



NEWS RELEASE

EREC – European Renewable Energy Council

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Press Release – 10 January 2007

The European Commission fails to deliver: When nice rhetoric counts more than concrete action, sustainable development is put at risk

Today, the European Commission recognised in very nice words the importance of renewable energy for a sustainable future. The Energy Strategy does not draw the right conclusions. The Commission misses the opportunity to deliver concrete measures to support their lip-service, it also endangers renewable energy development in Europe.

The Commission's proposals in the renewable energy roadmap would effectively change the existing, successful sectoral approach to renewables legislation, by proposing vague measures and ambiguous commitments.

“This energy package is another major step on the Commission's road to becoming the world leader in pure announcements and lip-service. In fact for renewables it means a re-nationalisation of existing, effective European legislation. Instead of strengthening what already delivers good results in renewables electricity and biofuels, the Commission puts this at risk for vague and ambiguous announcements. In addition, the long announced and expected legislation in renewable heating is disappointingly missing.” said EREC Policy Director Oliver Schäfer.

Almost one year after the European Commission's Green Paper on sustainable, competitive and secure energy the Commission is not able to follow its own correct analysis by calling for binding sectoral targets for renewables in order to achieve at least 20% of renewables in primary energy by 2020. Instead the Commission is proposing a new approach for renewables, without saying what this exactly means. This is exactly what is causing investor uncertainty.

The proposal for binding targets in principle is very much welcomed by the industry, but in order to make them work they would need to be set for the different sectors and not just globally. By omitting sectoral targets in its renewable energy roadmap, as part of the energy package, the Commission is providing cynical window dressing, according to the European Renewable Energy Council (EREC).

The Commission is setting out to undermine the existing system that would help realise the further development of renewables, which is currently functioning successfully: sector-specific support for renewable energy. Instead, it proposes a mandatory overall target for renewable energy by 2020 without defining a new target for renewable energy in the electricity sector, nor setting one for heating & cooling. Only for the transport sector does the Commission plan to continue with a sector-specific approach and propose a binding minimum 2020 target for the share of biofuels.

“This proposal could create a legislative vacuum for many years to come and fire up widespread investor uncertainty, the Commission should have focussed on creating the missing link in EU renewables legislation – heating and cooling – rather than undermining existing legislation for electricity and biofuels. We now hope that the Council and the Parliament will correct these completely baffling new proposals by the Commission.” Schäfer added.

The European renewable energy industries call on the European Council to support the European Parliament's approach in its discussions on the Renewable Energy Roadmap rather than following the Commissions' proposals. Anything else would threaten to dismantle the current, successful framework for renewables.

The EU should continue its successful approach of specific sectoral targets to avoid putting existing frameworks under threat and creating widespread investor uncertainty.

Concerning the rest of the energy package Schäfer summarises "The proposals are not serious on climate related needs, diluted on internal market issues and in itself not consistent at all with the analysis"

The renewable industry will react on the EU energy strategy on Thursday at 1030 at a press breakfast at the Renewable Energy House in Rue d'Arlon 63-65. You will get the chance to speak to the President of EREC and EWEA, Arthouros Zervos and CEO and directors from EREC, EWEA and ESTIF (Oliver Schäfer, Christian Kjaer and Raffaele Piria). See address below.

Note to editors:

EU POLICY ON RENEWABLE ENERGY TO DATE

The EU currently has a target for 12% of total energy use to come from renewables by 2010. Two directives have been adopted, breaking down this target for the two sectors of electricity and transport:

Since 2001, the directive for the promotion of electricity from renewable sources of energy sets an EU target of 21% for 2010, broken down into national targets. According to the directive, Member States have to implement support policies for renewable electricity.

The 2003 biofuels directive for the transport sector sets a target of 5.75% for the share of biofuels in the EU by 2010.

In both the electricity and transport sector, the development of renewable energy is flourishing.

In the remaining sector, heating & cooling, by contrast, progress has been sluggish due to the absence of specific targets and support.

EREC, the European Renewable Energy Council, is the umbrella organisation of the major European renewable energy industry, trade and research associations active in the field of photovoltaics, small hydropower, solar thermal, biomass, geothermal and wind energy. It represents an industry with an annual turnover of more than 20 billion and more than 300.000 employees.

EREC's member associations are the European Biomass Association (EUBIA), European Geothermal Energy Council (EGEC), European Photovoltaic Industry Association (EPIA), European Small Hydropower Association (ESHA), European Solar Thermal Industry Federation (ESTIF), European Biomass Industry Association (AEBIOM), European Renewable Energy Centres Agency (EUREC) and European Wind Energy Association (EWEA)

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