

Press Statement

Brussels, 1 December 2016

The Commission's Clean Energy Package needs more ambition to deliver European leadership on renewable energies

Yesterday, the European Commission published its Clean Energy Package, with the objective to pave the way towards achieving a carbon free economy.

EREF, as the representative of the renewable energies producers in Europe, is firmly committed to an energy system change in the EU towards sustainable renewable and efficient systems and will judge the Commission proposals on their ability to deliver on this goal.

At first analysis, the package fails to attack the hidden and open subsidies to the fossil and the nuclear sector. EREF criticises especially that the whole package does not pursue the urgently needed objective to acknowledge the missing internalization of the externalities of the nuclear sector, such as full insurance risk for the nuclear utilities and clarity on responsibility and capability for secure dismantling and final safe storage of the aged nuclear plants in the EUAs.

Furthermore, as much as it is positive that the Commission proposes stricter rules on capacity markets, it is to be noted that when this legislative process is finalized most of the key member states will already have installed such mechanisms. This bears the risk of being in effect rescue aid to the incumbent industry in disguise, adding further imbalances to the energy market

Concerning the recast of the current Renewable Energies Directive, EREF welcomes the acknowledgment of citizens and cooperatives as enabler for renewable change. EREF will come back to the positive sides with specific statements. On the negative cord, the Commission proposes to replace the existing binding national targets for renewable energies with a binding minimum EU target of 27% of renewable energies by 2030 but also proposes restrictions on renewable energies entering the market, compared to current legislation.

Priority access and dispatch of renewable energies over energy from fossil fuels, which have been crucial for the successful deployment of renewables so far, shall be abandoned for new installations with exemptions for small installations. Existing successful ways to financially support renewable

EREF is a federation of national renewable energy associations from EU Member States, such as wind, solar, small hydro, bio-energy, tidal, wave, and geothermal sources. EREF is striving to defend the interests of independent power, fuel and heat production from renewable sources and to promote non discriminatory access to the energy market

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energies moving into the market shall be restricted. On the other hand, there is no explicit obligation for tenders, which might give member states more flexibility to choose their support system. But in the reality of the day, it will be crucial that Members States make active use of the available tools and that there will be sufficient encouragement for all Member States who strive to help that the EU overall goes beyond the minimum 27% target.

EREF President Savvas Seimanides observes, "Europe needs a reliable and ambitious framework that encourages investments in innovation, guided by strong governance at national and European level, equally able to deliver on Europe's legally binding targets under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Following the weak commitment of the Council in 2014/2015, the new proposal replaces the existing national binding targets for 2020 by a binding EU target only for the period towards 2030. EREF constantly underlined this absolute weakness of Europe to commit for strong progress and we will work that the EU as a whole will guarantee adequate governance throughout the implementation process."

Dörte Fouquet, EREF Director adds, "The European citizens consistently express their wish to see a change to the benefit of renewable energies. The current proposals include the possibility to continue subsidizing coal for the decades to come, but still limit the access of renewables on the market by proposing restrictions on priority access. It seems that the European Commission has not yet fully understood the wishes of its own constituency. We are at the beginning of a campaign for a progressive energy system change towards renewables and energy efficiency in a Europe that is committed to make this happen."

EREF will work together with the EU institutions in the forthcoming decision making process with a view of effectively achieving a European energy policy that truly makes the EU the world number one in renewables.

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