

Thursday 31 January 2008

Action Plan for Energy Efficiency: Realising the Potential

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European Parliament resolution of 31 January 2008 on an Action Plan for Energy Efficiency: Realising the Potential (2007/2106(INI))

(2009/C 68 E/04)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled Action Plan for Energy Efficiency: Realising the Potential (COM(2006)0545),
- having regard to the Commission staff working document (SEC(2006)1173) accompanying the above-mentioned Commission Communication,
- having regard to the impact assessment of the Action Plan (SEC(2006)1174), and the executive summary (SEC(2006)1175),
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled An Energy Policy for Europe (COM(2007)0001),
- having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council of 8 and 9 March 2007 concerning the Council's endorsement of a 'European Council Action Plan (2007-2009) — Energy Policy for Europe' (7224/07),
- having regard to Council Directive 92/75/EEC of 22 September 1992 on the indication by labelling and standard product information of the consumption of energy and other resources by household appliances ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to Directive 2002/91/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2002 on the energy performance of buildings ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to Directive 2004/8/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 February 2004 on the promotion of cogeneration based on a useful heat demand in the internal energy market ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to Directive 2005/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2005 establishing a framework for the setting of ecodesign requirements for energy-using products ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to Directive 2006/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2006 on energy end-use efficiency and energy services ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to Council Decision 2006/1005/EC of 18 December 2006 concerning the conclusion of the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the European Community on the coordination of energy-efficiency labelling programmes for office equipment ⁽⁶⁾ and to the text of the abovementioned agreement ⁽⁷⁾,
- having regard to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Community energy-efficiency labelling programme for office equipment (COM(2006)0576),
- having regard to Decision No 1639/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (2007 to 2013) ⁽⁸⁾ and in particular its Chapter III of Title II thereof, concerning the Intelligent Energy-Europe Programme,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 297, 13.10.1992, p. 16. Directive as amended by Regulation (EC) No 1882/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 284, 31.10.2003, p. 1).

⁽²⁾ OJ L 1, 4.1.2003, p. 65.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 52, 21.2.2004, p. 50.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 191, 22.7.2005, p. 29.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 114, 27.4.2006, p. 64.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 381, 28.12.2006, p. 24.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ L 381, 28.12.2006, p. 26.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ L 310, 9.11.2006, p. 15.

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- having regard to Decision No 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013) ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2001 allowing voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 1 June 2006 on Energy efficiency or doing more with less — Green Paper ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 December 2006 on a European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy — Green Paper ⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the opinions of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Regional Development (A6-0003/2008),
- A. whereas chaotic climate change will result if global temperatures rise by more than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, as is attested to, inter alia, by the May 2007 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; whereas drastic cuts in carbon emissions are necessary by 2015 if the rise in global temperatures is to be kept to no more than two degrees Celsius; whereas using energy more efficiently is the most immediate and most cost-effective way of reducing carbon emissions;
- B. whereas energy efficiency has a crucial role to play in reducing the European Union's dependency on energy imports, in tackling the future penury of energy sources and in limiting the effect of energy price shocks;
- C. whereas the impact assessment relating to the Action Plan for Energy Efficiency acknowledged a lack of enforcement capabilities at all policy-making levels within the Commission and estimated that an additional 20 staff would be needed in order to make the Action Plan a success;
- D. whereas Directive 2002/91/EC has been properly transposed by only five Member States;
- E. whereas Directive 2006/32/EC requires Member States to submit a National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) to the Commission by 30 June 2007; whereas by 1 September 2007 the Commission had received only nine NEEAPs, and by 10 January 2008 still only seventeen NEEAPs;
- F. whereas implementation by the Member States of Directive 2004/8/EC is late and far from perfect;
- G. whereas the European Union is one of the richest and most technologically advanced regions of the world; whereas the European Union has increased its economic output by nearly 40 % and average per capita income by a third since 1990; whereas, over the same period, demand for energy and power resources grew by only 11 %;
- H. whereas information and communication technologies — if given the right policy signals — could generate additional productivity gains beyond the EU's 20 % target; whereas certain technologies such as smart grid technology, intelligent management systems and speckled computing technologies should therefore be the subject of effective policy recommendations;
1. Welcomes the abovementioned 2006 Action Plan for Energy Efficiency and applauds its objectives and scope;
2. Considers that a target of improving energy efficiency by over 20 % by 2020, in addition to any improvements due to autonomous structural or price effects, is entirely feasible technically and economically, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that this objective as well as the climate change targets are met;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 412, 30.12.2006, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 114, 24.4.2001, p. 1. Regulation as last amended by Council Regulation (EC) No 1791/2006 (OJ L 363, 20.12.2006, p. 1).

