Looking back on the preliminary results of the 20-20-20 targets, it is quite clear that we will likely reach our targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction and renewables.

At the same time it is not yet foreseeable if we will reach the indicative energy efficiency target. We will have to wait for the full implementation of the energy efficiency directive and the commission's report on it in autumn.

We also know that the three target approach has broad problems and costs, most visible in the emission trading system (ETS). While the ETS is the EU's prime instrument for carbon reduction, the parallel targets on renewables and efficiency obviously affect the price negatively.

Together with the economic crisis they have contributed to a carbon price much lower than expected. These relatively complex workings brought backloading, which after long debates and several votes in the European parliament is likely to come into force shortly. Critics say that the market has already
taken account of the backloaded certificates, with a rather marginal effect.

The enormous cost of long-term build up that renewable energy sources (RES) forerunners like Spain or Germany face are a further by-product. While the renewables industry has unfortunately not yet brought the positive employment effects my green and socialist colleagues forecasted. And at the same time the United States are overtaking the EU in terms of carbon reduction with shale gas.

So, despite reaching the overall EU targets on CO2 and RES the broad picture is negative and one should think hard of alternatives how to improve our climate and energy policy.

From this background it is very unfortunate that a majority of MEPs do not wish to do so. Rather, they opted for more reductions and faster. From 20-20-20 to 40-30-40 which is short-sighted and uninspired.

While the greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target on its own would be ambitious, but hopefully achievable, combined with the other targets a much higher percentage is effectively reached. According to the commission's calculation, 40 per cent GHG reductions will be reached with 27 per cent renewables and 25 per cent energy efficiency.

So numbers higher than these mean unrealistic emissions reduction targets which will become an enormous burden for our economy and in particular industry.

There are so many better things we could do. We could have asked for more from Europe on renewables support schemes. Instead of preserving numerous expensive national support mechanisms, which distort the internal energy market, a single European support system would be more sensible.

Instead, we simply ask for a new binding RES target that restricts member states' freedom in choosing their energy mix. In addition, the 40 per cent wish on energy efficiency is far beyond realistic.

Of course I support energy efficiency improvements, but a binding doubling of energy efficiency within ten years is simply unachievable as it would require massive investments in our buildings and factories. In times of economic crisis, I don't know where this money will come from.

It would also mean much more EU regulation in private households. The lightbulb ban was only a small-scale start, more home appliances would follow. This is a very dangerous direction and will again drive more citizens into the arms of the enemies of the EU.

We should be smarter and finally understand reality for EU climate and energy policy.

**About the author**

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