

Renewable Energy Sources

Fifty-two members of national Parliaments and the European Parliament met on 12-13 May 2000, in Madeira, at the Second Inter-Parliamentary Meeting on Renewable Energy Sources in the European Union to discuss the current status of such sources in the EU.

Their deliberations resulted in a “Madeira Statement” in which they call on EU bodies to give increased support to renewables, through various initiatives.

Delegates welcomed the proposal for a Directive tabled by the European Commission and urged its adoption “after due consideration”, and its full implementation.

A welcome surprise was their acceptance that clear renewable energy targets for the Member States should be agreed after discussions with them, while leaving it up to the countries to use the instruments they feel best suited to achieving those targets.

In their statement, the parliamentarians urge the EU institutions and especially the European governments as part of the ongoing negotiations at the Inter-Governmental Conference, to address the problem of the lack of a level base in the current EU Treaties for a common EU energy policy, especially in light of the need to meet the EU’s climate policy commitments, at the very least with a Treaty commitment to the promotion of renewable energy sources. They also call on the national Parliaments in cooperation with the EU institutions to hold an Inter-Parliamentary Colloquium on energy policy.

The politicians stated their concern regarding the implications that the ongoing review of the Community

Guidelines on State Aid for Environmental Protection – the Aid Code – might have for the development of schemes to support renewables. They noted that they would carefully follow the review of those guidelines.

The parliamentarians pointed out the lack of a level playing field in the internal electricity market because of the absence of full integration of social and environmental costs into electricity prices and because of what they stated were “large and ongoing subsidies” to traditional energy sources.

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The parliamentarians appealed to the EU authorities to address the energy problems of the candidate countries in Central and Eastern Europe and to come up with a clear strategy on how to help these countries to address the question of long term sustainability of energy. This should in particular take account of the benefits in terms of environment and employment, and be lined with the “necessary reform” in the field of agriculture.

The politicians also wished to see renewables take a much more significant place in the development policies of the EU and Member States and thus facilitate the transfer and the development of environmentally sound technologies in developing countries, notable in the field of energy and transport. (MJ)

