

(98/C 76/126)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-1713/97****by Hiltrud Breyer (V) to the Council***(22 May 1997)**Subject:* Electricity Grid Feed Act

Renewable energy is extremely important from the point of view of protecting the environment and climate. This point was most recently acknowledged in the Green Paper on Renewable Sources of Energy (COM(96) 0576 final). Effective measures to promote renewable energy and ensure its rapid introduction into the market are therefore essential. In Germany, the Electricity Grid Feed Act has for years served as an efficient means to this end, enabling more than 1600 MW of wind power capacity to be installed within six years. The success of this legislation is incontestable, but at the same time it has met with opposition from the monopolistic German energy industry, which suddenly found itself exposed to unwelcome competition on the energy production side.

1. What is the Council's view of the dispute about state aid in connection with the Electricity Grid Feed Act and Commissioner Van Miert's letter of 26 October 1996 to Germany's Federal Minister for Economic Affairs?
2. Does the Council agree that the 'polluter pays' principle referred to in Article 130r(2) of the EC Treaty permits the creation of instruments enabling any additional costs of environmentally benign energy production to be shared among all electricity consumers, as provided for, for example, by the Electricity Grid Feed Act in Germany in the case of renewable energy?
3. What is the Council's view of the role of renewable energy in fulfilling the European Union's climate protection obligations? Are not aid measures to promote the introduction of renewable energy into markets needed to perform this duty?

**Joint answer  
to Written Questions Nos E-1707/97, E-1709/97, E-1711/97 and E-1713/97**

*(25 September 1997)*

1. The Council agrees with the Honourable Member that renewable energy has an important role to play in the endeavours of the Community and the Member States to protect the environment. In its common position on the review of the European Community programme of policy and action in relation to the environment and sustainable development "Towards sustainability" <sup>(1)</sup>, the Council suggested priorities for the energy sector. Among these priorities are: to promote energy efficiency and the rational use of energy and to support the development and application of energy-saving technologies and practices including programmes and measures, awareness-raising and information measures, and to develop criteria for the screening of subsidy schemes in order to redress incentives which have an adverse effect.

Furthermore, the Council Resolution on renewable sources of energy agreed upon by Energy Ministers at the Council meeting on 27 May 1997 contains the position of the Council on various issues connected with renewables and, more specifically, questions raised in the Commission's Green Paper for a Community Strategy - Energy for the future: renewable sources of energy. The resolution lists a series of measures that could increase the consumption of renewable energy. These include actions and measures in the fields of research, development and demonstration; market conditions; consumer information and confidence; and coordination and monitoring. The resolution also notes that an active governmental policy, both at Member State and at Community level, is necessary to improve the competitiveness of renewables.

Thus, the Council is well aware of the efforts required to meet the indicative target to double the overall share of renewables by 2010.