

PARLIAMENT OF ROMANIA  
CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

Decision

approving the opinion regarding the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 to 2030'  
COM(2014) 15

Pursuant to the provisions of Articles 67 and 148 of the Romanian Constitution, republished, of Law No 373/2013 on cooperation between Parliament and the Government in the area of European affairs, and of Article 40 of Decision No 11/2011 of the Chamber of Deputies on the working and decision-making procedure for parliamentary supervision of draft legislative acts of the European Union, based on the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon on the role of national Parliaments,

The Chamber of Deputies hereby adopts this decision:

Sole Article - Taking into account Draft Opinion No 4c-19/162 adopted by the Committee for European Affairs at its meeting of 26 March 2014,

1. The Chamber of Deputies welcomes the emphasis on the need to significantly step up current efforts to tap the considerable potential for higher energy efficiency in certain sectors, such as housing, and recalls in this context the potential of traditional and 'green' architecture to contribute to the achievement of the targets. Romania could lend significant support to such an objective through its potential in the area of traditional building techniques and solutions. In the same context, we would recommend that the European Commission revitalise the focus on 'green' design of housing and public spaces, and ensure at the same time that cement surfaces are kept to a minimum, with a view to achieving EU objectives related to preserving soil biodiversity.

2. The Chamber of Deputies welcomes the European Commission's approach based on stimulating retail markets, both in the electricity sector and in the gas sector, in order to make them more dynamic and more competitive, and to enable consumers to benefit fully from the deregulation of the energy market. In particular, the Chamber of Deputies is strongly in favour of providing consumers with legal and technical means of knowing and controlling their own consumption and with the freedom to choose their energy providers themselves or to produce their own sustainable energy. Furthermore, the Chamber of Deputies considers that the potential of self-generated energy is not sufficiently used. In Romania, inhabited areas are widely dispersed, which would make such solutions feasible. This is why progress in this area in the EU should be assessed, and perhaps the Commission could propose EU-level support actions.

3. The Chamber of Deputies is in favour of drawing up national plans, but considers that the planned timeframe, namely completion well before the year 2020, is overly optimistic, given that gathering the necessary information would require at least two years.

4. The Chamber of Deputies proposes that the Commission include the Eastern Partnerships in its long-term strategic vision for the area covered by this proposal, as scenarios taken into consideration. Such an approach would be a concrete and strong message regarding the willingness to welcome new members into the European family.

5. The Chamber of Deputies would express its reservations as regards the Commission's proposal to examine the common aspects in the Member States' plans and make recommendations, because such an examination would lengthen the administrative process by at least one more year and it is not clear what the advantages of identifying common aspects would be. According to the proposal, the intention is to have Member States draw up and implement such plans on their own, precisely as a response to the particularities of each Member State. Therefore, we would recommend that the plans be only notified to the European Commission, to serve as a common knowledge base.

6. The Chamber of Deputies would express its concerns as regards the European Commission's intention to gradually eliminate, between 2020 and 2030, subsidies for energy technologies which have already reached maturity, including for renewable energy. The concern is that no sufficient data are available yet on the rates of return on this type of investment, given their long life cycles, and such data might not become available within the planned timeframe. This is especially important for Romania, where such investments reached significant economic size and installed capacity later than in other Member States.

7. The Chamber of Deputies is aware that at some point the theoretical limits of energy efficiency are reached and that process emissions are unavoidable in certain sectors, but would point out that there is no reason to declare that carbon capture and storage technology (CCS) might be the only option available for reducing direct emissions from industrial processes to the extent necessary in the long term.

Even though intensifying the efforts to research and develop CCS technology and test it commercially is essential in the next ten years, as the Commission rightly pointed out, in order to implement this technology by 2030, such a solution depends not only on technological maturity but also on other factors, including public acceptance and the scale and persistence of the generating industrial processes. In Romania, which has many suitable sites for CCS, public support for such projects is not a given. Furthermore, the magnitude of the generating processes is expected to decrease in time, due to the fall in energy demand. In this context, Romania would recommend that CCS technology really be regarded only as a last resort.

8. The Chamber of Deputies is concerned by the European Commission's proposal that the Council and the European Parliament consider approving an increase of the share of renewable energy at EU level to 27% by 2030, up from 20% today.

The Chamber of Deputies would recommend relaxing and differentiating this objective according to each Member State's energy mix and specific economic conditions. According to the forecast, in Romania a share of 41% of electricity produced from renewable energy in the energy mix cannot compensate for the efforts required to develop renewable energy sources in the transport and heating/cooling sectors.

9. The Chamber of Deputies would highlight the need to assess the extent to which Member States will have the same freedom to decide the national energy mix if a mandatory minimum target of 27% is agreed for the entire EU and an energy governance mechanism is introduced, giving the European Commission intervention levers on national renewable energy plans and, by extension, on the structure of the energy mix.

10. The Chamber of Deputies would stress that projects which aim to introduce innovative technologies or solutions in the field of energy which would contribute to a reduction in

greenhouse gas emissions, which are currently in their early stages, require European funding as early as possible. The Chamber of Deputies considers that research and development projects in this field should be supported at Union level.

11. The Chamber of Deputies considers that the target of a 40% reduction in greenhouse gases is the maximum acceptable level for Romania, and only if an international agreement is concluded.

12. The Chamber of Deputies considers that the proposal would be more predictable if differentiated timeframes were set for strict and minimum objectives (i.e. short term and medium term and where some flexibility is acceptable because they are for the longer term). The risk of failing to reach the level required to make certain programmes demonstrative, which has already materialised for the CCS projects launched to date, should be kept to a minimum.

13. The Chamber of Deputies would stress that decisions at Union level should take into account the context of the international negotiations on climate change and should not put additional pressure on the competitiveness of European industry, on energy security, or on the labour market. A balance needs to be struck between the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and that of preserving jobs and industry competitiveness and achieving economic growth.

14. The Chamber of Deputies would request a rigorous impact assessment of the proposal with regard to the effectiveness of its implementation measures, as well as its costs and benefits, so as to enable European industry to remain competitive. The assessment should be carried out for each Member State separately, because the starting points are different due to different national circumstances.

15. The Chamber of Deputies would stress that the reduction efforts should be distributed in a balanced manner, on the basis of transparent and fair criteria which should ensure cost-effective implementation. It is necessary to improve policy coordination so that the price of carbon becomes, in the medium and long term, an incentive which is strong enough to encourage investment in low-carbon technologies throughout the European Union. The objectives of competitiveness, energy security and affordable electricity prices should not be jeopardised in the short term. Consideration should be given to supporting energy transport networks from the Balkans, where Romania is located, to the western part of the continent, and analysing the potential of Generation IV nuclear reactors, which are much less polluting and safer.

16. The Chamber of Deputies would recommend laying down specific incentives to stimulate companies' interest in low-carbon technologies, and providing new instruments giving access to such technologies at a reasonable cost.

17. The Chamber of Deputies supports, in principle, the legislative proposal in question, considering that this represents an important contribution to the achievement of the objectives related to sustainable development and the quality of life of European citizens.

This Decision was adopted by the Chamber of Deputies at the session of 8 April 2014, in compliance with Article 76(2) of the Romanian Constitution, republished.

for the President of the Chamber of Deputies,

Viorel Hrebenciuc

Bucharest, 8 April 2014

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