

## Statement by the Committee on Industry and Trade 2021/22:NU24

### Communication from the Commission on joint European action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy

#### Summary

The Committee has examined the Commission's communication REPowerEU: Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy, and proposes that the Riksdag files the statement.

The Committee welcomes the Commission's proposal on joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy, including possible action to reduce the import of fossil fuels from Russia. The Committee would like to urge the Commission and the member states to speed up efforts to phase out the EU's dependence on fossil fuels from Russia as soon as possible. However, the Committee lacks reference to the importance of biofuels in the communication as an alternative to fossil fuels and would therefore like to highlight the importance of the contribution of forestry and agriculture to biofuels for example for heating and transport.

The Statement contains one explanatory reservation from the Moderate Party, the Sweden Democrats, the Christian Democrats and the Liberal Party.

#### *The examined documents*

The Commission's communication REPowerEU: Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy (COM(2022) 108)

## **The position of the Committee**

### *Introduction*

The Committee explains its position under the following headings:

- General position on the Commission's Communication
- Forthcoming measures

### *General position on the Commission's Communication*

The Committee welcomes the Commission's communication on REPowerEU with a proposal on joint European action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy, including possible action to reduce the import of fossil fuels from Russia. The Committee notes that in the communication the Commission states that the EU's dependence on fossil fuels from Russia can be phased out before 2030. In the Committee's opinion, this time perspective is far too long; for this reason, the Committee would like to urge the Commission and the member states to speed up efforts to phase out the EU's dependence on fossil fuels from Russia as soon as possible. In order to get rid of the need for energy sources from Russia, the energy transition must be accelerated and contributions from all domestic fossil-free energy sources must be greater. Another basic building block in this transition is a sharp increase in energy efficiency in the entire EU, particularly in the case of housing.

In its communication, the Commission proposes procedures to bring about gas diversification through increased import of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and gas via pipelines from suppliers other than Russia, as well as increased levels of biomethane and hydrogen. Furthermore, the Commission proposes a faster reduction of the EU's dependence on fossil fuels at the level of homes, buildings and industry, and at the level of the power system by boosting energy efficiency gains, increasing the share of renewable energy and addressing infrastructure bottlenecks. As regards an increased import of liquefied natural gas and pipeline imports from non-Russian suppliers, the Committee would like to emphasise how important it is that when phasing out Russian sources the EU does not build up a new dependence on imports from other undemocratic states. The Committee would therefore like to stress how important it is that the EU, as soon as possible, phases out its dependence on fossil energy sources such as oil and natural gas. EU policy must thus to a greater extent promote bioenergy and other fossil-free energy. In the opinion of the Committee, it is therefore positive

that the Commission highlights a faster reduction of the need for fossil-based energy sources, where the electrification of industry and the transport sector and increased production of biogas are included as part of the solution. In this context, however, the Committee lacks reference to the importance of biofuels in the communication as an alternative to fossil fuels and would therefore like to highlight the importance of the contribution of forestry and agriculture to biofuels for example for heating and transport.

The Committee would also like to underline the importance of safeguarding a balanced and smoothly functioning electricity market in the EU. The Committee therefore notes and welcomes the legislative proposal on an obligation to store gas until next winter to ensure security of supplies that the Commission has announced and then subsequently presented. The Committee further notes that the Commission has also presented a follow-up communication containing proposals for measures on the electricity and gas markets to mitigate the effects of high energy prices. The Committee believes that member states in extraordinary circumstances should have the possibility to consider temporary targeted measures to deal with considerable long-term price effects for end-customers. At the same time, in the opinion of the Committee, it is important that possible measures are budget-restrictive, take account of the administrative burden and do not distort competition, neither in the energy market, nor ultimately for European companies and industries in the internal market. With regard to what has been stated above, the Committee recommends that the Riksdag file the statement for this part.

### *Forthcoming measures*

In the opinion of the Committee, the EU needs to reduce its dependence on imports from Russia by increasing the production of all domestic fossil-free energy sources, in particular solar power, wind power and bioenergy. In this context, the Committee notes that the Commission intends to present a further communication in May 2022 on REPowerEU that will focus on how the EU can become independent of Russian fossil-based energy and that the Commission has also announced forthcoming recommendations for fast granting of permits for projects to produce renewable energy and a strategy for solar energy.

The Committee agrees with the Commission's view that the EU's dependence on fossil fuels can also be introduced by speeding up and increasing the expansion of wind power, heat pumps and solar energy and the importance of a more simple and faster system for the granting of permits to speed up projects to produce renewable energy. The Committee would however have preferred to see even more vigorous measures to promote a more rapid expansion of renewable energy.

With regard to what has been stated above, the Committee recommends that the Riksdag file the statement for this part.