

4th Workshop of the International Feed-In Cooperation

Ljubljana, Slovenia, October 18 and 19, 2007

Conclusions of the Chair

At the 4th International Workshop of the International Feed-In Cooperation, about 50 representatives from 16 Member States of the European Union, Croatia and the Commission came together in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 18-19 October. Besides the partners in the International Feed-in Cooperation also representatives from 9 other European member state governments actively took part in the discussion of the workshop, presenting their system and participating in shaping these common final conclusions. Discussions were focussed on the status of feed-in systems in place in those countries and scope for their optimisation, developments on EU level including the future European framework on renewable energy and their integration in the internal market.

From the discussions the chair draws the following conclusions:

Realising the 20% renewable energy target

The mandatory target of a renewable energy share of 20% in the overall EU energy consumption by 2020 was recognised as ambitious and at the same time feasible goal. It is seen as a big and important step in the direction of a sustainable energy supply, to mitigate climate change and create employment opportunities.

In order to realise this ambitious target, all member states have to exploit their national potentials thereby making use of all the available technologies.

Adoption of a new renewable energy framework

Participants welcome the European Commission initiative to present the proposal for the new comprehensive directive on renewable energy as early as December 5, 2007. This Directive should strengthen the existing and successful policies and legal frameworks as well as stimulate new innovation to foster energy technologies.

Success of feed-in-systems

The success of some EU member states that are using the feed-in-system in substantially increasing the share of renewable energy in the electricity market is a clear evidence of the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of feed-in-systems. The Commission repeatedly confirmed this in its reports. Feed-in-systems are particularly suited to drive down costs of the different technologies and therefore will bring renewable energies closer to competitiveness at the energy market.

Further developments of the feed-in-systems in Europe

Participants made clear that the new framework directive needs to give member states the possibility to use feed-in-systems in the future. Taking into account the impact of feed-in-systems in the EU over the last years, several countries stated, that the 20% renewable energy target will only be achieved if this successful instrument can also be applied over the EU in the future.

Concerns regarding renewable energy trade mechanism

Recognising this, it was seen with great concern that the European Commission is considering to propose a directive that contains regulations on a mandatory trade mechanism that goes further than the existing regulation in article 5, paragraph 4 of directive 2001/77/EC. Participants are afraid that such mechanism might endanger feed-in-systems and therefore their ability to achieve their mandatory national renewable energy targets and leads to substantially increasing costs for the consumer.

Option for flexibility in achieving national 2020 renewable energy targets

Taking into consideration the success of the feed-in-system in various member states the Commission should make a proposal for a voluntary coordinated or harmonised feed-in-system in wider Europe. Starting with a cluster of countries was seen a possible first step towards this direction.

A possible start could be a European equalisation scheme which could balance costs between EU member states for reaching the European 20% renewable energy target. This system is in place e.g. in the countries involved in the International Feed-In Cooperation.

This idea is of great interest with a particular view to allowing those participating states to reach their national renewable energy targets on the basis of common efforts and benefits. The International Feed-In Cooperation will continue and strengthen its work on this model.

Administrative and physical barriers

The new directive for the support of renewable energy should also address administrative and physical barriers such as limited access to the grid, the need to increase interconnections and obstructive planning procedures existing in EU member states. The Commission should also review the existing directives for the planning procedures and regulations of the European Union. This counts for renewable energy in the electricity field as well as in the heating and cooling sector and for bio-fuels.

Several countries expressed their interest in participating in the International Feed-In Cooperation. The Cooperation invites those interested countries to join the International Feed-In Cooperation and by this to shape and strengthen the voice of the countries using feed-in-systems. Germany invited all countries and the commission to the next workshop which will be held in Germany in March 2008.