

INFORSE-EUROPE

International Network for Sustainable Energy

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Move to 30% Reduction by 2020 with Many Benefits

INFORSE-Europe call upon the EU countries to decide for at least a 30% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in 2020, independent of the international climate negotiations. By doing so, EU could give a much needed momentum to the climate negotiations. Maybe more importantly, stronger greenhouse gas reductions will have a number of benefits for the EU countries outside of the international climate negotiations.

While it is well-known that a 30% reduction of greenhouse gases can be done at reasonable costs (a recent estimate is a cost of 0.2% of GDP), the reduction of fossil fuel use will reduce vulnerability to future energy crisis and related high energy prices. That can be very important to reduce the effects of future energy crisis on the economies of the EU countries, maybe more important than the expected costs of the reductions.

If the reductions of greenhouse gases include large elements of renewable energy to replace fossil fuels, they will reduce energy imports, leading to better balance of payment, - a very important issue for many EU countries. In addition, and even more important for many countries, the reductions will lead to increased employment. The increases in employment in energy efficiency and renewable energy will be substantially higher than the reductions in employment in the fossil fuel supply. Even in the EU country with the highest employment in fossil fuel supply, Poland, employment will be equal or higher if supply is changed from fossil fuel supply (oil, gas, coal) to energy efficiency and renewable energy. That is the conclusions of studies by INFORSE-Europe and others on employment gains of different energy options.

Higher greenhouse gas reduction targets will also drive the technological development, leading to innovation and better products. This will help to ensure that the EU countries will remain in the forefront of development tomorrow's technologies.

INFORSE-Europe has proposed strategies and scenarios for a number of EU countries and for the entire EU for phase out of fossil fuels until 2050 or earlier. These scenarios also show how CO₂ emissions from energy use can be reduced 40% or more from 1990 until 2020.

With the EU renewable energy directive, the EU countries have proposed increase of renewable energy until 2020 in their recent renewable energy action plans. Many countries have proposed higher increases of renewable energy than the minimum stipulated in the renewable energy directive. If these higher proposals are realised and are combined with real efforts to improve the energy efficiency with 20%, the EU will be on the road to a 30% reduction of greenhouse gases.

Therefore we urge the environmental ministers to agree to a 2020 greenhouse gas reduction target of at least 30% when they meet October 14 to discuss EU climate policies before COP16 in Mexico.

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