COUNCIL RESOLUTION
of 8 June 1998
on renewable sources of energy
(98/C 198/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the White Paper for a Community strategy and action plan 'Energy for the future: renewable sources of energy',

Having regard to the Council resolution of 27 June 1997 on renewable sources of energy (1), which, among other things, refers to the ambitious target mentioned in the Green Paper on renewable sources of energy (hereinafter 'renewables') to double the overall share of renewables in the Community by 2010,

Having regard to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as well as to Agenda 21 of 1992 concerning a Programme of Action for Sustainable Development,

Having regard to the White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment,

Having regard to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as well as to Agenda 21 of 1992 concerning a Programme of Action for Sustainable Development,

Having regard to the Altener programme and to the discussions concerning the energy framework programme as well as the fifth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities,

Having regard to the Commission's first report on the need for harmonisation requirements in the internal electricity market,

1. AGREES that there is need to promote a sustained and substantially increased use of renewable sources of energy throughout the Community in the light of the valuable contribution renewables can make to environmental protection and the implementation of the commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, to security of supply and the preservation of finite energy resources, and to economic and social development generally, including in relation to employment and the strengthening of the economic structure of the outermost, isolated and island regions;

2. WELCOMES the general thrust of the White Paper on a Community strategy and action plan as a basis for the development of actions at Community level complementary to actions at national level;

3. URGES Member States to continue to develop, in conformity with national procedures, national strategies and structures for the promotion of renewables with a view to bringing about a substantial increase in the use of renewables throughout the Community;

4. CONSIDERS that the White Paper's indicative target of 12% for the Community as a whole by 2010 provides useful guidance for increased efforts at Community level as well as in Member States, bearing in mind the need to reflect differing national circumstances;

5. NOTES that an objective of Community and national strategies should be to pursue the development of renewables in a cost-effective manner, taking into account their full benefits;

6. NOTES that the liberalisation of Community energy markets will increase competitive pressures on all sources of energy, particularly renewable energy sources, but also create opportunities for the development of renewables;

7. CONSIDERS that the relative costs of renewables must be reduced to allow them to compete with

other energy sources with a view to increasing their market penetration and that this is in general best achieved through market-based instruments;

8. BELIEVES that the strategy for promotion of renewables should focus on mature technologies in order to make these technologies fully competitive in the short or medium term;

9. NOTES that support should be given to research, development and demonstration in relation to not yet mature technologies in order to improve the overall competitiveness of renewables in the medium and long term;

10. BELIEVES that the development of Community-wide standards and certification schemes will assist the market penetration of renewables, in view of the significant actual and potential market for environmentally-friendly energy sources, industries and technologies;

11. NOTES that Member States choose the most appropriate means of promoting use of renewables from, for example, the following:

- programmes to support research and development, demonstration and dissemination of renewables technology,
- elimination of legal, administrative and institutional obstacles,
- fiscal measures,
- subsidies,
- preferential tariffs,
- levies on energy consumption, designed to promote sustainable energy systems,
- green certificates,
- voluntary agreements with industry,
- purchase obligations,
- long-term purchase contracts and energy contracting,
- removal of obstacles to the development of renewables in applications where they are already competitive,

which are best suited to their national circumstances and are in conformity with Treaty obligations and comply with Community State aid guidelines for environmental protection;

12. WELCOMES the intention of the Commission to consider appropriate modifications in favour of renewable energy sources during the revision of the guidelines for Community state aid;

13. RECOGNISES that these different measures may have an effect on the development of a single market in electricity, especially as the role of renewables increases substantially, and TAKES NOTE with interest of the Commission's first report on harmonisation requirements in the framework of the Electricity Directive;

14. CONFIRMS the Community role as a complement to national measures, following the principle of subsidiarity, and that action at Community level must add value to these national measures. Efforts should be made to ensure that Community funding, including where appropriate from the structural funds, is devoted to renewable energy sources, within the framework of the specific objectives agreed for the different instruments;

15. STRESSES the important role of the Altener programme, which will become an integral part of the Energy Framework Programme, to develop and promote support measures at Community level;

16. BELIEVES that it is also highly desirable to build renewables into other Community policies, where it is appropriate to do so;

17. RECOGNISES that other Community policies, including regional, rural development, research and technology, external and competition and State aid policies, could make a significant contribution to the promotion of renewables;

18. NOTES in this context the important role expected by the White Paper from biomass and waste in making significant advances in the market penetration of renewables in the coming years and BELIEVES that full account must be taken of renewables in the development of Community policies on agriculture and waste management;
19. RECOMMENDS that the White Paper on renewables should be considered by the Commission in the context of the strategy to integrate environmental protection into the Community’s policies and activities, to be presented before the Cardiff European Council;

20. WELCOMES the idea of the campaign for take-off;

21. AGREES that this campaign must be designed to help raise interest among industry, investors and the public;

22. RECOGNISES that this will require mobilisation of private sector as well as public sector funds in Member States and the Community;

23. INVITES the Commission to bring forward proposals on how this is to be done, in particular in relation to financing;

24. RECOGNISES that the existing situation and potential for development of renewables vary considerably between Member States and that in this context Member States will give special consideration to the sectors offering the best prospect for market penetration;

25. ENCOURAGES Member States to cooperate with a view to coordinating policy so as to obtain the optimum synergy from national policies and measures, to be complemented by Community action in line with the principle of subsidiarity. In this context, Member States and the Commission should regularly exchange information on progress made at national level;

26. INVITES the Commission to follow progress, including review of the working of the liberalised energy markets with respect to renewables and the development of renewables in other policy sectors, and to make a progress report by the end of 1999 and thereafter every second year, including if appropriate a revised action plan;

27. INVITES the Commission to consider the need for proposals in order to remove obstacles to the greater use of renewables and to the trade in electricity generated from renewables, and INVITES the Commission to develop indicators on the competitiveness of renewables in order to measure results in this area;

28. ENCOURAGES the Commission to keep Member States informed and involved in this process.