

EU energy security strategy fails to secure parliament's support

Written by Miroslav Poche, Ashley Fox and Neoklis Sylikiotis on 12 June 2015 in Opinion
Opinion

MEPs unable to reach agreement on tackling climate change and tensions with Moscow.



Following the rejection of European People's Party (EPP) deputy Algirdas Saudargas' report on a European energy security strategy earlier this week, MEPs Miroslav Poche, Ashley Fox and Neoklis Sylikiotis comment on why they think parliament failed to reach an agreement.

Miroslav Poche (CZ) is parliament's Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group shadow rapporteur on the European energy security strategy

"I am very sorry that parliament has dismissed the report on the European energy security strategy. It seems that some of its proposals were just too ambitious, namely the strong support for binding targets on energy efficiency, or too controversial, like nuclear energy, which has been a divisive issue among MEPs for years.

A moratorium on hydraulic fracking is another sensitive issue and, despite the fact that an amendment in favour of a moratorium was adopted, it left some people with a bad taste in their mouth, leading to them voting against the report.

The votes against spanned the entire political spectrum, but for very different reasons. Sadly, not even EPP group members supported their own rapporteur Algirdas Saudargas, as they mostly abstained or voted down his proposal.

The votes clearly show the wide variety of opinions among MEPs on this sensitive subject. Obviously, we desperately need to debate this use further, especially taking into consideration parliament's report on the energy union which is expected to be adopted in the near future."

Ashley Fox (UK) is parliament's European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group shadow rapporteur on the European energy security strategy

"The EU has an energy security problem because too many member states are over-reliant on a single source of energy - Russian gas. This report started positively, but unfortunately became distracted by calls for binding climate and energy targets. Improving energy efficiency and our use of renewables is important, but will not solve the problem of dependency on Russia.

If we are to achieve energy security we need to use all of the tools available to us, including shale gas and nuclear energy. It is entirely the prerogative of member states to decide upon their energy mix, and the EU should not interfere.

The EU should do everything possible to develop a single market in energy, using interconnection to allow gas and electricity to flow freely across Europe. This will diversify supply and increase competition, reducing prices for consumers and businesses across the EU and delivering energy security for all of us."

Neoklis Sylikiotis (CY) is parliament's Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) group shadow rapporteur on the European energy security strategy

"We oppose the European energy security strategy since it serves private interests, enhances inequalities, limits the sovereignty of states and fails to combat energy poverty.

This report had many problematic references. It proposed the continuous updating of the commission from the outset and its participation in the negotiations for intergovernmental agreements.

This proposal limits the sovereignty of states and restricts national flexibility in forming efficient and multidimensional interstate energy relations. Furthermore, the report underlined the importance of nuclear energy. Our opinion is that the EU should promote policies to establish a nuclear free Europe.

An important item in the report was its call for a Mediterranean gas hub with increased liquefied natural gas capacities, and its proposal to seize the opportunities that arise from eastern Mediterranean gas reserves to enhance EU energy security.

We adopted an amendment underlining that the use of hydraulic fracturing entails risks and negative consequences for the climate, environment and public health. However, we voted against the report, as it moves in the same direction as neoliberal policies.

The GUE/NGL group chooses a different path of real growth, where energy is a public social good accessible to everyone, enhanced state control, public infrastructures for the benefit of the people

and international partnerships based on solidarity."

About the author

Miroslav Poche (CZ) is parliament's S&D group shadow rapporteur on the European energy security strategy

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