



Press Release – 25 March 2005

Despite rhetoric, Commission spends less on renewable energy research than four years ago

Responding to a written question from MEP Mechtild Rothe (PSE), the Commission has revealed that funding for research projects in renewable energy and energy efficiency dropped from an average of 275 million EUR over two years in FP5 (1999-2002) to 215-260 million EUR in the first two years of FP6 (2003-2006).¹ “Instead of paying lip-service it is now time to match words with action and increase support for renewables R&D,” Mechtild Rothe said.

The news came only weeks after two other groups published their positions on energy research under FP7: EUREC Agency and EREC (which called for an increase in the annual Commission budget for renewable energy research to 250 million EUR per year²) and DG Research’s Advisory Group on Energy (which called for a quadrupling of the overall energy budget³).

Meeting in Strasbourg on March 10th, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for “all existing and future non-CO₂-emitting energy sources (particularly renewable energy and energy efficiency)” to be considered one of five key areas under FP7. Mechtild Rothe, who is also President of the cross-party Parliamentary coalition EUFORES, described the Commission’s figures as “highly worrying” and “inconsistent with the ‘vigorous promotion’ of renewable energy that the Commission intends⁴.” She said “Less than a year ago, the Commission admitted that the EU is not on track to achieve its goal of increasing the share of renewables to 12% in 2010.

¹ The FP6 figures are quoted as a range because of uncertainty over the extent to which expenditure on electricity grid research and on the clean urban transport programme CIVITAS are relevant to renewable energy or energy efficiency.

² [FP7 Research Priorities for the Renewable Energy Sector](#)

³ [Key Tasks for future European Energy R&D- A first set of recommendations for research and development by the Advisory Group on Energy](#)

⁴ “A greater security of supply would be provided by [...] the vigorous promotion of renewable energy” Commission’s Strategic Objectives 2005-2009 – [COM\(2005\) 12](#)

Therefore we should intensify our efforts rather than withdrawing financial support for the sector. I hope Mr Barroso and his colleagues will ensure that funding for renewable energy and energy efficiency is restored to the average level it received under FP5 for the remaining years of FP6 and that it will be significantly increased under FP7. This has to be done independently of the expected and necessary budget increase for the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme.”

Prof Arthouros Zervos, President of EREC, echoed her thoughts, adding, “Research is vital for the development of new, cheaper and more efficient technology. The faster the costs of renewable energy are reduced, the better we can fight global warming and increase the security of our energy supply.”

Notes to editors:

- EREC, the European Renewable Energy Council (EREC) is the umbrella organisation of the major European renewable energy industry, trade and research associations active in the field of photovoltaic, small hydropower, solar thermal, biomass, geothermal and wind energy
- EUREC Agency is the European Renewable Energy Centres Agency, representing the renewable energy research community to Brussels policy-makers in Brussels.
- EUFORES is the European Forum for Renewable Energy Sources – a cross-party Parliamentary coalition
- Further information on the Commissions response on request

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