

Resolution on security of energy supply in the European Union

2006/2530(RSP) - 23/03/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on security of energy supply in the European Union. It adopted a joint resolution, drafted on behalf of the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE and UEN groups. The resolution emphasised the need for a more ambitious European Energy Policy, focusing on renewable energy sources, solidarity between the Member States and the need to complete the internal market for electricity and gas.

Speaking with one voice: Parliament welcomed the Commission Green Paper on energy policy, but noted that the Green Paper did not propose new targets or advance concrete proposals. It urged the Commission and the Council to ensure to achieve a more ambitious European energy policy which included a concrete plan of action as soon as possible. Parliament must be fully consulted in that process. It also noted the Green Paper failed to address vital sectors that rely heavily on imported sources of energy, in particular transport and aviation. The EU-25's import dependency for energy is 48% and is projected to rise to 71% by 2030 if no additional measures are taken. Final energy intensity in the EU-25 has consistently decreased whereas overall primary energy consumption in the EU-25 has increased at an average rate of 0.8%

Parliament noted that recent disputes over gas prices between Russia and its neighbours, but also the recent increase in the price of crude oil, have revealed the vulnerability of the supply and distribution of energy. Energy policy in the narrow sense must be connected with foreign and security policy, and the Commission must respond to recent calls for a common energy policy. Parliament said that the EU should establish broad cooperation with all the large oil and gas consuming countries – the US, Japan and large emerging economies such as India and China – to work out a global strategy with a view to organising the demand side and combining their efforts in counterbalancing the oligopoly on the production side. It called on the Commission and the Council to propose an internationally recognised mediation system for cases of conflict and dispute concerning the delivery and distribution of energy. The EU could initiate such a process by developing a mediation system both as part of its neighbourhood policy and also with other key supplier countries, and could actively promote this mediation system globally. In addition, new strategies should be developed to reduce the possibilities of uranium and nuclear waste being used for the production and proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Commission, the Council and the Member States must give their fullest support to the IAEA proposals to multilateralise the supply of fissile material for nuclear energy production.

Solidarity in the EU: An essential element of a common energy policy should be enhanced solidarity between Member States in order to deal with difficulties related to the physical security of infrastructure and security of supply. Parliament advocated strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy, placing special emphasis on cooperation with the neighbouring countries in the energy field, including transportation infrastructure, to which special financial assistance should be provided. Energy policy cooperation should be included in the Action Plans being elaborated under the European Neighbourhood Policy.

A well functioning internal market: An essential part of the maintenance of security of supply is the rapid transposition of existing EU provisions by all Member States in order to achieve a fully functioning internal market in electricity and gas, thereby enhancing competitiveness, transparency and energy efficiency. Parliament was deeply concerned about the distortion in the internal market caused by protectionist support for national market leaders, and urged the Commission to ensure full implementation

of the internal market rules. The Commission must react strongly to the market dominance and market imperfections as described in the sector inquiry forwarded by DG Competition on 16 February 2006 and submit new proposals for combating market dominance and market imperfections with a concrete set of actions and instruments. Parliament also called for closer cooperation between European and national competition authorities in order to give a coordinated and truly European answer to the emerging national economic patriotism.

Sustainable energy sources: 59% of the oil consumed in the EU-25 in 2004 was used by the transport sector, 17% was used in buildings, 16% was used for non-energy purposes and 8% was used in industry. Parliament pointed out that the Commission expected energy demand in the transport sector to grow by at least 30% by 2030, with an increase of up to 5% per year for air transport. It urged the Commission to propose concrete measures on energy and invest urgently and massively in a truly energy-efficient economy in order to diminish drastically our dependency on fossil fuels and to become the most energy-efficient economy in the world by 2020. It stressed the enormous innovation gap that currently exists in the energy sector and called on the Commission to prepare a road map to speed up market penetration of existing best practice and best technologies. Parliament also stressed the exceptional importance of RES and insisted that there should be a directive on heating and cooling from RES to ensure further market penetration by RES. Member States must redouble efforts to achieve the targets of a 12% share of total energy consumption and 22.1% of electricity from RES by 2010. Parliament believed that nuclear energy is a part of the European political debate on the energy mix. It recognised the role that nuclear energy currently plays in some Member States in maintaining security of electricity supply as part of the energy mix and as a way of avoiding CO₂ emissions. Decisions on whether nuclear energy production should continue to play a role in some Member States can only be taken at Member State level within the framework of subsidiarity.

Research and development: Parliament called on the EU to ensure that renewable energy technologies were endowed with sufficient resources in the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development and to help SMEs in this sector to use their leadership in technology to achieve success on the global market. All the forecasts concur that even in the long term conventional power stations will continue to account for a large share of electricity generation. Parliament was therefore in favour of promoting R&D into the efficiency of such power stations and ways of increasing it. Furthermore, knowledge of nuclear fusion technology and its application are of strategic value and should be further developed in the EU.

Finally, Parliament requested that research into biomass, into all RES, including wave and tidal power and energy storage, and into coal gasification technology be carried out, under the Seventh Framework Programme in order to reduce pollutant emissions and create a world market.