



European Economic and Social Committee

PRESS

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EESC calls for a common EU external policy on energy

The EU should consider the security of its energy supply as one of the priorities of its external policy, the European Economic and Social Committee has suggested in its opinion on energy supply and neighbourhood policy. In the opinion, which was requested by the Hungarian EU presidency, the Committee came out in favour of appointing a high representative for energy policy to ensure that Europe speaks with one voice in this area.

Rapporteur Edgardo Iozia (Employees' Group, Italy), called on the European Commission to quickly step up a common EU foreign policy on energy in order to ensure security of supply across the EU and its neighbouring countries. Referring to the new provisions on energy in article 194 of the Lisbon Treaty, he pointed out the importance of implementing European energy policy in a spirit of solidarity and putting an end to the energy unilateralism of Member States.

Mr. Stéphane Buffetaut (Employers' Group, France), President of the Section Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society of the EESC, indicated that the EU's dependency on external suppliers is constantly growing: "It is a matter of great concern that the EU is increasingly dependent on undemocratic and unstable areas; in the long term, this could create many difficulties for the overall security of the EU."

The EESC urged the EU to strengthen its strategic partnerships with supplier countries as well as to advance its policy towards neighbouring countries through which most energy supplies transit, or example by supporting the countries of the Eastern Partnership and having structured cooperation with Mediterranean countries.

Finally, the EESC has asked the Commission to explore the feasibility of an **EU energy treaty** that would put energy on a new institutional footing and complete the provisions of the Lisbon treaty.

In a second associated opinion, once again drawn by **Mr. Iozia**, the EESC expressed its support for the Commission proposal promoting measures designed to prevent the manipulation of wholesale energy markets and to make them more transparent. Welcoming the willingness to strengthen the coordination mechanisms between the national energy authorities, the EESC also called on the Commission to build a **Europe of energy**, to protect consumers' interests, to guarantee energy supply and to safeguard social, economic and environmental sustainability.



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In the ensuing debate, Members stressed the importance of such opinions in the current international situation and the need to overcome national egoism to build towards stronger cooperation in this key sector.

For further information, please contact:

Aleksandra Klenke

EESC Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN)

Tél + 32-(0)2-546.98.99

E-mail : aleksandra.klenke@eesc.europa.eu

Martin Schneider

EESC Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN)

Tél + 32-(0)2-546.82.70

E-mail : martin.schneider@eesc.europa.eu