

Electrification of heating and transport could bring 'tangible benefits' for Europe

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News

A new report says that electrification of sectors such as transport and heating/cooling will bring “tangible benefits” for Europe.



A new report says that electrification of sectors such as transport will bring tangible benefits | *Photo credit: Fotolia*

The gains would be both economic and environmental and also benefit consumers, says the report by EURELECTRIC, the body that represents Europe’s electricity industry.

Called ‘A bright future for Europe’, the document claims that the electricity sector in the EU has reduced its carbon footprint by 35 per cent since 1990 - a decarbonisation pace it says is “significantly higher” than all other major energy carriers.

Current policy reforms are set to accelerate the decarbonisation of electricity further, says EURELECTRIC.

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Kristian Ruby, secretary general of EURELECTRIC, said, “As electricity becomes increasingly clean, it provides a key part of the solution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in other sectors such as transport, and heating and cooling.

“The recipe for clean energy to all Europeans really has one key ingredient: It is power to the people,” said Ruby.

“Electrification holds a huge potential for Europe. Switching to electricity will not only reduce CO2 and oil imports. It will also give us better cities with cleaner air,” he added.

The report analyses the potential impact of electrification beyond the power sector - in transport as well as heating and cooling - and provides policy recommendations on how to maximise the benefits for European society and consumers.

In the transport sector, switching to electricity is already a “no-regret option” for emission reduction, it claims.

Based on today’s average European electricity mix, the report says that an electric vehicle (EV) is responsible for less than 50g CO2/km.

“This is significantly below the EU target of 95g by 2020, and only a fraction of the carbon emissions produced by even the most efficient internal combustion engine cars available on the market today,” per the report.

It goes on, “But policy measures such as ambitious emission targets for cars and vans, separate zero-emission car targets, improved test cycles and charging infrastructure requirements are necessary to ensure emission reductions and further deployment of EVs.”

The report was presented at a stakeholder conference in Brussels hosted by EURELECTRIC, which represents 3500 companies across Europe with an aggregate turnover of €200bn.

In the heating and cooling sector, the scope for further emission abatement is significant, as is the scope for economic benefits. According to the report, increased use of electricity in heating and cooling could open the door to energy import savings of €44.7bn per annum.

It says that to harvest the benefits, a “level playing field” between energy carriers is needed.

“The legislation must revise and differentiate between the primary energy factors for different energy

sources. New and innovative finance instruments should be developed to accelerate deployment of heat pumps and similar technologies,” the report said.

The report was presented at a stakeholder conference in Brussels hosted by EURELECTRIC.

About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter for the Parliament Magazine

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