⁽³⁾ OJ C 298 E, 8.12.2006, p. 273.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 317 E, 23.12.2006, p. 876.

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3. Notes with grave concern that implementation by Member States of existing legislation on energy efficiency is incomplete and behind schedule;
4. Stresses the need for the energy-efficiency policy to be implemented at all levels of government;
5. Regrets that implementation by Member States of Directive 2004/8/EC is incomplete and far behind schedule;
6. Censures the failure to put in place the number of Commission officials needed in order to ensure that both the Action Plan and the energy efficiency legislation on which it builds are implemented fully and promptly;
7. Deplores the fact that, of 21 Commission actions scheduled in the Action Plan for completion in 2007, only three had been fully implemented by 1 September 2007, while noting that, by 30 October 2007, 16 of those 21 actions were reported by the Commission to be 'well on track'; deplores the severe slippage in the timetable for the adoption of minimum energy performance standards for priority product groups;
8. Censures the failure of many Member State governments to prioritise full and prompt transposition of, and compliance with, energy efficiency legislation, despite rhetoric about tackling climate change and reducing EU energy imports;
9. Urges the Commission to speed up the drafting of the future memorandum of understanding on cooperation with the Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER), which will lay down common guidelines and a common code of conduct, with a view to improving the efficiency of final energy use in all sectors;
10. Calls for an urgent and frank assessment, in the Commission and in each Member State, of the capacity shortfalls and other barriers which to date have led to inadequate implementation of energy efficiency legislation, and of how these shortfalls and barriers can be overcome;
11. Notes in particular the widespread lack of simple, immediate information and organisational support on energy efficiency at the point of need, which may arise suddenly (e.g. when a domestic appliance or other equipment breaks down) or be connected with particular events (e.g. moving house); believes that a lack of attention to the practical needs of citizens is undermining many energy efficiency schemes and therefore stresses the importance of practical help and up-front funding;
12. Emphasises that information and communication technologies (ICTs) should be promoted as a key element in driving forward energy saving in various sectors such as transport, construction, energy and manufacturing; in this context, welcomes the Commission's study to assess the potential contribution of various leading-edge technologies based on ICTs to improving the energy efficiency of the EU economy and reducing green house gas emissions by 2020; urges the Commission to include intelligent management systems in general, and smart grid technologies and embedded systems in particular, in the matters covered by that study;

Equipment and appliances

13. Welcomes the strategy of adopting minimum energy performance standards and calls on the Commission to establish and apply them by 2008 for air conditioning and all types of television set-top boxes; urges that this be done in conjunction with a dynamic revision of labelling and notes that the CE marking can support the enforcement of minimum energy performance standards; calls on the Member States to devote more resources to market surveillance;
14. Approves the adding of domestic lighting to the list of priority product groups and stresses the importance of the Commission's keeping to the proposed timetable for the withdrawal of the most inefficient lightbulbs from the market, in line with the European Council conclusions of March 2007;

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15. Notes recent progress in LED lamp technology; calls on the Commission to explore ways of advancing research into LED lamps and of increasing their use;
16. Urges the Commission to establish timetables for the withdrawal from the market of all the least energy-efficient items of equipment, appliances and other energy-using products, such as patio heaters;
17. Welcomes the emphasis on stand-by loss reduction and on the increasing availability of products and technologies which ensure that energy-using goods and appliances use energy only when it is actually needed; calls on the Commission to come forward with a 'one watt' stand-by performance requirement and an analysis of the potential energy savings to be made from both minimising and eliminating non-essential stand-by mode consumption, particularly passive stand-by;
18. Welcomes the signing of a new Energy Star Agreement with the United States establishing common energy efficiency standards for office equipment, and particularly the inclusion in the implementing regulation of a mandatory public procurement provision; urges the Commission to take forward negotiations on extending the scope of EU-US Energy Star cooperation to other products, in line with the commitment made at the EU-US summit of 30 April 2007;
19. Welcomes the proposal to establish by 2010 minimum performance standards for all other significant energy-using appliances and equipment; calls on the Commission to start with the least energy-efficient products on the market;
20. Supports the Commission in its efforts to formulate criteria for the eco-labelling of heating and cooling technologies, covering in particular primary energy use, with a view to ensuring that users are guaranteed reliable information on the most effective and environmentally-friendly options available on the market for equipment for the heating and cooling of buildings;
21. Urges rigorous implementation of the 2006 requirements relating to the installation of smart meters in order to raise consumer awareness of electricity use, to help electricity suppliers manage demand more effectively and to help improve the requirements relating to energy-efficiency statistics;
22. Calls for the formulation of a standard for intelligent heat meters to be used in central heating systems and remote heating networks with a view to encouraging end users to behave more responsibly ('pay for what you use') and to getting rid of fixed-cost systems, which have the opposite effect;
23. Takes the view that industrial technologies should ensure that less energy is used in production processes; believes that considerable energy savings could be made by reducing the weight of road vehicles and other means of transport;

