

EU Policy Update

Clean Energy Package

This eagerly awaited group of legislative proposals has finally arrived: it was presented by the Vice-president of the European Commission for the Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič and the Commissioner for Energy and Climate Action Miguel Arias Cañete. No less than 1200 pages long, this second step for the completion of the Energy Union proposes binding energy efficiency targets of 30% by 2030 (replacing 27% non-binding targets), environmental limits for capacity mechanisms that will push the coal-fired plants out of the market and leave room for gas, further inclusion of the renewables, and push for deeper integration of the electricity market, raising questions in terms of available power storage and supply. The next issue of the Quarterly Newsletter, to be released in early January, will provide more details.

State of the Energy Union

The European Commission has decided to postpone its yearly State of the Energy Union communication to early 2017. This document takes stock on the progress of the building of this Energy Union in all its aspects, from the integration of the market to the share of renewables or energy efficiency. This follows the publication of the Clean Energy package and the adoption of the first pieces of legislation, regarding security of supply of gas.

Maltese Presidency

On 1 January 2017, Malta has taken up the Presidency of the Council of the EU, following Slovakia. Every 6 months, a member state takes the Presidency of the Council, which gathers the representatives of the government of the 28 member-states. The state in charge defines some priorities, on which it wants to give a special impetus. Malta is in charge until 1 July 2017, then handing over to Estonia. The UK was supposed to be in charge but has passed its turn, due to Brexit. More on the website of the Maltese presidency: www.eu2017.mt

Maltese Priorities

1. Migration
2. Single Market
3. Security
4. Social inclusion
5. Europe's Neighbourhood
6. Maritime

The Single Market priority encloses one aspect for energy: *"Reviewing the Energy Efficiency package aimed at reducing energy consumption in residential buildings and industry through improved energy efficiency"*.

New directive on Air quality

The European Union has adopted the revised National Emissions Ceilings directive, which sets national limits for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, non-methane volatile organic compounds and ammonia and, from now on, fine particulate matter as the main responsible pollutants for acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone. Limits for member states between 2020 and 2029 are identical to those provided in the revised [Gothenburg protocol](#). Restrictions from 2030 will be stricter. The EU claims that this directive aims at cutting the number of premature deaths due to air pollution by about 50% in 2030 (compared to 2005). The directive will come into force on 31 December 2016.