
EU RENEWABLES ON THE UP, BUT 2020 TARGET LOOMS LARGE

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Renewable energy use in Europe is still increasing, although a slowdown in overall development has continued. According to new data, the EU got 17.5% of its energy from renewable sources in 2017, marking a slight increase compared to 2016.

The European Union has a binding target of 20% renewable energy use by 2020 and the most recent statistics from Eurostat now show that as of 2017 the bloc had reached 17.5%.

Renewable energy made up 16.7% of final energy consumption in 2015, and 16.1% in 2014.

This weeks announcement means that little has changed since the statistics were last updated in 2018, when the EU announced that its member states are on course to hit the 2020 target.

In January 2018, the European Commission revealed that 11 of the 28 EU members have already hit their individual benchmarks for 2020 ahead of schedule. That number has not increased in the last 12 months.

11 member states smash 2020 renewables targets early

Eleven EU countries have already met their 2020 renewable energy goals ahead of schedule while the bloc as a whole has reached 17%, just shy of the overall target with two years to go, according to new data from Eurostat.

EU climate boss Miguel Arias Cañete said that the bloc is on track to meet the end-of-decade target, although the Spanish Commissioner also warned that more efforts will be needed as talks start to ramp up over long-term climate planning.

Countries like Sweden, Finland and Latvia all remain top of the clean energy leader board, while the Netherlands and France are still furthest away from their goals. Luxembourg is also still rooted to the bottom of charts.

Every member state was required to submit draft energy and climate plans by the end of December, so that the EU as a whole can start to plan for 2030 and the now-agreed renewables target of 32%.

Seven countries missed that deadline, but the latecomers have started to submit their efforts to the Commission, which is expected to offer feedback and recommendations by the summer. Spain,

one of the no-shows, will try to approve its draft next week.

Seven EU nations miss climate and energy plan deadline

Seven EU member states have missed an end-of-2018 deadline to submit draft energy and climate plans to the European Commission, which are essential to the bloc's overall targets for 2030, as well as commitments made under the Paris Agreement.

Some 2020 targets have been criticised for being unambitious and the EU executive will want to ensure that member states set themselves challenging goals.

Belgium, for example, has set a 2030 target of 18.3% although its efforts to meet its 2020 goal of 13% are still ongoing, as renewables currently make up just under 10% of its final energy consumption.

Greece, which has almost met its 2020 goal, has matched the overall EU benchmark of 32% in its draft plan.

Energy efficiency measures will play an important role in the renewables drive too, as the European Environmental Agency warned in 2018 that the clean energy slowdown is largely due to increasing energy consumption.

Solar, wind and hydro-power capacity may continue to surge but may struggle to keep pace if overall energy use also continues to rise.

Kaynak/Source: