Procedure file

Basic information

COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1996/2260(COS)	Procedure completed
Renewable sources for energy: Community strategy. Green paper Subject 3.60.05 Alternative and renewable energies		

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy	PSE ROTHE Mechtild	06/02/1997
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	PPE SCHIERHUBER Agnes	28/01/1997
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	NI KRONBERGER Hans	26/02/1997
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Social Affairs	2015	27/06/1997
	Energy	2009	27/05/1997
	Energy	1975	03/12/1996

Key events

20/11/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1996)0576	Summary
03/12/1996	Debate in Council	1975	Summary
10/12/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
12/05/1997	Vote in committee		
12/05/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0168/1997	
15/05/1997	Debate in Parliament		
15/05/1997	Decision by Parliament	T4-0256/1997	Summary
15/05/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
27/05/1997	Resolution/conclusions adopted by		

	Council		
02/06/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		
27/06/1997	Debate in Council	2015	

Technical information

Procedure reference	1996/2260(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENER/4/08460

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(1996)0576	20/11/1996	EC	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES0462/1997 OJ C 206 07.07.1997, p. 0041	23/04/1997	ESC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0168/1997 OJ C 167 02.06.1997, p. 0010	12/05/1997	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0256/1997 OJ C 167 02.06.1997, p. 0124-0160	15/05/1997	EP	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0438/1996 OJ C 244 11.08.1997, p. 0001	11/06/1997	CofR	

Renewable sources for energy: Community strategy. Green paper

OBJECTIVE: This green paper is intended to prompt a debate on the best approach to follow and the measures needed to improve the penetration of renewable energy sources (wind, solar energy, biomass, hydro-electricity, etc.) onto the EU energy market. SUBSTANCE: In its green paper, the Commission seeks to promote renewable energy sources whose potential is far from being fully exploited (their current contribution to the EU's overall energy consumption is under 6%) and which should play a much more important role in future for economic, ecological and strategic reasons. The green paper describes the current situation and the advantages of increasing the use of renewable in the light of Community objectives and sets out the basic elements of a policy strategy to be implemented at both Community and Member State levels. This strategy should, in the Commission's view, comprise four separate elements: (1) in the first place, the goal across the Community must be to achieve a clear, ambitious and yet realistic increase in the contribution of renewables to the Community energy balance. If we were to double the present contribution to 12% by 2010, for example, this would focus the minds of decision-makers at all levels; (2) Member State cooperation on renewables must be boosted, if necessary by creating a mechanism for coordinating efforts at Community level; (3) the Community should reinforce its policies affecting the development of renewable sources of energy by making better of use of the opportunities presented by the provisions of the Treaty (particularly those on the internal markets). The main obstacles are linked to the imperfections of the market (technical and non-technical barriers) and the fact that the prices of conventional fuels do not reflect all the environmental costs they incur. Tax incentives and the taxing of conventional energy (CO2 tax) can also be effective instruments for promoting renewables; (4) efforts must be made to ensure more rigorous assessment and monitoring of the progress towards achieving the objectives for the penetration of renewables (by improving the quality of statistics and setting up a database with the capacity to record all the Community aid allocated to renewables). The Commission points out that its green paper merely defines the context without putting forward specific proposals. On the basis of the conclusions the Commission will draw from the debate, a more detailed Community strategy and an action plan will be published by mid 1997. ?

Renewable sources for energy: Community strategy. Green paper

The Council had an open debate based on a communication by the Commission titled ?Energy for the future: renewable sources of energy? - Green Paper for a Community strategy. Ministers discussed, among other related issues, the following themes: - to what degree should the use of renewable energies be promoted in order to achieve the Community energy objectives: competitiveness, security of supply and protection of the environment; - what would be an appropriate objective for future market penetration of renewable energy sources by the year 2010; - which strategies could be developed to ensure the market penetration of sustainable renewable energy technology; - which type of incentives could be used to ensure the economic viability of renewable energies vis-à-vis other energy sources. In their interventions, the

Ministers emphasized the importance for the Community of developing policies for a renewable energy resources strategy. It was agreed that renewables? share of the Community energy supply market should be increased. However, there was a need to examine the appropriateness of specific quantitative targets. There was broad consensus on the role that research and development activities and new technologies could play in strategies designed to enhance the market penetration of renewable energy sources; fiscal and financial incentives were considered important tools in promoting renewable energies, provided that there was no distortion of competition.

Renewable sources for energy: Community strategy. Green paper

The Economic and Social Committee recommends support for renewable energies as a means of ensuring sustainable development. The Union needs a programme of research and marketing support comparable to the very significant programme of investment and market-oriented support for renewables exports in the USA. Financial incentives are needed to accelerate the penetration of renewables, with coordination within the Union so that stable and predictable market conditions are created for energy product and services companies, their investors and customers. Priority should be given to promoting the market for renewables in developing countries. In the short to medium term, a parallel aim should be to promote energy efficiency, which should be a priority for the 5th framework programme. There is a need for an R&D programme planned to improve the efficiency and price of renewable energy technology. Policy should recognize that public utilities have an important part to play both in encouraging rational energy use as well as developing and acquiring renewable energy supplies. ?

Renewable sources for energy: Community strategy. Green paper

In adopting the report by Mrs Mechtild Rothe (PES, D), Parliament called for the Commission's forthcoming white paper on renewable sources of energy to include the following points: - making it an objective to gear EU policy to increasing the share of renewable energy sources in total energy consumption in the EU to at least 15% by the year 2000; - a Community tax model which internalizes external costs and exempts renewable energy sources from tax; - requiring electricity supply companies to take electricity from renewable energy sources; - drafting initiatives to secure commitments from the Member States to using a specified proportion of renewable energy sources in energy production by supply companies and industry; - setting up a European fund for renewable energy sources to finance research, development and market introduction; - a strategy for a European programme for '1.000.000 roofs' which would meet a proportion of the cost of small, private photovoltaic systems on the roofs and walls of buildings, together with a 15 000 megawatt wind programme (offshore and in the mountains) and 1 000 megawatt biomass programme in conjunction with the Member States; - a draft directive on buildings taking account of the use of solar energy for heating and electricity; - a list of key projects which could receive start-up finance of more than 50%; - an information campaign to explain the value of and potential for renewable sources of energy to the energy sectors, industry, investors and the public; - better utilization of agricultural and forestry biomass as part of the Common Agricultural Policy; - better use of renewable energy sources in the building projects of the Community bodies; - better use of the Structural Funds. Paramount is also calling for 15% reduction in CO_2 emissions by 2010 from their 1990 level. An amendment has been tabled seeking the inclusion of an energy chapter in the Treaty or the establishment a Treaty on renewable energy sources (Euronew) modelled on the EURATOM Treaty (with the power of codecision for the European Parliament). ?