
Energy efficiency should be a key priority of Europe's energy strategy for 2011-2020, said the Energy Committee on Tuesday. MEPs urged the European Commission to exploit existing EU energy legislation and projects to the full.

MEPs stress that energy efficiency should be a key priority of any future energy strategy. In a report intended to contribute to a forthcoming European Commission paper on energy strategy priorities for 2011-2020, they urge that the EU should better exploit energy efficiency, as a cost-effective way to cut energy dependency, combat climate change, create jobs and counteract increases in energy bills.

The report also says that the future strategy should seek to fulfil the aims of a fully-functioning single energy market, security of supply, and moving towards a low-carbon energy system.

Implementing existing legislation and energy projects

MEPs call on the Commission and Member States to step up work on EU southern gas corridor projects and especially the Nabucco Asia to Europe gas pipeline, to promote Mediterranean Solar Plan projects DESERTEC (clean power from deserts) and TRANSGREEN (low carbon and renewable energy networks) and also to promote regional projects such as the “Mediterranean Ring” (grid interconnection) and the “Baltic Interconnection Project”.

Evaluating implementation

MEPs asked the Commission to evaluate the implementation of existing legislation. If this evaluation reveals unsatisfactory results, the European Energy Action Plan should include a commitment by the Commission to propose further EU measures for Member States, such as individual efficiency targets designed to bring about overall energy savings of at least 20% at EU level, but taking into account relative starting positions and national circumstances.

External energy policy
The report says Energy Community membership should be extended to more EU neighbouring countries, and notably those in the Eastern Partnership. Diversifying supply sources could help in dealing with future supply crises, say MEPs, who stress the importance of further expanding the European liquid natural gas fleet, and ask the Commission and Council to work closely with NATO to align EU and NATO energy security strategies.

The report, drafted by Lena Barbara Kolarska-Bobinska (EPP, PL) and approved in committee with 42 votes in favour, 3 against and 4 abstentions, will be put to a plenary vote at the end of November.

In the chair: Herbert REUL (EPP, DE)

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