

AT A GLANCE: BULGARIA SETS OUT PRIORITIES FOR EU ENERGY POLICY – MORE POWER FROM RENEWABLES THAN FROM COAL IN 2017 – S3PENENERGY MEETS IN BRUSSELS

Edition Content

BREXIT

EU27 set out their position on transition deal **P.1**

ENERGY & CLIMATE

Bulgarian presidency of the Council sets out energy priorities **P.2**

MEPs vote for 35% target on energy efficiency **P.2**

RENEWABLES

More power from renewables than from coal in 2017 **P.3**

ELECTRICITY MARKET DESIGN

Brussels ploughs €578m into France-Spain power link **P.4**

ELECTRIFICATION OF TRANSPORT

Social-Democrats in Parliament leading on CO2 Regulation **P.5**

Adopted revised Renewable Energy Directive paves the way for EV charging infrastructure **P.5**

SMART GRIDS

S3PENenergy meets in Brussels **P.6**

BREXIT

EU27 set out their position on transition deal

The General Affairs Council met in Brussels at the end of January to adopt **supplementing negotiating directives** for the Brexit negotiations, which detail the EU27 position regarding a transition period and thus to provide the Commission with a mandate to begin discussions with the United Kingdom on this matter. Summarising the decision, the Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister Ekaterina Zaharieva explained that *“EU ministers have given a clear mandate to the Commission on what is the type of transition period that we envisage: full EU acquis to be applied in the UK and no participation in the EU institutions and decision-making”*.



The negotiating directives set out that during the transition period, the UK would have to both apply existing EU acquis, which is the body of EU treaties and legislation, as if it were a member state as well as any *“changes to the acquis adopted by EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies during that period”*. In addition, the UK would under these terms be bound by the obligations stemming from trade and international agreements concluded by the EU, while it will no longer participate in any bodies set up by those agreements. By definition, this would mean that the UK would be unable to enter into new international agreements on its own. All of this would be required of the UK, whilst, it would not be able to participate in the institutions and the decision-making of the EU.

In terms of a timeline for the transition, the national ministers proposed an end date of 31 December 2020.

Source: [Dods](#)

Edition Content

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Bulgarian presidency of the Council sets out energy priorities **P.2**

MEPs vote for 35% target on energy efficiency **P.2**

RENEWABLES

More power from renewables than from coal in 2017 **P.3**

ELECTRICITY MARKET DESIGN

Brussels ploughs €578m into France-Spain power link **P.4**

ELECTRIFICATION OF TRANSPORT

Social-Democrats in Parliament leading on CO2 Regulation **P.5**

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SMART GRIDS

S3PEnergy meets in Brussels **P.6**

ENERGY & CLIMATE

Bulgarian presidency of the Council sets out energy priorities

As from this month, Bulgaria will hold the presidency of the Council of Member States for the next semester. This means it will chair all Council meetings, from Working Party level to Ministerial level. Prior to taking over the presidency from Estonia, Bulgaria outlined its priorities for the presidency. For energy, the Bulgarian Presidency outlined the following objectives:

- It will strive to achieve a stable Energy Union and increase the potential for regional cooperation by promoting the construction of the necessary infrastructure, with a view to ending the isolation of some of the Member States from the European gas and electricity grids.
- Ensuring the security of gas supply through diversification of sources and routes, protecting
- the critical energy infrastructure, as well as measures related to increasing energy efficiency as a contribution to the reduction of energy consumption, are among the key issues the Bulgarian Presidency will work on with a view to finding sustainable solutions.

Source: [Bulgarian presidency programme 2018](#)

MEPs vote for 35% target on energy efficiency

This month MEPs voted for a minimum 35% binding target to increase energy efficiency in the EU.

The vote in the European's Parliament plenary also backed the energy efficiency obligations of Article 7, which would require EU countries to save 1.5% of energy annually.

In this month's [vote in Strasbourg](#), 485 MEPs backed the main compromise text of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED), while 132 voted against and 58 abstained.

Parliamentarians within S&D group, which took the lead shaping the legislation, welcomed the result of the vote, adding that it had substantially scaled up ambition for energy savings.

"We have also managed to close most of the loopholes that slowed down the progress under the existing legislation, such as including the transport sector and pushing member states to replace those measures that do not deliver savings," said the rapporteur for energy efficiency, EP Miroslav Poche (S&D, CZ).

