

Parliament wants new targets on energy security and energy supply

If no additional measures are taken, Europe will have to import a projected 71% of its energy in 2030. Recent energy disputes with Russia and the increase in the oil price show the need for action. Therefore, in adopting a joint resolution on 23 March, Parliament underlined the need for a more ambitious Common European Energy Policy, focusing on renewable energy sources, solidarity between the Member States and the need to complete the internal market for electricity and gas.

MEPs adopted a joint resolution on security of energy supply in the European Union. The resolution, drafted on behalf of the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE and UEN groups urges the Commission and Council to realise a more resolute European energy policy, with "more concrete measures" and "to come forward with new, ambitious targets".

The importance of security in the supply of energy

In 2002, the European Union's import dependency on energy was 48%, by 2030 this figure is "estimated to rise to 71%...if no additional measure is taken." In 2005, the primary energy consumption of the Union stood at 1700 million tonnes of oil equivalent, with this figure rising at an average rate of 0.8% per year. With this in mind, the resolution recognises the importance of energy security as one of the three main objectives for EU energy policy. Correspondingly, it recalls the "recent disputes over gas prices between Russia and its neighbours" and "recent increase in the price of crude oil", both of which demonstrated "the vulnerability of the supply and distribution of energy". The House calls on the Commission to strongly react to the market dominance and market imperfections as described in the 'sector inquiry' forwarded by DG Competition on 16 February 2006 and to submit new proposals for combating market dominance and market imperfections with a concrete set of actions and instruments. MEPs call for closer cooperation between European and national competition authorities in order to give a coordinated and truly European answer to the emerging national economic patriotism.

Methods for assuring such security

In order to realise better security within the area of energy supply, the text proposes further solidarity within the Union, an efficient working European internal market, better use of sustainable energy sources and further research and development in the area.

In response to the *"difficulties related to the physical security of infrastructure and security of supply"*, the resolution emphasises the importance of solidarity within Europe, further cooperation with neighbouring countries and a *"strengthening of the European Neighbourhood Policy"*. It also calls on the Commission to put forward a *"mediation system"* to deal with such cases of dispute over the distribution of energy.

The resolution considers that imperative to the maintenance of energy security is a *"well functioning internal market"*, therefore it is concerned by *"protectionist support for national market leaders"*, and *"urges the Commission to ensure full implementation of the internal market rules to ensure fair and non-discriminatory competition and avoid the formation of oligopolistic energy markets"*.

The text also highlights the role of sustainability energy sources and *"stresses the exceptional importance of renewable energy sources, along with energy efficiency"*. It therefore asks the Commission and Council to present *"ambitious targets after 2010"* for this area. Moreover the text calls on Member States to realise the targets of a *"12% share of total energy consumption and 22.1% of electricity from RES by 2010"*. The resolution considers the area of energy-demand to be of relevance when considering levels of energy consumption. It therefore encourages measures to improve upon energy efficiency and promotes conservative strategies to reduce the rate of consumption. Correspondingly, it *"notes the economic potential of saving a minimum of 20% of energy consumed"* noting that *"this potential will rise with energy prices, technological improvements and economies of sale"*. However, the resolution suggests that Member States should apply the principle of subsidiarity when it comes to policies on nuclear energy as it recognises nuclear energy to be *"part of the European debate on the energy mix"*.

Within the area of research and development, the paper suggests that there is a need for better renewable energy technologies, more knowledge regarding conventional power stations and a development in the knowledge of nuclear fusion technology and its application.

Finally, the House insists that new strategies should be developed to reduce the possibilities of uranium and nuclear waste being used for the production and proliferation of nuclear weapons. MEPs therefore urge the Commission, the Council and the Member States to give their fullest support to the IAEA proposals to multilateralise the supply of fissile material for nuclear energy production.