

Crisis, climate change, conflict over Lisbon

Brussels. (jm) The June elections brought a new European Parliament into office, delivering a clear victory to centre-right parties across Europe (see page 18). The conservative "European People's Party" (EPP) with 264 seats has retained its position as the largest bloc in the European Parliament. The former Socialist Party (PSE), now called "Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats" (S&D), is the second largest bloc with 183 MEPs, followed by the "Alliance of Liberals and Democrats" for Europe (ALDE) with 84. The "Greens Group" gained seats, bringing the party to 55 MEPs.

The new European Parliament was officially constituted on July 14-16 and consists of 736 members. The first task on the new EP's agenda was to elect a new President and other senior office holders. The European Parliament elected the 69-year-old Polish MEP Jerzy Buzek (EPP), a former Member of the Solidarność-Movement, in its first round of votes as its new President for the next 2.5 years.

MEPs also elected the chairs and vice-chairs of the 22 parliamentary committees, including the two committees most relevant for energy and environmental issues, the industry committee (Committee on Industry, Research and Energy - ITRE) and the environment committee (Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety - ENVI). German Christian Democrat Herbert Reul (EPP) will chair ITRE, while former Minister of the Environment in Saarland (Germany) MEP Jo Leinen (S&D) was elected chair of ENVI.

In the coming months, MEPs will have a say in the composition of the next Euro-



A clear victory to centre right parties across Europe changed the balance of power in Brussels.

pean Commission, and if the Lisbon Treaty gets past a second Irish referendum later this year, in the new roles of the EU President and EU Foreign Policy Chief. Tackling the economic crisis, climate change, and energy issues will be high on the agenda. MEPs will help shape negotiations on an international agreement on global warming to be reached at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 15) in Copenhagen, from December 7-18, 2009. Once a worldwide agreement on an international post-Kyoto climate regime with higher reduction targets for the period after 2012 is reached, the revision of the Emission Trading System (ETS) and the effort sharing de-

cision will be on the agenda, with new assignments of future CO2 targets per country and per sector. In a second reading, the European Parliament will also consider measures to improve the energy performance of new and existing buildings. At its first reading in April 2009, the European Parliament called for all new buildings constructed after 2018 to be at least net-zero energy buildings, hence to generate on-site as much energy as they consume. Now, the Council's Energy Working Group has to formulate its position. The Swedish presidency's aim is to reach an agreement with the European Parliament at the Council meeting on December 7, 2009.

Time to implement RES Directive

Brussels. (jm) After the publication in the Official Journal of the European Union, the new European Renewable Energy Sources (RES) Directive entered into force on June 25. Now, Member States have to explain how they intend to comply with their indicative trajectory and meet their binding national targets for 2020 by coming up with National Renewable Energy Action Plans (NREAPs).

On June 30, the European Commission published a template for the NREAPs. As stipulated in Article 4 of the RES Directive, Member States are obliged to comply with the template and submit their action plans to the Commission by June 30, 2010 at the latest. The individual action plans and other important documents about re-

newable energy will be published on a "Transparency Platform". Before the official publication of the template by the Commission, Member States complained in a consultation about the detailed approach and the specific questions that have to be answered. However, the 40-page NREAP template met with approval at the European Renewable Energy Industry and its umbrella association EREC (European Renewable Energy Council). These action plans will be the major tool in ensuring that all EU-27 Member States provide an adequate, reliable framework for boosting renewable energy. In particular against the background of the experience gained with other national actions plans, such as the National Energy Efficiency Ac-

tion Plans (NEEAPs), it is of utmost importance that Member States get clear advice.

Member States have to present sectoral targets for the development of renewable energy in the three different sectors of electricity, heating & cooling and transport and have to assess their domestic potential. Moreover, they have to list which support schemes they allocate to the different technologies and present concrete measures related to removal of administrative barriers, training and education, access to the grid, planned statistical transfers or joint projects, awareness raising, policies to develop and mobilize biomass resources.

If a Member State fails to introduce adequate measures to enable it to meet its trajectory, the Commission can require the Member State to submit an amended NREAP or initiate infringement procedures. To facilitate the process of implementation of the RES Directive on a national level and help Member States draw up their NREAPs, EREC together with the parliamentary network, EUFORES (European Forum for Renewable Energy Sources) set up the REPAP2020 project. Co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme, it aims to facilitate the implementation of the RES Directive by giving advice and good practice examples. The main target

groups of the project are Parliamentarians and Civil Servants in national administrations as well as national industry associations. Furthermore, REPAP2020 will empower national industry associations to come up with their individual RES roadmaps which will serve as an important tool to give advice and provide support.

For further information visit:

RES Directive in the Official Journal:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:140:0016:0062:EN:PDF>

NREAP Template:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/doc/nreap__adoptedversion__30_june_en.pdf

Transparency Platform:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/transparency_platform_en.htm

REPAP2020:

<http://www.erec.org/projects/ongoing-projects/repap2020.html>

Certificated installers for renewable energy in buildings

Brussels.(eg) In its recently adopted Energy and Climate Package, the European Union has set ambitious energy and climate targets (new energy 1/2009). To reach these targets, the building sector is a key area to look into, as it is both a big consumer of energy (both electricity and heating) and has great potential for integration of renewable energy technologies. The large up-take of renewables installations in the building sector will require a significant number of highly qualified installers to integrate renewable energy technologies in new and existing buildings and to ensure the proper functioning of these systems.

Article 14 of the directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (2009/28/EC) obliges all EU Member States to develop and mutually recognize accreditation and certification schemes for installers of small-scale renewable energy installations. By December 31, 2012, they need to develop certification schemes or equivalent qualification schemes for installers of small-scale renewable energy installations, i.e. biomass boilers and stoves, PV and solar thermal systems, and heat pumps including shallow geothermal systems.

The QualiCert project co-funded by Intelligent Energy Europe aims to develop a manual of key success criteria for accreditation and certification systems and to validate the manual among key stakeholders. To guarantee broadest possible support for the future accreditation and certification scheme, QualiCert relies on an interdisciplinary multi-stakeholder approach involving builders and installers through their EU associations, training providers and accrediting bodies, the renewables industry through its European associations (EREC and its members), and a number of national energy agencies. The multi-stakeholder composition of the consortium is intended to ensure the broadest possible support to the future accreditation and certification scheme.

Focused on a first core group of five Member States – namely Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Poland – the EU-wide dissemination of the approach thus created will then encourage its replication in other countries.

Beyond the proactive approach anticipating the EU obligation, QualiCert is also addressing the genuine market need for a comprehensive system to certify installers in order to guarantee quality installations



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and satisfied customers, which in turn will spur further market deployment.

For further information, visit:

<http://www.erec.org/projects/ongoing-projects/qualicert.html>