

EREF Press Release on the Commission Work Programme 2025

The Need for a Bolder, Simpler, Faster Energy Transition

Brussels, 12 February 2025

Today, the EU Commission presented its Work Programme for 2025, outlining its key initiatives for the coming year. In the programme, the Commission recognises the need to address current major challenges, such as the climate emergency, securing Europe's global competitiveness and ensuring prosperity of its citizens and industries. EREF welcomes the Commission's efforts to build on the significant progress made under the Green Deal, Fitfor55, and REPowerEU, while adapting to current geopolitical necessities, pursuing strategic autonomy, and ensuring affordable green energy through renewables across all end-uses and sectors.

At the same time, EREF reminds the Commission that accelerating renewable energy deployment, implementing the European Green Deal, and establishing a sustainable pathway for the EU from 2030 into 2040 must be at the heart of the Work Programme. In this context, EREF offers its continuous cooperation and support to both the Commission and co-legislators in pursuing a more consequent, simplified, and accelerated energy transition.

Several new initiatives in the Work Programme align with this vision. These include the Affordable Energy Action Plan—which promises further market integration and urgently needed support to reinforce Europe's energy networks—the Competitiveness Coordination Tool to ramp up investments in crucial sectors, and the highly anticipated Clean Industrial Deal. However, it is crucial to put greater emphasis on small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Work Programme mentions SMEs only twice, primarily in reference to cutting reporting burdens by 35%. Yet, SMEs and independent renewable energy producers form the backbone of the European economy, and policies must recognise their central role in achieving competitiveness, decarbonisation, energy security, and sustainable growth.

Furthermore, EREF welcomes the introduction of the 2040 climate target to be scheduled for Q1 2025 but strongly reminds the Commission to maintain the ambition of reducing emissions by 90% until 2040. This target must be supported by an ambitious policy and legal framework that includes a renewable energy target for 2040 – as outlined in Commissioner Jørgensen's mission letter – and an equally ambitious energy efficiency target. EREF warns the EU against replacing or diluting these

renewable and efficiency targets with “low-carbon” alternatives, as doing so would undermine the pace of decarbonisation, reduce job creation and innovation, and jeopardise Europe’s long-term competitiveness and autonomy.

It should also be acknowledged that putting in place adequate financial frameworks remains essential for many of the proposed initiatives. The Commission must put forward concrete plans to mobilise both public and private funding to meet its objectives for the coming years and beyond 2030. An ambitious next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), in combination with a well-crafted Competitiveness Coordination Tool and a targeted Competitiveness Fund, will be crucial to support the transition to net zero.

EREF is looking forward to continuing working together with the European institutions and stakeholders to forge bold, coherent, and streamlined policies that meet our climate and energy targets and secure a competitive, resilient, and sustainable future for Europe in an increasingly complex global environment.

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