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Energy Union

Greens call for EU energy policy to be based on efficiency and renewables

The current situation in Ukraine demonstrates once again the EU's dependence on fossil fuel imports to feed its economies. As with the situation five years ago, the EU has been taken hostage by its biggest supplier, as Russia plays its joker card named "fuels". With this as background, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk recently re-opened the debate on a European Energy Union, calling on Europeans to face their energy challenges together. It's clear that the EU should steer away from being the biggest financial supporter of the Russian oligarchy and the EU could become a powerful actor, if Member States agree on a common set of policies on energy.

Commenting on these developments, MEP **Rebecca Harms**, President of the Greens/EFA group, stated:

"The current situation clearly demonstrates the benefits of a common EU energy strategy. Less dependence on Russian imports through a common EU-wide approach to energy policy would enhance our political capital and allow us to show solidarity within the EU and with Ukraine. Europeans have to stand together now to develop an energy strategy that allows us to achieve our multiple goals of job creation, emission reduction and reduced fossil fuel dependency."

According to the Commission, the EU's oil and gas import bill amounted to more than €400 billion or approximately 3.1% of the Union's GDP (2012). The Greens therefore believe that it is also imperative to reduce the EU's energy bill.

Greens/EFA MEP and energy policy spokesman **Claude Turmes** said:

"*It has long been clear that the only way to decrease the world's biggest wealth transfer from one economic zone (EU) to a handful of oil and-gas-producing countries, is to increase the use of renewable energy and increase efforts on energy savings and efficiency. Greens have been to the fore on this, proposing ideas on a unified European approach. Citizens need future-proof, sustainable solutions instead of coal, nuclear or shale gas."*

A significant expansion of renewables, energy efficiency, and smart grids are the "no-regrets" options in the European Commission's Energy Roadmap 2050, also supported by both the European Parliament and Council. And there is a huge untapped potential within EU Member states for making their economy more energy efficient and exploiting renewable energy sources. Greens therefore propose that the EU should

rely nearly exclusively on renewable energy.

MEP **Bas Eickhout**, Greens/EFA spokesperson for the environment said:

"We have developed scenario analyses *that show that it is possible for the European Union to achieve a nearly 100% renewables-based and highly energy efficient economy by 2050. At national level, Greens have contributed to the current debate by elaborating a concept for a* Green Energy Union*, which includes institutional and budgetary measures. We calculated that as early as 2035, by radically investing in energy savings across the board, Europe can gain independence from Russian gas supplies."*

Greens have suggested binding targets for reducing the Union's greenhouse gases emissions by 60% by 2030, with energy savings of 40% and an increase in the renewables share to 45% by that date. Contrary to alternative plans such as the Tusk proposal, Greens are against exploiting fossil fuels such as shale gas and coal.

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Rebecca Harms

Member



Claude Turmes

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