Building performance requirements

24. Urges the Commission to expedite infringement procedures against those Member States which have not properly transposed or fully implemented Directive 2002/91/EC;
25. Given the long life of buildings, notes the paramount importance of ensuring that new buildings are constructed to the highest energy-efficiency standards possible and that existing buildings are upgraded to contemporary standards; considers that the demolition of energy-inefficient buildings, combined with the construction of new energy-efficient buildings, might sometimes be supported as an alternative to refurbishment;
26. Calls on the Commission to revise Directive 2002/91/EC so as to include, within the scope of Article 6 from 2009 onwards, all buildings requiring heating or cooling, regardless of their size;

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27. Calls on the Commission, in its review of the performance of boilers, to have regard to the fact that cogeneration (micro combined heat and power) boilers are by far the most efficient, and to set minimum performance requirements for boilers accordingly;
28. Welcomes the proposal to lay down minimum performance requirements for new and renovated buildings and for building components such as windows and window films;
29. Calls on the Commission to propose a binding requirement that all new buildings needing to be heated and/or cooled be constructed to passive house or equivalent non-residential standards from 2011 onwards, and a requirement to use passive heating and cooling solutions from 2008;
30. Calls on the Commission to consider the gradual introduction of district heating and cooling grids for all buildings in order to reduce fossil fuel use in heating and cooling by utilising the losses occurring in the transformation of energy;
31. Calls on the Commission to consider architectural solutions for passive heating and cooling, such as construction structures with thermal properties, when considering taxation and other measures for promoting energy efficiency;
32. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote district cooling from renewable sources of energy as an efficient alternative to meeting the growing demand for comfort cooling;
33. Calls on the Commission to create a transparent database, accessible to Union citizens, of national, regional and local measures promoting energy efficiency in buildings, in particular financing measures, in the interests of the exchange of best practices in the EU and of public information and awareness;

Power generation and distribution

34. Urges Member States to include in their NEEAPs plans to increase high-efficiency cogeneration and to move towards the holistic planning and fostering of electricity, heating and cooling supply and urges the Commission to look unfavourably on NEEAPs which fail to do this; more generally urges the Member States to promote measures to encourage the use of, and remove administrative barriers to, small-scale and micro cogeneration;
35. Points out that transport and distribution are among the sources of energy losses and causes of power cuts and stresses the role that microgeneration and decentralised and diversified generation might play in guaranteeing supply security and reducing losses; considers that incentives should be created aimed at improving infrastructure with a view to reducing transmission and distribution losses;
36. Calls on the Commission to pay greater attention to the heat market, as heat represents the largest share of energy consumption, and to instruments (urban planning, heat mapping, investment incentives) that will allow the recovery of surplus heat from renewable sources through the development of district heating and cooling infrastructures;
37. Calls on the Commission to monitor closely the implementation of Directive 2004/8/EC and to assess whether support schemes are adequate to harness the national potential for high-efficiency cogeneration;
38. Draws the Commission's attention to the need for local cooling networks to be introduced as an effective alternative response to the growing demand for comfort cooling and also to the need for a drastic reduction in related CO₂ emissions;
39. Calls on the Commission to extend the scope of existing financial incentives to developments which enable energy produced from renewable sources to be fed into existing networks set up for fossil fuel energy; considers that improving existing networks would significantly increase the efficiency of energy production from renewable sources in a shorter time and for less cost, at the same time helping to increase security of supply as a result of such timely improvements;

