



Recommendation 339 (1962)¹

European energy problems

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

Considering that abundant supplies of energy are a prerequisite for the functioning of the economy ;

Believing that the expansion of economic activity in Western Europe will be usefully served by making the necessary energy available at low cost, and by allowing the consumer freedom to select the particular form of energy best suited to his requirements ;

Basically endorsing the conclusions of the Report of the Energy Advisory Committee of OEEC published in January 1960 and entitled Towards a New Energy Pattern for Europe (the Robinson Report) ;

Convinced that economic and technical developments in the energy field urgently demand a greater integration of energy supplies and policies in Western Europe as a whole,

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers urge member Governments to take into account in formulating and implementing their energy policies, the following proposals :

1. That the efforts hitherto devoted to improving the techniques of energy forecasting should be pressed forward with vigour, as it would be a grave mistake if the present abundance of energy were to lead to any relaxation of the efforts currently being made in this field by OECD ;
2. That, bearing in mind that the large and increasing part of Western Europe's energy needs is being met by imports, emphasis should be placed on formulating global rather than purely Western European energy balance-sheets ;
3. That, since in the longer term an increasing part of Western Europe's energy needs is likely to be met by nuclear power, member Governments should be encouraged to deploy the necessary scientific and technical effort to enable them to take advantage of nuclear power as and when it becomes competitive with other forms of energy, notably through co-operation within and between ENEA, Euratom and the International Atomic Energy Agency ;
4. That closer co-operation between member Governments in the peaceful uses of atomic energy is urgently desirable if waste of time and money, and duplication of effort are to be reduced ;
5. That, bearing in mind that nuclear energy is virtually already with us, it would be wrong to base national energy policies on the supposition that there need be any anxiety in the foreseeable future over the possibility of Western Europe's running short of energy either through the exhaustion of exploitable reserves of oil or because of lack of ability to earn the necessary foreign currency to pay for oil imports ;
6. That, since the practical problem of "security" over oil supplies is mainly one of the risk of sudden interference with supply routes and the curtailment or cutting off of supplies in circumstances of political tension falling short of war, the required security is best provided by an approach based on diversification of sources of supply, including an active policy of prospecting for oil and natural gas in Western Europe itself, by the maintenance of reserve tanker tonnage in excess of normal day-to-day requirements so as to provide the possibility of rapidly switching to alternative sources and/or supply

1. Assembly debate on 25th September 1962 (17th Sitting) (see [Doc. 1463](#), Report of the Economic Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25th September 1962 (17th Sitting).



routes, by the holding of ample stocks in consumer countries to tide over any temporary dislocation, and not by seeking safeguards from possible future interruptions in supply by aiming at greater self-sufficiency ;

7. That in this context Western European countries should pay close attention to the need to avoid allowing excessive dependence to be placed on imports of oil from the Soviet bloc ;
8. That a stable and prosperous coal industry in Western Europe can only be conceived on the basis of an orderly reduction over the next decade in the overall current level of coal production in the area ;
9. That, none the less, for Governments forthwith to permit, in any Western European country where there is currently a substantial production of coal, unrestricted competition between indigenous Western European coal, on the one hand, and imported coal and oil, on the other, would be utterly irresponsible and productive of disastrous social consequences ;
10. That, if stability and prosperity in Western Europe's coal industry based on an orderly reduction in output of Western European coal are to be achieved, there must be :
 - a. continued interim protection to the coal industry ; and
 - b. a vigorous policy to compensate, to retain, and to resettle miners who are displaced as a result of reorganisation ;
11. That the necessary interim protection to Western Europe's coal industry should not be achieved by measures which tend to raise the price of energy ;
12. That member Governments should (subject to the interim measures referred to above) be invited to re-examine their systems of taxation, and their regulations in the energy field with a view to fully implementing the recommendations made by the Robinson Commission with regard to energy taxation, and to arriving at a common policy ;
13. That, having regard to the economies to be achieved by increased long-term exchanges of electrical power across national frontiers in Western Europe, OECD, together with the professional international organisations involved, be urged to pursue by all appropriate means the examination of the further steps which can be taken on a long-term and permanent basis in this field, having regard to the ever-increasing interdependence of the economies of Western European countries generally.

The Assembly further requests the Committee of Ministers :

- a. to forward the above recommendations and the accompanying Report to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development for consideration and appropriate action ; and
- b. to transmit the above views and the accompanying Report to member Governments of the Council of Europe for study with a request that they inform the Consultative Assembly of their views on the various recommendations.