[Promoting renewable energy use – Council adopts its position]

Press contacts

[Ana Crespo Parrondo]
Press officer
+32 2 281 56 12
+32 470 88 43 74

On 18 December 2017, the Council adopted its position on a directive promoting **the use of renewable energy** across the EU. This agreement paves the way for the Council to start negotiations with the European Parliament as soon as its negotiating mandate is agreed.

The EU is committed to reach a target of **at least 27% renewable energy** of its overall energy consumption by 2030. This directive, in line with the guidelines of the European Council from October 2014, confirms this binding target and puts in place the appropriate framework and tools to achieve that goal.

The new legislation addresses bioenergy, sustainability, transport, electricity, heating and cooling, and in particular, focuses on empowering consumers. Facilitating and enhancing consumers' use of renewables is a key element in the Council's position.

> "This decision has a direct and positive impact on all Europeans. Using more renewable energy will help our cities, industries and houses become cleaner, healthier and more sustainable. The directive will also make it easier for consumers to take the initiative and become producers themselves. Through a combination of action by governments, companies and consumers, we will be able to maintain our global leadership in renewables."
>
> *Kadri Simson, Minister for Economic Affairs and Infrastructure of the Republic of Estonia*

The **main elements** of the Council's general approach are as follows:

Consumers will benefit from simplified notification procedures for small-scale installations, and the rights and obligations of **'renewable self-consumers**' as well as **renewable energy communities** are now clearly set out.

Regarding **heating and cooling,** member states will have to adopt measures to achieve an indicative **annual 1 percentage point increase in the share of renewable energy.** As existing national systems and installations differ widely across the EU in this respect, this is taken into account in the Council text. In particular, it reflects the specific characteristics of 'cooling' installations in warmer climates.

In the transport sector, the **renewables target** for 2030 is set at 14% for each member state, and there is a sub-target of 3% for **'advanced biofuels**', for which double-counting will be allowed. This advanced biofuels target has an intermediate binding milestone of 1% in 2025 to increase investment security and guarantee the availability of fuels throughout the period. **Electromobility** is strongly encouraged by two multipliers of 5x for renewable electricity used in road transport, and of 2x for rail transport.

The existing 7% cap on **first-generation biofuels** is maintained to provide certainty to investors. If a member state sets a lower cap, it will be rewarded with the option of lowering its overall target for renewables in transport.

The directive also clarifies rules concerning the sustainability criteria and greenhouse gas emissions saving criteria that apply to biofuels, bioliquids and biomass fuels.

Member states will have the possibility of opening up their **national support schemes** across borders to generators of renewable energy in other member states, but the final decision on this will remain with them. In relation to investments in renewable energy, the Council text, like the Commission's proposal, addresses the stability of **financial support** by preventing unjustified retroactive changes to support schemes.

On 30 November 2016, the Commission submitted the **clean energy package.** Its eight legislative proposals, including the renewable energy directive, aim at implementing the 2015 strategy for an Energy Union with a forward-looking climate policy.

The package as a whole was presented at the Energy Council meeting of December 2016. EU ministers had a first **exchange of views** on the entire package in February 2017 and assessed the **progress made** on governance, renewable energy and the electricity market design in June 2017.

The European Parliament is expected to agree on its negotiating mandate for this directive in the beginning of next year. The Council stands ready to start negotiations immediately after.

Visit the meeting page Download as pdf

International criminal network

[involved in synthetic drug trafficking dismantled]

18 December 2017

On 12 December 2017, a coordinated international operation supported by Eurojust and Europol took down an organised crime group (OCG) involved in the production and trafficking of drugs and psychotropic substances and in money laundering.