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Transport

40. Calls on the Commission to set minimum energy performance requirements for all transport modes, including public transport; stresses the need for an energy-efficient transport policy giving preference to public transport, cycling and walking in urban areas; welcomes the Green Paper on Urban Transport and calls on the Commission to launch an initiative specifically concerning urban transport and the issue of integrating climate protection, energy saving and public health in a sustainable mobility policy for towns and cities; encourages urban authorities in the EU to consider measures to reduce CO₂ emissions from cars and from passenger car traffic, for example by means of congestion charges; recalls that binding annual car emissions in respect of all new passenger cars sold contribute to the EU reaching its binding CO₂ targets;

41. Calls for Directive 1999/94/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 1999 relating to the availability of consumer information on fuel economy and CO₂ emissions in respect of the marketing of new passenger cars to enable car labelling using a clear multi-class rating system as used in appliance labelling (currently the seven-class A to G scale)⁽¹⁾; proposes that a minimum of 20 % of any space devoted to the advertising and marketing of new cars should provide information on fuel efficiency and emissions;

42. Regrets also that the directive proposed in respect of passenger car taxation, aimed at reducing CO₂ emissions in line with the EU's commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, has still not been adopted by the Council, and urges its rapid adoption and implementation;

43. Calls on the Commission to devise a framework strategy to facilitate substantive improvements to the efficiency of urban and suburban public transport, requiring operators of urban and suburban public transport systems to conduct studies and feasibility studies focusing on system-related efficiency and service levels, the strategy in question being geared to adjusting the establishment of horizontal support schemes aimed at developing public transport systems in such a way that those schemes comply with stricter conditions regarding efficiency and consistency;

44. Welcomes the Clean Sky Joint Undertaking, the aim of which is to produce greener, more environmentally sustainable and energy-efficient aircraft;

Financial arrangements and regional policy

45. Notes the importance of access to structural funding in the financing of energy efficiency, through bodies such as the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and also through private banking schemes;

46. Calls on the Commission to raise from 3 % to a minimum of 5 % the proportion of structural and cohesion funding which should be spent on improving the energy efficiency of existing homes, and to require Member States to take full advantage of this opportunity;

47. Regrets the complexity of much EU funding for energy efficiency, notwithstanding the existence of the Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises Initiative (Jeremie); notes that the lack of simple and accessible funding constitutes a huge barrier for small businesses and micro-businesses in particular, which do not have the necessary capacity to access complex programmes;

48. Notes the vital importance of research and development and innovation in the area of energy efficiency; urges Member States, regional authorities, local authorities and NGOs to take advantage of the funding available under the Seventh Framework Programme, the Structural Funds and the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme/Intelligent Energy Europe, which are intended to stimulate research into energy efficiency and to promote renewable energy technologies and the development of new modes of energy transport and storage designed to reduce energy losses; urges the Commission to respond generously to calls for funding for research into energy efficiency; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that energy efficiency is given high priority in the sustained efforts that are to be made to maximise the use of EU research and technology development programmes;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 12, 18.1.2000, p. 16.

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49. Calls for micro businesses to be treated like domestic households and offered very simple financing for energy-efficiency improvements, such as upfront grants;

50. Calls on the Commission to support state aid rules that are more favourable to energy efficiency measures (such as eco-innovation and productivity improvements); believes that such rules should be simple, practical and transparent, removing barriers to the effective implementation of energy-efficiency measures;

51. Calls on the Commission, as a matter of the utmost urgency, to put forward proposals for specific measures aimed at achieving greater energy efficiency in the outermost regions, geared to their particular characteristics resulting from the effects of the permanent constraints to which those regions are subject;

52. Stresses the role of local and regional energy agencies in the effective implementation of energy-efficient measures; calls for the involvement of all agencies (European, national and local) in the formulation and implementation of energy-efficiency action plans;

Taxation

53. Calls on the Council to encourage the Member States to apply a reduced rate of value added tax on labour, materials and components which improve energy efficiency in buildings; calls on the Council to ensure that the overall tax system reflects, in a coherent way, the aim of improving energy efficiency in buildings;

54. Encourages Member States to make full use of the possibility of a reduced rate of VAT on labour in the renovation and repair of private dwellings to improve energy efficiency; welcomes the Commission's decision to evaluate the effectiveness of tax credits both for consumers buying the most energy-efficient appliances and for undertakings which produce and promote such equipment;

