

Renewable Energy: huge potential but needs a level playing field

- The EU had a goal in 1997 to increase their contribution of renewable to energy consumption from 6% to 12% by 2010. According the European Commission, this will now not be met – the EU is unlikely to get higher than 10% renewable share by 2010. Current shares are stuck around 6%. Also, the EU will miss the target set out in the Renewable Energy Directive to meet 21% of the EU's electricity demand from renewable energies.
- The new proposed target for primary energy demand met by renewable is 20% by 2020
- The EU is capable of achieving 25% renewable share given the technological improvements and opportunities that exist.²²
- A 25% renewable share target is a long standing demand from the European Parliament.²³
- The current proposal in the Energy Plan is a broad target, with freedom for Member States to set their own targets for different sectors. A broad target without breakdown into the specific sectors of electricity, heating and cooling and transport will threaten investment security.²⁴
- Renewable energy creates jobs: It is more employment intensive than conventional energy generation and can lead to a thriving decentralised network of small and medium enterprises.
- In 2005, about 2.4 billion Euros were used to subsidise renewable energy in Germany. 2.8 billion Euros of external costs from conventional energy were avoided, which means that supporting renewable energies through such mechanisms as in Germany has net benefits for society.²⁵
- BIOFUELS: Producing, processing and transporting biofuels can produce more emissions than saved by using these biofuels instead of fossil fuels. In other words, over the entire lifecycle, biofuels do not necessarily have net emissions savings.²⁶
- BIOFUELS: The production of biofuels often leads to negative environmental and social impacts in producer countries, destroying rainforests, damaging biodiversity and undermining livelihoods of people or increasing food prices.

²² "Target 2020 – Policies and Measures to reduce GHG in the EU"; Wuppertal Institute and WWF 2005; see http://assets.panda.org/downloads/target_2020_low_res.pdf

²³ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0038+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

²⁴ The EC's own impact assessment of the Renewable Energy Roadmap concludes that failing to agree sector-specific targets will delay technological development and commercial deployment of renewable energies and increase climate change abatement costs in the long-term. It notes that "a single broad target is too unfocused and would fail to provide sufficient guidance and certainty to businesses operating in specific sector of the market." See 'Renewable Energy Roadmap - Impact Assessment', SEC (2006) 1719.

²⁵ "Externe Kosten der Stromerzeugung aus erneuerbaren Energien im Vergleich zur Stromerzeugung aus fossilen Energieträgern", Wolfram Krewitt; German Aerospace Centre; Barbara Schломann, Fraunhofer Institute for System and Innovation Research, available from <http://www.erneuerbare-energien.de>

²⁶ <http://dematerialism.net/Pimentel.pdf>