

Is Europe's growth strategy boosting energy efficiency?

In 2010 EU leaders agreed a joint growth strategy, called Europe 2020, setting five headline targets, including energy efficiency. The following table assesses the 27 countries reports from April/May 2011 against three questions:

- 1) Has an efficiency target clearly been set?
- 2) Is the target expressed in a way which makes it comparable to the EU overall target of staying below 1474 Mtoe consumption in 2020 / realising 368 Mtoe savings?
- 3) Is the ambition consistent with the EU target of reducing energy consumption by 20% in 2020 compared to projections?

Country	Target		
UK	<i>No target</i>		
Netherlands			
Slovenia			
Czech Rep			
		Comparability	
Bulgaria	<i>Not clear</i>	<i>Not assessable / comparable</i>	
Luxembourg			
Ireland			
Poland			
Hungary			
Slovakia			
Lithuania			
Sweden	<i>Clear</i>		
Spain			
			Consistency of Ambition
Finland		<i>Baseline unclear</i>	<i>10% final savings*</i>
Estonia		<i>Reduced scope</i>	<i>11% final savings*</i>
Denmark		<i>Comparable with EU method</i>	<i>8% savings*</i>
Italy			<i>13% savings</i>
Cyprus		<i>Baseline unclear</i>	<i>14% savings</i>
Austria		<i>Reduced scope</i>	<i>14% final savings*</i>
Greece		<i>Baseline /scope unclear</i>	<i>15% savings</i>
Germany			<i>15% savings*</i>
Belgium			<i>18% savings</i>
Malta		<i>Baseline unclear</i>	<i>22% savings</i>
France		<i>Reduced scope</i>	<i>23% final savings*</i>
Romania			<i>19% savings</i>
Portugal			<i>20% savings</i>
Latvia			<i>42% savings*</i>

* Based on own calculations using data provided by the NRP, Eurostat and Primes 2007



Background

The EU energy savings target is not on track

The 27 EU Member States committed themselves in March 2007 to improve energy efficiency in order to reach a 20% reduction of energy use by 2020 compared to projections. Energy efficiency is the lowest-cost means of reducing carbon emissions in the economy and has many direct social and economic benefits.

However all recent assessments show that the 20% target is about to be missed by half.

Closing the gap to the target by 2020 would save EU consumers around €78 billion annually on energy bills, and avoid the need to build new power generation capacity equivalent to 100 new generation nuclear reactors. It would lead to the creation of more than one million new, local jobs and reduce significantly the EU's dependency on the import of fossil fuels.

National targets required to drive efforts in the 27 Member States

Recent studies showed that meeting the target can still be done cost-effectively with sufficient investments and the right policy drive.

For this to happen, the EU target must be made concrete, and responsibility for achieving it has to be clearly assigned. National objectives which add up to the EU target are needed to ensure transparency and accountability. They would allow Member States to report on their contribution to the overall target, and the EU to assess whether additional policies are needed to ensure its achievement.

NRPs insufficient – EU legislation required

Member States are setting national energy efficiency targets in their National Reform Programmes (NRP) submitted in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy. This process was endorsed by the Commission, which announced its intention to assess the progress towards the 20% target based on these national statements of ambition.

However the energy saving ambitions reported in the NRPs are not comparable, lack a robust method and are far below what is needed to meet Europe's 20% objective, e.g.:

- UK, the Netherlands and Slovenia do not indicate a target;
- The Czech Republic mentions a target but indicates that it will not be quantified;
- Lithuania and Slovakia indicate only relative targets, making it impossible to predict how much it will represent in 2020;
- Around 14 countries could be compared, out of which only five declare a level of ambition close to or above the EU 20% target; the rest is far below.

The responsibility for achieving the EU 20% target must be clearly divided between Member States, in order to align national targets with Europe's energy savings ambitions. A transparent effort sharing based on a common methodology and taking into account respective economic situations would ensure that each Member State contributes equitably to the overall objective and allow the EU to assess whether additional policies are required.

References

Ecofys and Fraunhofer ISI (2010), [Energy Savings 2020 – How to triple the impact of energy saving policies in Europe](#)

Europe 2020 web portal: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