MEPs backed proposals in the EED to fully include energy use in transport from 2020.

Source: [Ends + Interel](#)

Edition Content

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ENERGY & CLIMATE

Bulgarian presidency of the Council sets out energy priorities **P.2**

MEPs vote for 35% target on energy efficiency **P.2**

RENEWABLES

More power from renewables than from coal in 2017 **P.3**

ELECTRICITY MARKET DESIGN

Brussels ploughs €578m into France-Spain power link **P.4**

ELECTRIFICATION OF TRANSPORT

Social-Democrats in Parliament leading on CO2 Regulation **P.5**

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SMART GRIDS

S3PEnergy meets in Brussels **P.6**

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More power from renewables than from coal in 2017



According to the **Power Industry 2017 report**, by Sandbag and Agora Energiewende, the EU in 2017 generated more power from wind, solar and biomass than coal, but deployment of low carbon energy remained patchy across the EU, while greenhouse gas emissions rose 1% last year.

The report states that generation from wind, solar and biomass rose by 12% in 2017 to 679 terawatt hours, putting output from these sources above coal generation for the first time.

In addition, the roll-out of renewable energy across the EU has become increasingly uneven, the report finds, with Germany and the UK alone contributing to 56% of the growth in renewables in the past three years, while countries in central and eastern Europe, most notably Poland, continued to cling tightly to the use of coal.

The report also showed a disappointing trend in terms of energy efficiency, with overall consumption of electricity rising 0.7% last year, the third consecutive year of increases. "Europe's efficiency efforts are not sufficient and hence the EU's efficiency policy needs further strengthening," the report states.

Looking ahead to trilogue negotiations on the 2030 renewable energy target, the report mentions that wind and solar power production could either double or triple compared to 2017, depending on the outcome of talks between lawmakers, the Commission and member states.

Source: Ends Europe

Edition Content

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ENERGY & CLIMATE

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Brussels ploughs €578m into France-Spain power link **P.4**

ELECTRIFICATION OF TRANSPORT

Social-Democrats in Parliament leading on CO2 Regulation **P.5**

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S3PEnergy meets in Brussels **P.6**

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The EU will provide nearly EUR 580m of funding for a high-voltage power line between France and Spain, the European Commission said this month as it unveiled a series of investments to ready Europe's grid for increasing wind and solar deployment.

Climate and energy commissioner Miguel Arias Canete described the construction of the Biscay Gulf undersea interconnector, which is intended to boost transmission capacity between the two countries by 80% to 5 megawatts, as an important step towards integrating the Iberian Peninsula in Europe's energy market.

Source: Ends Europe

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ELECTRIFICATION OF TRANSPORT

Social-Democrats in Parliament leading on CO2 Regulation

The Social-Democrat group in the Parliament's Environment Committee group will obtain rapporteurship on the CO2 regulation which was proposed by the European Commission on 8 November. Miriam Dalli (S&D,MT) will draft a report on the Commission proposal.

The Social-Democrats in the European Parliament are strong supporters of a faster uptake of electric vehicles in Europe, and have expressed their disappointment with the low ambition for electric vehicles incentives in the European Commission's proposal.

Source: [Interel](#)

Adopted revised Renewable Energy Directive paves the way for EV charging infrastructure

This month the European Parliament's plenary voted on the [Renewable Energy Directive](#). Policymakers included an incentive in the text in order to facilitate the uptake of e-mobility: from now on, renewable electricity supplied to vehicles will be considered 2.5 its energy content. Such multiplier helps Member States to attain the requirement to have at least 12% renewable energy sources of the overall energy consumption in the transport sector. In addition, an amendment was passed that set a target for Member States to ensure that 90% of fuel stations are equipped with high-power recharging points for EVs by 2022.

Source: [Interel](#)

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S3PEnergy meets in Brussels

Last month the Smart Specialisation Platform on Energy (S3PEnergy) gathered in Brussels. The platform, organised by the European Commission, facilitates partnerships between EU regions that plan investments in energy innovation and assists them to use funding more effectively. Five interregional partnerships that bring together sixty European regions have been created so far, in bio-energy, solar energy, renewable marine energy, smart grids and sustainable buildings.

One of the partnerships of interest to the Energy Working Group member is the Smart Grids partnership between the Basque country in Spain and the Provence in France.

Source: Interel

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