



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 29.8.2022
C(2022) 6238 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera dei Deputati for its Opinion on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Directive 98/70/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the promotion of energy from renewable sources and repealing Council Directive (EU) 2015/652 {COM(2021) 557 final}.

The Commission welcomes the favourable assessment of the proposal for the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive and the support expressed by the Camera dei Deputati.

The Opinion calls for consistency between the regulatory framework that is being drawn up and the new legislative initiative under the REPowerEU Plan. Given the recent radical change in the market conditions for fossil fuels used in power, heating and transport, including as concerns increased prices and the need for the European Union to phase-out its dependence on energy imports from Russia, the Commission adopted in May 2022 a new targeted proposal to amend the Renewable Energy Directive on two specific points: the overall renewable energy target for the European Union and the provisions related to permit-granting procedures. As regards the overall target, the Commission proposed to raise the 2030 target for renewables to 45% so that they better contribute to this objective in order to significantly accelerate the current pace of deployment of renewable energy and increase the availability of affordable, secure and sustainable energy in the European Union. On this specific point, the new proposal supersedes the previous one. Moreover, this proposal addresses one of the main obstacles to renewable energy deployment that is slow and complex permitting procedures. By simplifying and speeding-up those procedures, the proposal intends to facilitate the achievement of the 45% target.

The Camera dei Deputati asks in its Opinion for greater flexibility to the obligations concerning joint projects and cross-border cooperation. The joint projects are intended for utilising the potential of regional cooperation in reaching the individual Member States and collective European Union renewable energy targets. According to the impact assessment for the revised Renewable Energy Directive, joint projects tend to be more cost-effective than individual projects due to the following reasons: (i) they help to mobilise larger investments

*Mr Roberto FICO
President of the Chamber of Deputies
Palazzo Montecitorio
Piazza Montecitorio
IT-00186 Rome
Italy*

by enabling larger projects than may have been undertaken by a single Member State; (ii) they enable riskier projects to materialise – risk-sharing between Member States and exploitation of cost-effective potentials drives down costs; (iii) the access to more favourable renewable energy potentials via cross-border cooperation also allows for a reduction of support cost; and (iv) through joint projects, Member States can share the added value of the project and also benefit from knowledge transfer and joint learning.

This obligation has been drafted in such a way as to leave maximum flexibility to Member States in its implementation. The obligation can be met by several means, such as the establishment of physical joint projects, the opening of support schemes or the renewable energy financing mechanism, which was set up to help filling the gap towards the European Union 2030 renewables target, and to contribute to the enabling framework for renewable energy deployment.

With regard to the binding sub-targets for renewable fuels of non-biological origin in the transport and industry sectors proposed in Article 22(a) and 25 of the revised Renewable Energy Directive, the Commission considers them necessary to push the industry and transport sectors to use such fuels, driving up investments in renewable fuels of non-biological origin for industrial use and for use in transport and significantly reducing the need of public support schemes. Without such targets, it would be difficult to obtain the investments in the production, transport and use of renewable fuels of non-biological origin that are necessary to accelerate the development of a renewable hydrogen market in the European Union and to achieve the general renewable energy target set in the Directive.

The Commission shares the Camera dei Deputati's call for adequate resource for research and innovation for technologies that are necessary for the energy transition. In this respect, the Commission will double the funding available for the 2022 large-scale call of the Innovation Fund this autumn to around EUR 3 billion. A specific REPowerEU window will support (1) innovative electrification and hydrogen applications in industry, (2) innovative clean tech manufacturing (such as electrolysers and fuel cells, innovative renewable equipment, energy storage or heat pumps for industrial uses), and (3) mid-sized pilot projects for validating, testing and optimising highly innovative solutions.

Moreover, the Commission has approved in July, under EU State aid rules, a first Important Project of Common European Interest ('IPCEI') to support research and innovation and first industrial deployment in the hydrogen technology value chain. The project, called "IPCEI Hy2Tech" was jointly prepared and notified by fifteen Member States. The Member States will provide up to EUR 5.4 billion in public funding, which is expected to unlock additional EUR 8.8 billion in private investments

Funding is also provided under Horizon Europe (2021-2027), which is the European Union's key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of EUR 95.5 billion. Specifically, EUR 15 billion funding is being spend in cluster 5 (climate, energy and mobility) aiming to fight climate change by better understanding its causes, evolution, risks, impacts and opportunities, and by making the energy and transport sectors more climate and environment-friendly, more efficient and competitive, smarter, safer and more resilient.

The majority of topics in this cluster is also highly relevant for REPowerEU as it promotes research and innovation on renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency of buildings and industry, electrification of heating and cooling (e.g. heat pumps) and digitalisation of the energy system.

Regarding the Camera dei Deputati's focus on the need for developing grid, transmission and storage infrastructure, the Commission supports a rapid development of energy infrastructure to match the needed acceleration of renewable energy deployment. The Commission's proposal regarding the acceleration of the permitting for renewable energy projects includes co-located storage facilities as well as grid connection, which may partly cover transmission infrastructure. Among other aspects, this proposal introduces a presumption that renewable energy projects, including their connection to the grid, are of overriding public interest for the purposes of certain environmental directives.

The recently revised TEN-E Regulation is the instrument that establishes a regulatory framework to properly address the acceleration of the development of transmission grids and strategic planning for cross-border infrastructure projects, with its projects of common interest. Projects of common interest count with provisions on accelerated permitting (maximum within 3.5 years), priority status and accelerated court procedures nationally, and the possibility of benefiting from the overriding public interest status, if environmental legislation conditions are met. While such provisions apply only to projects of common interest, the Commission encourages Member States to apply the same or similar rules to all energy infrastructure projects.

Moreover, a platform for permitting one-stop shops has been set-up in May 2022 for national competent authorities to exchange best practices, ensure administrative capacity-building and uniform interpretation of key notions in the permit granting processes for energy infrastructure.

The proposal is currently in the legislative process, involving both the European Parliament and the Council. The Camera dei Deputati's Opinion has been made available to the Commission's representatives in the ongoing negotiations of the co-legislators and will inform these discussions.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera dei Deputati and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Kadri Simson
Member of the Commission*