Press release | 16.08.2010

European electricity interconnection

EU Commissioner Oettinger has to press Member states to increase interconnectivity of electricity grids rapidly

Reinhard Bütikofer, Vice-Chair of the Greens/European Free Alliance and spokesperson on industrial policy, declares:

"In 2002, at the Barcelona Council, EU member states agreed to the goal of a 10% electricity interconnection target for every one of them. 8 long years later even this meagre goal remains elusive".

This is the result of an answer by Energy Commissioner Oettinger to a parliamentary question* by **Reinhard Bütikofer**.

"Oettinger writes: 'The Commission considers that an increase of interconnections between the Member States is important especially to cope with the growing generation of electricity from renewable energy sources.' But he has to admit, that Italy, Spain, Ireland, the UK and Poland are still not meeting the 2002 target".

"A low level of interconnectivity not only obstructs the uptake of renewable energy, but also hurts competition in the oligopolistic electricity sector, ultimately hurting consumers, and it prevents the creation of a single European market in electricity. The Commission is right in pointing out the importance of increasing interconnectivity, particularly for the Central and Eastern European member states, for whom this also has a relevant energy independence dimension. However, the Commission has shown little ambition to push hard on interconnectivity in the past. Hopefully, Oettinger will be able to translate the importance he assigns to the topic into concrete actions in the upcoming Energy Infrastructure Package. Making the slowpokes catch up will not suffice. Increasing the overall connectivity target must be part of the new approach".

**** The parliamentary question as well as answer is available at:***

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2010-3252&language=EN

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Reinhard Bütikofer

Member

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