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[Publication](#) | 24.11.2006

EU energy policies

EU Council failed to agree on binding renewable and efficiency targets.

The outcome of the ministers' meeting is a paper of empty words.

The Ministers failed to set concrete commitments to cut energy waste. They discussed especially the proposed target to reduce EU energy waste by 20 percent by 2020 **but did'nt commit to actually achieving it**. This would have been a strong signal to steer future policies and investments. Not only would **such a binding target lead to far less CO2 emissions** but it would also bring huge economic benefits for the European Union, like **fuel savings worth 100 billion € per year!**

Furthermore, the Energy Council didn't emphasize the need for concrete and effective policies, complementary to the Action Plan. **The transport sector**, which accounts for more than 30 percent of energy use in the EU, **has again been widely ignored** whereas strong efficiency measures are urgently needed to curb the emissions.

A handful of **EU member states (Germany, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden)** **signalled their support for setting binding targets for the contribution of renewable sources** to the European energy mix. But France, which produces 80% of its electricity through nuclear power, preferred to promote its obsolete nuclear technology through a 50% target for "low carbon sources". **France is again on its isolationist policy**, undermining the efforts to progress towards an EU energy policy based on renewables and energy efficiency.

As such, the **EU energy ministers were only able to reach a minimalist consensus**, saying that renewable energies "enhance competitiveness and security of supply". They insisted on R&D programmes at both national and EU levels to make the technologies more competitive.

However, the opportunity offered by the renewables and energy saving technologies are emphasized by Greens/EFA Co-President **Dany Cohn-Bendit** who said:

"There are massive opportunities for EU businesses to pioneer a new generation of environmentally-friendly technologies, across all sectors of the economy"

Separately, the European Parliament's Industry Committee (ITRE) on 23 November backed calls for binding targets for renewable energies in order to achieve a 25% share of renewables in primary energy by 2020. On this occasion Greens energy spokespersons **Claude Turmes** and **Rebecca Harms** said:

"Member States must agree to set sectoral targets for renewables in the EU Energy Strategy (due to be adopted in March) if they are serious about addressing the problem of climate change. Today's report also calls for a target for CO2 reductions of 30% by 2020 and 60 to 80% by 2050"

The Council conclusions are available here

Read also:

The Green's press release regarding the report in ITRE committee and the press release on Verheugen's anti-environment drive.

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