Commission against EU leadership: Less growth, fewer jobs, more import spending

Brussels. 22nd January 2014. Today, the European Commission has presented its proposal for a climate and energy framework 2030. The proposal includes a binding greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 40% and a binding EU-level target of 27% for renewable energy.

"After a heated internal debate on whether to propose a very unambitious or just an unambitious climate and energy framework for 2030, the Commission has chosen the latter", said EREC’s President, Rainer Hinrichs-Rahlwes. The European Commission’s White Paper proposes a domestic greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target of 40%, a share of 27% renewable energy and leaves energy efficiency without a target altogether.

"What’s more, the Commission is undermining its own findings from the impact assessment and has opted for less growth, fewer jobs and more spending on fossil fuel import", emphasised Hinrichs-Rahlwes. About 600,000 more jobs would be created and €258 billion of fossil fuel imports would be saved with a 30% renewables target in addition to a GHG target, according to the impact assessment accompanying today’s Communication. With a target of 35% renewables those savings would amount to €358 billion.

"Just five years ago, the Commission sent the signal to investors that renewable energy was to be the future for Europe. Now, the Commission is acting in reverse-mode, setting a cap for renewables, not a target for 2030”, said Hinrichs-Rahlwes. The Commission’s own so-called Reference Scenario, published in December 2013, indicates that renewables would grow to a share of 24.4% without any new policies in place.

“If you wanted to shift investments further away from Europe, you would go about it no other way. The Commission is weakening the EU’s international competitiveness and industrial leadership", continued Hinrichs-Rahlwes. EREC, together with various other stakeholders, is calling for a mutually reinforcing policy framework, including a binding target for renewable energy of 45%.

“All eyes are now on the Council to shape a dedicated European climate and energy policy for 2030”, concluded Hinrichs-Rahlwes. The Commission’s White Paper will be discussed at the March and June Councils by European Heads of States.

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