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A greener Europe through interconnected electricity grids

If you have seen the mural painting of Michelangelo "The Creation of Adam" in the Sistine Chapel you know that connectivity makes a difference. The same goes for electricity. When the grids are connected, new perspectives and possibilities arise. It is by building well-connected electricity grids in a joint European market that we all of a sudden can make renewables dominate. Investments in renewables will be made in areas where it is most windy, where the sun shines and where the cost per kWh is low.

I will provide you with an example. It is often said that the problem with wind energy consists in the fact that we can extract energy only when the wind blows. But in a connected world, winds will always be blowing, somewhere along the grid. On Saturday 11 July a low-pressure area formed over the North Sea, indicating that the wind turbines in Denmark will start delivering at full speed. On Monday, at the same time, the wind had moved on and was blowing over the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. The surplus of electricity in the Baltics and in Romania can be transported back to the west. But at that point a new low-pressure area has formed over England and Scotland with even stronger wind- power. If our electricity grids are isolated, wind energy will require other individual, isolated plants to regulate the energy produced back and forth. In a joint electricity grid, however, there is a surplus floating back and forth between different parts of Europe and the wind is able to balance itself. The demands on other kinds of balancing power sources will be radically diminished. The conclusion is that we can have more renewables, much more, in our electricity systems, which in turn means that investments in renewables can be increased, especially in areas where they are most efficient, strengthening competitiveness in the marketplace. The best way to increase cross-border interconnectivity is to encourage and support regional cooperation. Moreover, there is a need to increase interconnector capacity. I also believe that it would be highly beneficial if ACER, a European Union agency and an independent European structure which fosters cooperation among European energy regulators, was empowered to issue binding decisions on transmission system operators, where appropriate and proportionate, to ensure that the European public interest is

properly served. Furthermore, we have to abandon the principle of always choosing the lowest bidder. People would like to profit from interconnectors, but not have one in their backyard. Ten years of trials instead of having energy lines up and running is a huge cost that can be avoided by paying more in the beginning of a connectivity project. An underground cable is often a cheaper solution in the long run. These are the main arguments of my initiative report to be debated on 15 July 2015 in the Industry, Research and Energy Committee (ITRE). **Peter Eriksson**, MEP, Greens/EFA Group /Miljöpartiet, Sweden.

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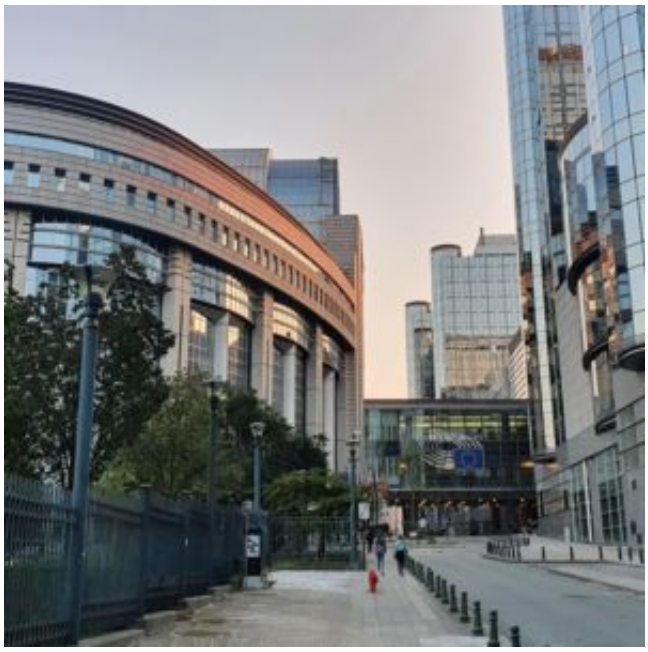

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