

Press Release

The new State Aid Guidelines on Climate, Energy and Environment (CEEAG) - a good step forward towards the prime role for renewables and climate policies across the European legal framework

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The EU Commission published yesterday afternoon the new Climate, Environment and Aid Guidelines (CEEAG) to revise the EU Guidelines on State aid for environmental protection and energy (EEAG). They pose the evaluation ground for the European Commission and the Member States under which State aid granted by Member States in the field of climate, environmental protection and energy will be compatible with the Single Market.

EREF welcomes many parts of the new text as a lot of progress had been made since the first draft guidelines were issued for consultation. EREF President António Sa da Costa: "The first draft was nothing to write home about in view of the climate urgency and the need to enable especially citizens and small and medium sized projects to roll out the much needed renewables all over the EU and with as little burden as possible."

A strong alliance of many associations and not least the work of EREF itself in good and open exchange with the EU Commission and through the consultation process added a lot more value to the text.

EREF welcomes an increase of the threshold for small and medium sized renewable energy projects which enable to get support without tedious auctioning process requirements. The threshold to be exempted from competitive bidding processes for small and medium-sized companies and renewable energy communities will be 6MW for electricity generation (including solar and small hydropower) but 18 MW for wind power. This means clarity that all renewable technologies are called to do their bit in the process towards 2050.

The guidelines also respond to the needs for decarbonisation of sectors such as heating and transport and for the introduction of hydrogen.

EREF is still opposed that the new guidelines foresee access to hydrogen financing not only for renewable hydrogen but also for nuclear and fossil hydrogen. The biggest failure of the new guidelines is the by-packing of so-called but undefined low-carbon

fuels and gases and hydrogen on the same footing with renewable sourced electricity, gases or hydrogen.

EREF Director Dr. Dörte Fouquet highlights that the new Guidelines have bowed especially to the nuclear interest in the Union. They exclude the application of these guidelines for support for new construction of nuclear power plants, but they have explicitly allowed that nuclear creeps in under the mantle of an obscure low-carbon notion. EREF refuses again, that nuclear and fossil gas can sneak in as forced companion next to the only sustainable and do-no-harm- source of energy- meaning Renewables.

EREF would despite its strong criticisms on the low-carbon trap again underline and thank the working units of the EU Commission for their hard work to substantially improve the guidelines and to listen to fact-driven exchange.

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