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EU Member States display little eagerness to save more energy

Energy ministers from national governments have agreed to push for a weak energy savings target in 2030, as part of a comprehensive reform of the EU's energy market. This is despite energy efficiency being one of the most important ways to cut CO₂ emissions and for consumers to save money.

Member States are prepared to commit to a 30% target, without repercussions if the target isn't met [1], even though some countries led by France and Germany pushed for more ambition. This is likely to have a negative knock-on effect, with less certainty for investors in energy efficiency schemes and fewer savings for energy consumers, through for example home insulation or energy advice.

BEUC is particularly disappointed that helping the energy poor is not considered a priority for energy efficiency policy by EU Member States. Around 54 million people in the EU have difficulties in keeping their homes warm [2]. Almost 50% of people in Bulgaria are at risk of energy poverty, while the corresponding figure in Spain is over 11 million people [3].

Monique Goyens, the Director General of The European Consumer Organisation BEUC, said:

"Energy efficiency is a no-brainer for consumers. Investing today pays off in the long term through lower energy bills. Unfortunately, a number of EU Member States prefers a 'business-as-usual' approach with a feeble target and more flexibility which may slow down energy savings after 2020.

"Almost 10% of EU consumers struggle to warm their homes or pay their energy bills today. EU Member States should be prioritising measures that help the energy poor, who suffer the most from inadequately heated homes. Saving energy is also a way to reduce our dependence on foreign countries' energy reserves."

The EU Parliament still needs to come to its position before the three EU institutions, the Commission, Council and Parliament, can hammer out an agreement which will apply across the EU.

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[1] This is a revision to the Energy Efficiency Directive, which was proposed by the European Commission as part of the 'Clean Energy for All Europeans' Package in November 2016.

[2] See Insight_E report prepared for the European Commission '[Energy poverty and vulnerable consumers in the energy sector across the EU](#)' (2015).

[3] See Insight_E report prepared for the European Commission 'Energy poverty and vulnerable consumers in the energy sector across the EU' [appendix](#).