

Voting recommendations

ITRE vote 14 November 2022 on the proposal for a revision of the renewable energy directive (REPowerEU)

On 14th November, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy of the European Parliament will vote on Rapporteur Markus Pieper's [draft report](#) on the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive under the REPowerEU legislative proposal.

The European Environmental Bureau, CEE Bankwatch Network, EuroNatur, and Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe call on Members of the European Parliament's ITRE committee to adopt ambitious amendments that will put the EU on the right track to speeding up renewable energy permit-granting procedures in an effective way by striking the right balance between accelerated renewable deployment, nature protection, and public participation.

In particular, we call on Members of the ITRE committee to consider these recommendations:

- **Only promote renewable energy technologies with low climate and environmental impact.** Among renewable energy technologies, wind and solar, when positioned in the right places, have the lowest impact on nature, and are the two technologies that can deliver the biggest contribution to emission cuts. Therefore, they should be preferred over technologies with generally higher climate or environmental impacts. Specifically, there should be no go-to areas for hydropower or bioenergy, as these have strong impacts on environment and biodiversity and therefore are not suitable for fast-track approval. **Support AMs 86, 101, 191, 97. Reject AMs 4, 92, 93, 98, 156, 174, 250, 257 and CA1**
- **Maintain existing environmental safeguards.** Existing environmental provisions remain key because on the one hand they do not slow down permitting - as they, inter alia, reduce the risk of litigation at the local level and thereby help speed-up development processes - and on the other hand they provide the needed clarity and predictability for both developers and permitting authorities. They are also part of the EU's obligations under international treaties such as the Aarhus Convention and Bern Convention. Projects in go-to areas must not be exempted from Environmental Impact Assessments and/or Appropriate Assessments or meaningful screening under the existing legislation. In addition, they should not be automatically presumed to be projects of overriding public interest contributing to public health and safety with regards to the Birds, Habitats and Water Framework Directive. As the Nature Directives contain other tests that need to be met on a case-by-case basis (before a project can be allowed to go ahead, despite its harmful effects, due to overriding public interest) the presumption will not accelerate the permitting process but will only create legal uncertainty, risk a

regression of existing EU environmental law and set a harmful precedent. **Support AMs 159, 182, 188, 246=247, 252, 291-292 (if rejected 298).** **Reject AMs 5, 17, 248, 253, 295, CA3, CA8 and CA9**

- **Foster public participation and bottom-up engagement.** Early-stage, meaningful consultation and engagement of residents and civil society must be ensured to improve citizen support, foster local communities' acceptance of RES projects of public relevance, and to minimise the risk of legal challenges against RES project development. Co-ownership, community-led projects where communities have concrete stakes in RES projects should be prioritised in both permitting and financing. Additionally, it is crucially important to take into account regional and local level planning in order to reap all the socio-economic benefits of locally-anchored decarbonisation pathways. **Support AMs 118-119, 123, 128-129, 134-139, 154, 163, 165, 196, 198=199, 220, 224-227, 300, CA 12**
- **Ensure a holistic approach to spatial planning.** Spatial planning provisions should allow a 'cascading' deployment of additional renewable energy capacity, focusing development on the least harmful areas. Renewables go-to areas must be well defined through an inclusive process that integrates public participation, sensitivity mapping, and appropriate analysis of renewable energy production potential. At the same time, this process must be used to also designate space for nature, to ensure that EU obligations on protected and strictly protected areas, Natura 2000 sites, other protected areas, reserves and nature restoration areas can be met. Equal priority must be given to addressing the biodiversity crisis, energy crisis and climate crisis. This requires ecosystem-based spatial planning for both land and sea areas. **Support AMs 104, 106-107, 116, 141-143, 145, 148, 167, 169, 171, 177, 180, 189=190, 192.** **Reject AMs 7, 8, 9, 110, 113, 166, 179**
- **Seize the opportunity to effectively speed up renewables uptake.** High complexity, long duration and low transparency in renewables permit-granting procedures are registered as some of the main barriers hindering renewables deployment. Opportunities for faster permitting of renewable energy projects should be taken where they do not compromise environmental protection. However, faster permitting timeframes or bypassing fundamental provisions in the EU environmental legislation might not necessarily lead to faster deployment. Unclear or opaque decision processes might actually lead to the opposite: a slower deployment rate, higher costs and lower public acceptance. **Support AMs 182, 187, 210, 212, 228-229, 232-233, 260, 261.** **Reject AMs 238, 239, 241**
- **Target administrative bottlenecks.** As also outlined by industry, the main problems hindering RES deployment are not related to nature protection legislation. Barriers related to administrative processes are acknowledged among the major factors hindering renewables developments in Europe. However, many of the actual problems are not tackled by this legislative proposal – remarkably the understaffing and lack of adequate skills in public authorities. Those obstacles must be addressed by

bringing Member States to ensure sufficient and adequate staffing, with relevant skills and qualifications, for their permit-granting bodies and environmental assessment authorities. **Support AMs 144, 157, 207-208, 209, 216, 218, 260 and CA6. Reject AMs 16, 172**

- **Facilitate the installation of solar energy in artificial structures and the uptake of heat pumps.** To achieve an accelerated deployment of additional solar capacity and heat pumps, procedures to install small and medium-size installations should be simplified and streamlined. **Support CA10 or AMs 282, 286, 288, 289**