55. Notes that taxation falls within the competence of the Member States; notes that taxation measures chosen by Member States may be an element of all NEEAPs; advocates the internalisation of environmental costs;

56. Calls on all Member States to introduce specific incentives to encourage households, micro-businesses and private landlords to pursue energy-efficiency measures and buy energy-efficient products;

57. Considers that tax incentives could in certain circumstances be available for the demolition of energy-inefficient buildings, when combined with the construction of new energy-efficient buildings;

Changing behaviour

58. Points to the major role to be played by the public sector in promoting energy-efficient solutions;

59. Agrees that education and training programmes relating to energy efficiency have a key role to play, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises; notes that energy education should start at a very early age with the incorporation of related courses within the educational programmes of schools throughout the EU; notes that rolling out innovative techniques for construction and energy management will require a large cadre of appropriately skilled workers; is concerned that Member States have not yet produced adequate training programmes for energy-efficiency related skills; calls for human resource requirements to be regarded as an essential element of NEEAPs;

60. Encourages regional and local authorities to develop close partnerships with regional energy agencies in order to improve training facilities for energy technicians and professionals working in related sectors; stresses the need for more coordinated networks of local actors in order to disseminate best practices in energy efficiency to less developed regions;

61. Stresses the role that public procurement, as well as services such as energy audits might play in reducing waste and promoting the improved exploitation of each building's energy potential; urges the Member States and their regional, local and other public authorities to be the first to set an example, not only in administrative buildings but also in other public buildings such as schools, universities and hospitals and in entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services;

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62. Calls on the Commission to increase research into behavioural economics and human decision-making so as to help to tailor future energy-efficiency information campaigns (such as the Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign) and thus maximise their benefits;

63. Agrees that energy efficiency starts at home; calls on the Commission, the Council and its own departments to take the lead by requiring exemplary energy performance standards to be set for all EU institution buildings, as part of a wider audit of energy use by the institutions which should embrace working and travel arrangements, incentives and locations, as well as equipment and procurement;

64. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to organise — on an annual basis — a European Action Day on Energy Efficiency;

65. Notes that the high-tech sector can play a crucial role in raising consumer awareness and increasing the willingness of consumers to contribute to energy efficiency by offering products that are both energy-efficient and of an improved standard;

66. Considers that energy service contracts between energy suppliers and consumers are an effective means of increasing the efficiency of heating and cooling installations; calls on the Commission to remove the administrative and legal barriers to the conclusion of such contracts;

Cities

67. Recognises the importance of exchanging and promoting best urban practices in relation to energy efficiency; suggests that the existing Eurocities forum could be an effective vehicle for doing this;

68. Urges the Commission and the other EU institutions to work together with the big cities in the EU, favouring budgets for twinning and the exchange of good practices between the major cities;

69. Welcomes the Covenant of Mayors initiative, bringing together in a permanent network the mayors of 20 to 30 of Europe's largest and most pioneering cities, and calls for further details regarding its establishment; emphasises, however, that the Covenant of Mayors must complement the activities of similar networks which already exist;

The global dimension

70. Supports the Commission in its proposal to set up the Platform for International Cooperation on Energy Efficiency; calls on the Member States and the Commission to enhance international cooperation in the energy-efficiency field so as to ensure that new regulations and standards do not fragment the global market; calls for these international — bilateral and multilateral — agreements to embrace not only a shared commitment to minimum energy-efficiency performance standards but also the sharing of energy-efficiency technology; notes the strategic imperative of technology diffusion, which requires a public-interest approach to intellectual property rights;

71. Acknowledges the ongoing work at technical level on shared energy-efficiency standards, particularly with China; is concerned that this work is undermined by the lack of coordination between Member States, giving rise to confusion in third countries; calls for an integrated approach with regard to standards;

72. Notes the widespread concern that Russia will not be able to meet its domestic and contractual gas demand, and urges the Commission, in the interests of energy security, to commit greater resources to the EU-Russia Energy Efficiency Dialogue, with particular attention being paid to the upgrading of Russian district heating networks and to the utilisation of gas currently flared on oil fields;

73. Welcomes the Council initiative for an Africa-EU Energy Partnership, and calls for this partnership to prioritise energy-efficient and sustainable growth in Africa;

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74. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the parliaments and governments of the Member States.
