



REPowerEU: Commission steps up green transition away from Russian gas by accelerating renewables permitting

Brussels, 9 November 2022

The European Commission has proposed today a [new temporary emergency regulation](#) to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy sources. Together with diversifying our supplies and saving energy, deploying more renewable energy is part of the EU's plan to end our dependence on Russian fossil fuels. Renewables reduce the EU's demand for fossil fuels in the power, heating and cooling, industry and transport sectors, both in the short term and for the future. Thanks to their low operational costs, a larger share of renewable energy sources in the EU's energy system can help to reduce energy bills.

The ongoing energy crisis requires immediate and targeted action to speed up the [REPowerEU Plan](#). On 20 and 21 October 2022, the European Council called for a fast-tracking of permitting procedures to accelerate the rollout of renewables. REPowerEU already proposed measures to address the lengthy and complex administrative procedures that are an obstacle to the speed and scale of investment in renewables and related infrastructure. However, the situation on the energy markets has worsened since then, prompting the need for urgent measures. This is why the Commission is proposing new action in the form of a Council Regulation based on [Article 122](#) of the Treaty.

Today's proposal complements previous emergency measures to tackle the exceptional situation on the energy markets and to accelerate the clean energy transition. It will apply for one year, covering the time needed for the adoption and transposition of the Renewable Energy Directive, currently discussed by the co-legislators, in all Member States. It targets specific technologies and types of projects which have the highest potential for quick deployment and the least impact on the environment, contributing to our energy security in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and weaponisation of its energy supplies.

Overriding public interest

Under the proposal, renewable energy plants would be presumed to be of overriding public interest. This would allow new permitting procedures to benefit with immediate effect from a simplified assessment for specific derogations foreseen in EU environmental legislation. Moreover, the proposal clarifies the scope of application of certain rules foreseen in the EU [Birds](#) and [Habitats](#) directives in order to eliminate bottlenecks in the permit-granting process for certain renewable energy projects.

Solar energy

Solar energy is a low-cost renewable electricity and heating source which can be rolled out rapidly, directly benefitting citizens and businesses. In light of the current electricity price volatility, granting significantly faster permit procedures will accelerate the pace of the installation of solar equipment on artificial structures, such as buildings. The Commission is therefore proposing a maximum deadline of one month for the permitting process for solar energy equipment and its co-located storage and grid connections when it is not installed on natural ground. The proposed Council Regulation also exempts these installations from the need to carry out certain environmental assessments. Introducing the concept of 'positive administrative silence' in the relevant permit-granting procedures aims to promote and accelerate the deployment of small-scale installations.

Repowering renewable power plants

Repowering existing clean energy plants has significant potential to rapidly increase power generation from all renewable sources. It reduces gas consumption as well as the need to designate new sites. Today's proposal streamlines the permit-granting process applicable to the repowering of renewable energy projects by including all the relevant environmental assessments in the new maximum deadline of six months. The proposal also specifies that the environmental assessments should be limited to assessing the potential impacts resulting from the change or extension compared to the original project. Furthermore, it introduces a simplified procedure for grid connections in cases where the repowering doesn't exceed a 15% increase in total capacity compared to the original project.

Heat pumps

Heat pumps are a key technology to produce renewable heating and cooling from ambient energy sources and have significant potential to reduce the use of gas in the supply of heating, both in industry and buildings. In order to accelerate the rollout of this technology, the proposal accelerates permit-granting procedures by introducing a three month maximum deadline and a simplified procedure for grid connection of smaller heat pumps.

Background

The [European Green Deal](#) is the EU's long-term growth strategy to make Europe climate-neutral by 2050 and put renewable energy at the heart of the energy system. On 18 May 2022, the Commission adopted, as part of the REPowerEU plan, a [proposal](#) to amend the Renewable Energy Directive (REDII) on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, the Energy Efficiency Directive, and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive in order to accelerate the clean energy transition and increase energy efficiency. The European Parliament and the Council are currently working towards the adoption of the revised REDII. However, since the publication of the REPowerEU plan, the energy crisis has worsened. The European Union has taken several steps to reduce gas and electricity demand and intervened on the energy markets to address the impact of the crisis on EU consumers. Nevertheless, the situation remains challenging, putting Europe's security of supply at risk. Targeted action to accelerate the rollout of home-grown renewables is therefore needed to quickly follow-up on the mandate by EU Leaders to fast-track the simplification of permitting procedures for renewable energy projects.

For More Information

[Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down a framework to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy](#)

[Questions & Answers](#)

[REPowerEU Plan](#)

[Renewable Energy](#)

[EU actions to address the energy crisis](#)

IP/22/6657

Members of the college said:

The EU is speeding up its renewable energy deployment, with the record-breaking 50GW of new capacity expected this year. But to effectively address high energy prices, ensure energy independence and achieve climate goals, we need to accelerate even more. Permitting is often one of the main bottlenecks preventing swift progress. Today's proposals can make a difference already in the coming months and directly benefit citizens and businesses

Renewable energy is a triple win for Europeans: it is cheaper to produce, cleaner for our planet, and independent of Russian manipulation. This proposal is another step to fast-track the green transition and respond to the energy crisis started by Russia's war in Ukraine. We uphold the necessary environmental protections by focusing on areas where there is strong evidence that there would be no concerns, such as solar panels on existing or already planned structures, or the renewal and upgrading of current plants that are near the end of their economic life. Coming in the middle of COP27, this proposal is also another demonstration that Europe is taking action to deliver on our climate promises.

Press contacts:

[Tim McPHIE](#) (+ 32 2 295 86 02)

[Giulia BEDINI](#) (+32 2 295 86 61)

[Ana CRESPO PARRONDO](#) (+32 2 298 13 25)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)