POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON ENABLE.EU FINDINGS

Europe is building its clean energy future. While European companies deploy new solutions and policymakers develop a new legal framework, it is essential to consider citizens' energy behaviours in the energy transition. The Horizon 2020 ENABLE.EU project attempts to understand the key drivers of individual and collective energy choices. At the governance level, we investigated energy policies and the challenges to perform the energy transition in European countries. We also looked at how companies react to energy policies and how citizens and households make choices in terms of electricity consumption and production, heating and mobility.

Based on research led in eleven European countries, this brief proposes a selection of recommendations to enable the transition towards a low-carbon future[1].

Governing the energy transition

EU public authorities should:

- Set an example by implementing the sustainable actions they advocate: for example, renovating EU institutional buildings and switching to renewable energy suppliers, eliminating flights for short distances and developing a public fleet of clean vehicles.
- Develop a single online portal that provides:
    - European households with credible information in all EU languages about clean energy solutions, including solar panels, heat pumps, energy efficiency, etc. This could take the format of an application easily accessible on a smartphone.
    - European cities, regions and States with the possibility to share their experiences, develop partnerships and learn from one another in the field of energy transition policies (e.g. renovation, mobility, prosuming).
- Finance activities and provide tools to promote energy and climate education in schools. As a first step, the EU could implement such changes in the European Schools it funds (e.g. in Brussels where children of EU civil servants go).

EU and national public authorities should:

- Provide adequate training for professionals in the field of the energy transition (e.g. installation of heat pumps and solar PVs, energy efficiency jobs). At the EU level, this can be supported by adding a green component to the Erasmus Pro programme for apprentices.

1. This brief is based on a longer version of recommandations (D8.6) that will be available online at the end of October.

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- Ensure that human resources (e.g. in terms of length of contracts and when relevant, workload and remuneration) allocated to the management of national and local energy policies are consistent with the challenges of energy policy-making.
- Support the implementation of bottom-up approach and wider stakeholders' involvement in the design and implementation of climate and energy policies, particularly in Central and Eastern European States, including with the aim to enhance the management of general innovation policies in these countries.
- Make direct links between SET Plan priorities and targets into the 2030 climate and energy framework, 2050 low-carbon framework and EU R&I Missions.

Decarbonising the industry

The European Commission should:

- Further work with Member States and regions to provide retraining and adequate unemployment benefits for workers in industries that suffer from the energy transition. This can build on the experience of the Coal Regions in Transition Platform.
- Study how to direct energy efficiency policies at SMEs in order to exploit an as yet untapped potential for cost-efficient improvements.
- See how it could target energy efficiency policies and incentives for low-carbon equipment at new firms while they still have to decide upon which machines to buy.

Energy efficiency in electricity and heating consumption at home

European and national authorities should:

- Steer funding towards the deep renovation of buildings, in order to achieve large-scale improvements in the energy efficiency of dwellings.
- Establish restrictions on the rental of dwellings with low energy efficiency ratings when there are public schemes helping owners to renovate the dwelling.
- Put a stronger emphasis on the promotion of renewable energies for heating (not only for electricity), with technologies such as heat pumps, biomass boilers and solar heating (e.g. through visible support schemes).
- Support cities in the organisation of community meetings (e.g. neighbours, networks, condominiums) to discuss best energy practices to save energy and provide positive feedback about behaviour change.
- Support the further development of programmes for local energy advisors to support energy-poor households. Trusted interlocutors can help households identify the available schemes that best address their situation. This could also be done through discussion groups for energy-poor households to share experience and seek support and could be a task of the EU Energy Poverty Observatory.

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- While monitoring the proper implementation of the Clean energy package, ensure that consumption data on the energy bill are compared to the consumption of similar households or previous periods.
- Steer EU funding, especially innovation, regional and cohesion funds, to support the uptake of innovative energy saving and energy conservation measures.

From consumers to prosumers

The European Commission should:

- Further engage Member States to facilitate access to solar panels technology by reducing transaction costs (e.g. simplification of the bureaucracy, support in assessing the suitability of solar to the household's circumstances and in selecting the products and installers, minimisation of the burden linked to registration and monitoring of the systems) and by providing subsidies, especially for low-income households.
- Encourage public authorities and businesses to advertise energy technologies, such as solar panels, in a more diversified way to reach a larger audience, i.e. showing more women using the technology, underlining both economic and environmental aspects to also appeal to a public less interested in the technological dimension.
- Allocate EU funding to the creation of video games/apps to raise awareness of sustainable behaviours, such as prosuming. This could take the form of a mobile phone video game targeting specific groups, e.g. young parents or low/middle-income women, that may ease the transition to more sustainable behaviours, incl. prosuming.

National and local authorities should:

- Develop 'hands on workshops' for children and adults on how to use technologies to produce energy at home.

Towards a low-carbon mobility

European Institutions, national and local authorities and companies should:

- Develop initiatives that encourage Europeans to try out sustainable behaviours, such as free public transport days, days without cars in city centres and electric car-sharing services.
- Invest more in clean public transport and trains (i.e. fleets and infrastructure).

EU and national authorities should:

- Introduce higher taxes on more polluting fuels. EU legislation should tax polluting activities like aviation.

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The European Commission should:

- Propose strict rules for the advertisement of polluting products - e.g. gasoline and diesel cars. This could build on existing rules for other products that have an impact on health, such as tobacco.

National authorities, regions and cities should:

- Develop more projects that integrate public transport and transport sharing services (e.g. bikes, scooters, cars) in one application (i.e. Mobility as a Service).
- Provide incentives for users of private cars to switch to car-sharing services (as long as they do not foster a shift from public transport and soft modes to shared cars). Such incentives can be financial as well as non-financial incentives (e.g. access to faster lanes/bus lanes, easier access to city centre, reserved parking slots).

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