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**JOINT SESSION
OF THE EIGHTH COMMITTEE
(ENVIRONMENT, TERRITORY AND PUBLIC WORKS)
AND THE TENTH COMMITTEE
(ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, TRADE AND TOURISM)**

**FINAL DOCUMENT, PUBLISHED PURSUANT TO
RULE OF PROCEDURE NO. 127 AND RELATING TO:**

The Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank: Accelerating Clean Energy Innovation (COM (2016) 763)

Approved 2 August 2017

Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank: Accelerating Clean Energy Innovation (COM (2016)763 final).

APPROVED FINAL DOCUMENT

The Committee on Environment, Territory and Public Works and the Committee on Economic Activities, Trade and Tourism of Italy's Chamber of Deputies, meeting in joint session,

having examined in accordance with Rule of Procedure no. 127 the Communication "Accelerating Clean Energy Innovation" (COM(2016) 763);

taking cognisance of the information and analyses provided to the Committees in the course of the hearings;

whereas:

Innovation in the area of clean energy is a mainstay of the transition to a competitive low-carbon economy based on the increased use of renewable energy sources. Support is needed for dedicated research and innovation, in close cooperation with industry, for renewable energies to become the main source of primary energy generation;

Providing support for innovation in the energy industry can give technological progress a powerful boost that favours the competitiveness of Europe's industries, broadens the horizons of economic development and creates quality jobs;

The Communication outlines the EU strategy for encouraging private investment in innovation in the sector. The European Union currently has a portfolio of instruments and funding sources, the most important of which is the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) – the so called "Juncker Plan" - which allocates 25% of activated funding to projects relating to energy, the environment and the efficient use of resources. The European Investment Bank (EIB) plays a decisive role in the selection of financeable projects;

In cooperation with the EIB, the European Commission has rolled out "Innovfin," a new component of the Horizon 2020 programme. Innovfin, a financing tool for projects that show innovation in the field of energy technology, offers loans or loan guarantees to fund innovative and original projects characterised by high risk for the private sector. Also in connection with the Horizon 2020 programme, which has already appropriated a budget of €5.7 billion for the achievement of Europe's "safe, clean and efficient energy" target, the European Commission intends to mobilise more than €2 billion for the period 2018-2020 and channel it into several strategic priorities, namely: the decarbonisation of the EU's housing stock by 2050, the development of energy storage solutions, and e-mobility;

The Commission has declared its intention to review the existing rules on state aid so as to allow investment to flow freely into research and innovation, and has undertaken to carry out a careful review of the current practice of allowing incentives to support less environmentally friendly energy sources. The remaining grants for petroleum, coal and other high-carbon fuels can be put to better use if they are diverted into innovation and renewable energies;

Mindful that the present final document needs to be forwarded without delay to the European Commission as part of the political dialogue, as well as to the European Parliament and the Council;

EXPRESS A FAVOURABLE OPINION,

with the following remarks:

a) the European Commission is to be commended for its supportive approach to research and investment in innovative renewable energy technologies and for its commitment to making an accurate audit of the incentives that continue to flow into less environmentally friendly energy sources. It is nonetheless to be hoped that the European institutions will be more consistent and resolute in their disincentivising of such sources, especially coal, which is still used on a vast scale by some Member States;

b) Likewise, it is to be hoped that the audits and reviews of the existing systems in the various Member States will result in a new model that is coherent, designed with a view to its eventual general adoption, and that redirects incentives into technological research and progress;

c) We applaud the intention of the European Commission to carry out a review of the current rules on state aid to encourage investment in research and innovation in energy decarbonisation. Apart from generic references, however, the Communication is lacking in specifics about the means and ends of the review;

d) The possibility of increasing the resources allocated to the Horizon 2020 programme for safe, clean and efficient energy must be taken under consideration, with particular regard to the strategic priorities of decarbonising the EU housing stock by 2050, developing energy storage solutions and promoting e-mobility;

e) Supplying financial support for research and innovation at the domestic level requires policies to forge strong links between market participants and state institutions, beginning with government departments and including industry, research institutes and universities. The aim must be to build an integrated system in which the best minds and drivers of innovation can work together and achieve real progress in the field of renewable energy. For this reason, we must look to the possible introduction of measures to reward initiatives with the potential to become formidable drivers of progress and offer Europe a valuable opportunity to narrow the widening gap vis-à-vis countries at a more advanced stage of renewable energy research. These objectives should be included in the upcoming review of Italy's National Energy Strategy, which is a key document that sets priorities for the sector.