Press Release

What future for national energy efficiency programmes?

New study recalls that significant potential across sectors necessitates securing the full 1.5% annual energy savings in the Energy Efficiency Directive

25 April 2017, Brussels – A new study from Ricardo Energy & Environment finds that national transport efficiency measures could deliver five times more energy savings annually in 2021-2030 than in 2014-2020. These savings, as those occurring in other sectors such as buildings or industry, create jobs, increase competitiveness and security and boost climate protection. The findings from the study reinforce the necessity and feasibility of securing the full 1.5% energy savings requirement in the Energy Efficiency Directive by closing the loopholes which are currently slowing down delivery.

As part of its proposal for a revised Energy Efficiency Directive, the European Commission proposes to extend until 2050 Article 7 - the cornerstone of the Energy Efficiency Directive. Article 7 requires Member States to put in place energy efficiency measures, additional to EU measures, to deliver new energy savings of 1.5% of energy sales every year. The Commission however proposes to maintain the possibility for Member States to deliver less, including by ignoring the energy used in transport. In the current period, most governments have used all available loopholes, resulting in halving the effective energy savings requirement to only 0.75% per year.

A new research by Ricardo Energy & Environment finds that scaling up national transport efficiency measures could deliver more savings than the ones which would be needed if the transport exemption is removed – these could represent five times more energy savings in the second Article 7 period than in the current 2014-2020 period.

“Energy savings in transport can no longer be ignored in the revision of the Energy Efficiency Directive. National transport measures have a great potential and together with the untapped savings in buildings and industry will allow reaching truly 1.5% savings per year,” said Stefan Scheuer, Secretary General of the Coalition for Energy Savings. “If loopholes in the Directive are maintained, the current rate of energy efficiency improvements across sectors is at risk leading to job losses and negative impact on people’s energy bills and cities’ air quality”.

While the European Parliament asked for removing the loopholes post 2020 and reaching a full 1.5% savings per year, the Maltese Presidency proposed further slowing down the delivery of Article 7, from 1.5% to 1.4%, while keeping the loopholes.

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Notes for editors

• The study from Ricardo Energy & Environment can be downloaded here. It looks at national transport efficiency measures additional to EU vehicle standards, an area where the Commission is expected to propose new rules by the end of the year.

• More information and suggestions on how to strengthen Article 7 can be found in the Coalition’s briefing on Article 7 and on our position paper on the Clean Energy for All Europeans Package.

• Article 7 of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) requires Member States to put in place national energy efficiency measures to deliver new and additional end-use energy savings every year. It has secured the single largest contribution to achieve the 2020 energy efficiency target by driving energy savings of up to 60Mtoe per year.

• All Member States but Sweden are using the possibility to exclude transport energy consumption from their baseline when calculating the energy savings needed to fulfil their 1.5% objective. Some of these Member States however account for savings stemming from the transport sector, even if transport is not included in the baseline.

• The study has looked into at a number of selected potential policy options Member States could take to achieve more energy savings in the context of Article 7 in the transport sector. They include: improvements to public transport, cycling and walking, shift of heavy truck tonne-kilometres to inland shipping and rail, improved speed enforcement and reduction of average motorway speeds, training for fuel efficient driving, reform of company car tax, increase in fuel taxation, and complementary policies to improve the uptake of plug-in electric vehicles or other types of low emission vehicles.