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Hydrogen Strategy must not be excuse to continue polluting the planet

Green Deal

Today, the European Commission has presented the new EU Hydrogen Strategy. The Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament rejects the use of hydrogen produced from fossil fuels due to its negative impact on the climate and its economic costs and call for green hydrogen produced entirely from renewable energy sources. A European energy strategy must not rely on hydrogen alone. The Commission's goal is to make the EU the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. In line with the science, the Greens/EFA group are calling for zero emissions by 2040 to meet the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.

Ville Niinistö MEP, Greens/EFA coordinator in the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, comments:

"Hydrogen can play a role in decarbonisation and in promoting the greening of European industries and the economy. However, the Hydrogen Strategy must not be allowed to become a greenwashing exercise used to subsidise obsolete gas pipelines. Funding hydrogen from fossil fuels is not sustainable and not in line with our climate commitments.

"The Commission must focus on the expansion of renewables and promoting energy infrastructure for hydrogen produced from renewable energy. High costs and massive energy expenditure for the production of hydrogen are only justified where there are no other options, such as for the steel industry or for use in shipping. We also have concerns on the composition of the Hydrogen alliance, with so such strong representation of gas and heavy industry companies. The clear focus of the alliance should be on renewable hydrogen."

"The energy system strategy launched in parallel with the Hydrogen Strategy sets positive goals for utilising waste heat, and electrification, but falls short on efficiency improvements. These strategies will carry very little impact without a massive scale-up of renewable power; we need to quadruple our capacity by 2050, while cutting energy consumption by a third. Without renewables there will be no green hydrogen and we won't get the required benefits."

Bas Eickhout MEP, Greens/EFA Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee, comments:

"The Hydrogen Strategy must be built on renewable and green hydrogen only. Only 100 percent renewable hydrogen should be part of the picture. Hydrogen is not some magical cure that will make the climate crisis disappear. In the building sector, the use of this expensive energy makes no sense. Instead, we should modernise our buildings and use renewable energies for residual demand. The yardstick for spending billions earmarked for the recovery fund must be a 65 percent reduction in CO2 emissions by 2030.

"The Green Deal and climate protection require massive investment with incentives for a green economy and industry without coal, gas and nuclear energy. Investments in renewable energies and a wave of renovation will create jobs, reduce fossil fuel emissions and protect the planet."

Background

Today, the European Commission presented the "Clean Hydrogen Alliance", which aims to identify technological requirements, investment opportunities and regulatory hurdles. The Greens/EFA group calls for equal participation of independent aspects, NGO representative and renewable industry stakeholders so as to not only seek advice from hydrogen industry representatives.

More details available on the Commission website here:

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1259

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