Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2611 (2025)[1]

Analysis and guidelines for a sustainable and socially fair energy transition

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Clean, safe and affordable energy is essential for securing Europe's continued prosperity. It is also central in addressing the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss. As part of the international community's efforts, the Council of Europe member States have committed to changing their legislation and policies in the light of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, climate treaties and the European Green Deal of the European Union.

2. This commitment was further strengthened at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in Reykjavik in 2023, when member States of the Council of Europe recognised that "human rights and the environment are intertwined" and that "a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of human rights by present and future generations". The Parliamentary Assembly considers that socio-economic transformation, including the transition to a more sustainable energy system, is essential for this collective endeavour and should follow a human rights-based approach, as both the goal of a clean and safe energy system and the transition towards it strongly affect basic human rights.

3. The Assembly highlights the importance of stable access to clean energy for the enjoyment of fundamental social rights to housing, work, health, education and protection from poverty and social exclusion, as well as the rights of vulnerable persons (notably children, persons with disabilities and older persons), as enshrined in the (revised) European Social Charter (ETS No. 35 and ETS No. 163, the Charter). The Assembly is concerned that in Europe millions of people still experience energy poverty caused by a combination of low income, high energy costs and poor energy efficiency in buildings, as well as the choice of transport modes. In line with the requirements of the Charter, States have the obligation to remedy and prevent the situation of energy poverty as far as possible. A well-designed national energy transition strategy with strong social and economic dimensions is crucial to this end.

4. The Assembly acknowledges the challenges of building sustainable and socially fair energy systems in member States. The transition to renewable energy technology requires strong and stable investment, social adaptation and decisive governance measures to guide and support citizens and businesses in adapting to renewable energy systems. There is a need to embrace new technologies, improve energy efficiency in companies, housing and modes of transport and change both products and procedures, including their location. Special attention is needed to ensure that citizens view the transition as a positive development.

5. The Assembly considers that the transition to clean energy systems presents real opportunities for European countries to boost the resilience of their national economies against external shocks, strengthen energy security, enhance competitiveness thanks to green technologies, empower consumers and improve public health. This complex undertaking requires a holistic vision accompanied by ambitious and stable long-term policies, sectoral synergies and coherent investment strategies aimed at supporting the large-scale deployment of renewable energy sources and phasing out fossil fuels which, according to the International Energy Agency, still account for around 70% of the energy produced in Europe. The Assembly underlines that new investment in solar and wind projects in the European Union is now cheaper than continued investment in coal and gas.

---

1. *Assembly debate* on 25 June 2025 (24th sitting) (see Doc. 16182, report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Ms Saskia Kluit). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 25 June 2025 (24th sitting).

6. The Assembly expresses grave concern that the Russian Federation's full-scale aggression against Ukraine has dramatically exposed the vulnerability of energy systems to armed conflict. Repeated and deliberate attacks by the Russian Federation on Ukraine's civilian energy infrastructure have led to severe disruptions in the energy supply, threatening not only the safety and well-being of millions of civilians but also undermining regional energy security. The Assembly underlines that military aggression against energy systems is not only a violation of international humanitarian law but also a threat to global climate and energy transition goals.

7. The Assembly believes that, in exercising their responsibility to ensure access to clean, safe and affordable energy for all, which is a key goal of the transition, States should act through regulatory and budgetary tools on three main axes: providing adequate energy supplies by maximising investment in clean, locally available energy sources; designing fair pricing strategies that underpin responsible production and use of energy; and supporting vulnerable users in their transition to more sustainable and energy-efficient systems. Measures should prioritise the transport and housing sectors, which are the largest energy consumers in Europe and significant emitters of greenhouse gases.

8. The Assembly welcomes the targets set under the European Green Deal of cutting national greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% and increasing the share of renewable energy to 45% of the national energy mix by 2030. It also welcomes the European Union's Action Plan for Affordable Energy and underlines that switching to more environmentally friendly sources of energy and improving efficiency of energy use make good economic sense. This enables households, businesses and States to make savings in the long term and enhances energy security through abundant, free local resources, while also benefiting society at large in terms of improved public health and well-being, and reduced pollution. However, in the transition phase, States should protect citizens, notably vulnerable groups, against expensive lock-in problems and help to cover high transition costs, especially in rural areas.

9. The Assembly calls on member States to steer sustainable energy policy choices for all stakeholders at the national level, while ensuring their consistent and long-term implementation by building synergies through co-operation at the pan-European level. It therefore recommends that member States:

9.1. consolidate their national strategy for transitioning to clean, safe and affordable energy and promote it through a public communication campaign highlighting the advantages of embracing renewable energy sources;

9.2. put in place more incentives for investment in sustainable mobility, renovation of older buildings, green technologies and smart grids to improve energy efficiency, where appropriate through public–private partnerships;

9.3. considering that data centres and artificial intelligence applications significantly increase energy consumption, make better use of artificial intelligence as a powerful tool to develop policies that can dramatically advance the energy transition;

9.4. consider the possibilities offered by the Council of Europe Development Bank for financing projects that promote a sustainable and socially fair energy transition;

9.5. promote local production of clean energy by private and public stakeholders, notably through local co-operative initiatives;

9.6. eliminate public subsidies for fossil fuels and scale down public investment in such sources of energy;

9.7. foster sustainable mobility by improving public transport infrastructure, accessibility and affordability, encouraging walking and cycling, and accelerating the shift towards shared mobility and clean vehicles;

9.8. with a view to shielding vulnerable members of society from energy poverty, consider using structural measures such as:

9.8.1. price caps and tax reductions to offset the effect of spikes in energy prices;

9.8.2. targeted payments and income support for the most vulnerable;

9.8.3. grants to help implement housing renovation schemes and facilitate the acquisition of electric vehicles;

9.8.4. bans on the disconnection of vulnerable users from the energy supply;

9.8.5. professional training schemes to enable workers to acquire new skills and access "green jobs" in the energy sector;

9.9. involve citizens and municipalities in the shaping and implementation of local energy partnerships, in order to empower them as "prosumers" (producers-consumers);

9.10. develop socially fair green taxation schemes that favour transition to clean energy by stimulating investment and shifting the financial burden onto polluting activities and away from green solutions;

9.11. engage in regional cross-border projects aimed at optimising interconnections, improving network stability and guaranteeing mutual support in situations of disruption in the energy supply;

9.12. invest in back-up and storage capacity to manage fluctuations in renewable energy supply and demand;

9.13. support job creation in sectors that underpin the transition to a sustainable energy system and set up social transition funds to help employees to move from fossil-fuel based sectors to clean sectors;

9.14. conduct regular and independent energy audits at the national level to track progress and ensure accountability in the clean energy transition;

9.15. provide continued technical, material and financial support to Ukraine for the restoration, renewal and modernisation of its civilian energy systems. Such support should prioritise decentralised, renewable and resilient energy solutions, helping to rebuild Ukraine's energy sector in line with European clean energy goals and to ensure the population's access to electricity, heating and critical services;

9.16. strongly condemn any military aggression targeting civilian energy infrastructure and support co-ordinated efforts to hold perpetrators accountable under international law.