The law enforcement and judicial authorities of Iceland, the Netherlands and Poland carried out joint operations against this organised crime group consisting mainly of Polish nationals. The operations were coordinated via a Coordination Centre established at Eurojust with the active participation of Europol. As a result of these operations, 8 suspects were arrested, 30 locations were searched and different types of drugs seized. Moreover, cash and other assets (such as cars, apartments and bank accounts) in excess of EUR 1,8 million were seized. The high value of asset seizure is also the result of the simultaneous financial investigations – initiated from the beginning of the case and targeting the proceeds of crime.

These successful joint operations are the result of the continuing and fruitful cooperation amongst the law enforcement and judicial authorities of Iceland, the Netherlands and Poland, facilitated by Eurojust and Europol.

Over the last twelve months, Eurojust and Europol organised several operational meetings to ensure the coordination of parallel investigations opened in Iceland, the Netherlands and Poland against this crime group. Eurojust also facilitated the simultaneous execution of mutual legal assistance requests and European Arrest Warrants, and the development of coordinated strategies for the joint operations. Europol provided in-depth operational analysis and supported the joint operations by deploying mobile offices on the ground and participating in the Eurojust's Coordination Centres.

[International criminal network involved in synthetic drug trafficking dismantled]

18 December 2017

On 12 December 2017, a coordinated international operation supported by

Eurojust and Europol took down an organised crime group (OCG) involved in the production and trafficking of drugs and psychotropic substances and in money laundering.

The law enforcement and judicial authorities of Iceland, the Netherlands and Poland carried out joint operations against this organised crime group consisting mainly of Polish nationals. The operations were coordinated via a Coordination Centre established at Eurojust with the active participation of Europol. As a result of these operations, 8 suspects were arrested, 30 locations were searched and different types of drugs seized. Moreover, cash and other assets (such as cars, apartments and bank accounts) in excess of EUR 1,8 million were seized. The high value of asset seizure is also the result of the simultaneous financial investigations – initiated from the beginning of the case and targeting the proceeds of crime.

These successful joint operations are the result of the continuing and fruitful cooperation amongst the law enforcement and judicial authorities of Iceland, the Netherlands and Poland, facilitated by Eurojust and Europol.

Over the last twelve months, Eurojust and Europol organised several operational meetings to ensure the coordination of parallel investigations opened in Iceland, the Netherlands and Poland against this crime group. Eurojust also facilitated the simultaneous execution of mutual legal assistance requests and European Arrest Warrants, and the development of coordinated strategies for the joint operations. Europol provided in-depth operational analysis and supported the joint operations by deploying mobile offices on the ground and participating in the Eurojust's Coordination Centres.

ESMA updates its MiFID II Q&As on transparency and market structures

The purpose of these Q&As is to promote common supervisory approaches and practices in the application of MiFID II and MiFIR. They provide responses to questions posed by the general public and market participants in relation to the practical application of transparency requirements. This update includes new answers regarding:

· The scope of the tick size regime;

· Application of MiFID II after 3 January 2018, including issues of 'late transposition';

· Equity transparency;

· Non-equity transparency; and

· Pre-trade transparency waivers.

The Q&A mechanism is a practical convergence tool used to promote common supervisory approaches and practices. ESMA will periodically review these Q&As on a regular basis to update them where required and to identify if, in a certain area, there is a need to convert some of the material into ESMA Guidelines and recommendations.

ESMA updates its MiFID II Q&As on transparency and market structures

The purpose of these Q&As is to promote common supervisory approaches and practices in the application of MiFID II and MiFIR. They provide responses to questions posed by the general public and market participants in relation to the practical application of transparency requirements. This update includes new answers regarding:

· The scope of the tick size regime;

· Application of MiFID II after 3 January 2018, including issues of 'late transposition';

· Equity transparency;

· Non-equity transparency; and

· Pre-trade transparency waivers.

The Q&A mechanism is a practical convergence tool used to promote common supervisory approaches and practices. ESMA will periodically review these Q&As on a regular basis to update them where required and to identify if, in a certain area, there is a need to convert some of the material into ESMA Guidelines and recommendations.