highlighted in the recent green paper on energy. The availability of timely and reliable data on the energy situation in the EU is of paramount importance for succeeding in this objective. This importance justifies a stable, institutional basis for the collection of energy data which is at present still undertaken by voluntary agreements.

CONTENT: the objective of this proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council is to establish a common framework for the collection and compilation of Community statistics on energy production, imports and exports, transformation and consumption. This framework makes extensive use of the existing data collection and also of the cooperation at international level with other relevant organisations, so that a methodological uniformity and data comparability are guaranteed. The objective is therefore not to open a new statistical domain, but rather to provide a helpful legal basis for an existing, quite important effort of making reliable data available in a timely manner for Community policy on energy.

The subject proposal also takes attention to minimize the burden on enterprises : although this regulation does not reduce the existing burden, it does not add new obligations nor increase the existing scope of energy data collection in the EU. The objective of the proposed Regulation is therefore not to modify the statistical work that is already being done, but to provide a legal framework for it.

This legal framework is proposed at a time when Member States experience more and more difficulties in the subject data collection. The liberalisation of the energy market resulted i.a. in the appearance of large numbers of energy producers and resellers which made the data collection far more complex. This put the resources allocated to energy data collection under pressure, particularly since energy has remained one of the few unregulated statistical domains.

The fact that this market liberalisation also causes issues with commercial confidentiality makes it more difficult for Member States officials to perform their statistical work on the basis of a gentlemen's agreement.

In recent years, a general decline of the statistical quality (completeness, accuracy, timeliness) is being noticed. It is considered appropriate that initiatives be taken to underline the essential needs of reliable energy data i.a. by providing a regulated confirmation of the requirement for such important data collection work.

The significant recent increases of the energy prices have increased the awareness of the European citizens and policy makers on the complexity of our energy situation. Insight in this energy situation requires availability of accurate, timely and complete statistical data on energy.

Lastly, this proposal also takes into full consideration the cooperation of the Commission with the International Energy Agency (IEA) on energy statistics: the proposed data collection covers entirely the part that is shared with the IEA in the context of this cooperation.