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Energy union

Missed opportunity for promoting real energy transition in Europe

The European Commission today presented its proposal for a European energy union, which will be discussed by EU leaders at a summit next month. Commenting on the proposals, Green energy spokesperson **Claude Turmes** said:

"The energy union should be a flagship project for Europe over the coming years but today's proposal marks an inauspicious start. The Commission's proposal is a missed opportunity for outlining a path to a real energy transition in Europe. The overarching focus is on finding new supply routes for gas and reviving nuclear power, rather than trying to wean us off our damaging dependence on unreliable energy exporters. If the EU wants to get serious about energy security, it should be prioritising energy efficiency as the first line of defence.

"It is welcome that the Commission is looking to present new legislation on energy efficiency and renewable energy. One key focus should be to increase the ambition of Europe's targets on energy saving and renewables share. However, despite some flowery rhetoric, the Commission is only half-hearted on these two elements, which should be the central plank of any meaningful energy union. This is disappointing given Commission president Juncker's promise to make Europe a leader on renewables. The Commission ignores the now urgent need to scale down coal power generation and instead trying to relaunch the red herring of 'clean fossil fuels'. It is also biased in its approach to the internal market: clamping down on promotion schemes for renewable energy, whilst ignoring the massive state subsidies that continue to flow to nuclear power."

Green energy spokesperson **Bas Eickhout** added:

"Europe's energy union should be ensuring that citizens and municipalities have a real say in and control of the energy system. This will be crucial for ensuring an effective energy transition based on renewables and energy efficiency, which will benefit all in our societies. This must be the focus if we are to truly strengthen our energy security, create high-quality jobs, boost our economy and ensure we do our part to prevent climate change. Unfortunately, the Commission seems to regard citizens as mere consumers, rather than active partners in the process.

"Today's proposals will not create the energy system we need to stop climate-warming greenhouse gases and limit the increase in global temperatures to below 2 degrees, which is necessary to prevent catastrophic climate

change. This will require a much more rapid shift to safe and clean home-grown renewable energy. Hopefully, this is only the start of a process that will lead to a more comprehensive and future-oriented European energy union."

(1) The Greens last month outlined their proposals on what Europe's energy union should look like. The paper and a short overview can be found at: http://www.greens-efa.eu/a-green-energy-union-13369.html

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Claude Turmes

Member

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