

Norwegian preliminary views on streamlining of planning and reporting obligations as part of Energy Union governance

1. Introduction

Reference is made to the Commission's consultation on streamlining of planning and reporting obligations, as part of the Energy Union governance.

Norway welcomes the opportunity to express preliminary views on the shaping of the future governance system of the Energy Union.

Based on the EEA Agreement, Norway is part of the internal energy market, although not directly part of the EU 2030 climate and energy framework. The governance system may affect Norway, depending on the incorporation of EU legal acts into the EEA Agreement, and the final design of the system. How, and to what extent, will need to be considered at a later stage. Reference is also made to the ongoing dialogue between Norway and the EU regarding the joint fulfilment of our climate commitments for 2030. An agreement between Norway and the EU on joint fulfilment of our climate commitments may imply that some of the legislative proposals may also be relevant to Norway.

Norway notices the importance of a good governance system to safeguard fulfilment of targets and to promote coherent and consistent climate and energy policies. The governance system should be flexible, but reliable, and an efficient tool for the EU to reach its 2030 energy and climate targets. The target of emission reductions is particularly important towards 2030, as well as in a long-term perspective.

We share the opinion that a governance system should be designed without setting binding national targets on energy efficiency and renewable energy. Member States' rights to determine their energy mix must be respected in accordance with earlier decisions on the 2030 energy and climate policy framework.

Norway agrees that regional cooperation in the EU/EEA is an important building block in the Energy Union process, and we should apply the best practices available in future cooperation on regional level. Norway stresses that the regional cooperation as part of governance should be bottom-up and voluntary. Today's cooperation in the Nordic region ensures good information flow on best practices between neighbouring states.

2. Main message on planning and reporting system

Norway recognizes the need for a reliable and transparent system for assessing the progress made towards reaching the EU energy and climate targets. The fundamental purpose of the new planning and reporting system should be to fulfil Energy Union objectives in a coherent and consistent manner.

The plans and reports should be good tools for the EU to assess the progress towards adopted EU targets. However, it is also important that they are designed to be useful tools for individual Member States when they implement and assess their national policy.

The EU should in its elaboration of the Energy Union governance reflect on how a "one plan and report" concept could give added value for the Member States. The EU should also look for simplification and increased efficiency for the Member States. There is a comprehensive reporting system in place today, through a large number of legislative acts. Not all these reporting processes are adequate tools for monitoring the attainment of the Energy Union goals. It should therefore be considered carefully which legislative acts should be part of a streamlined reporting system.

Planning and reporting are two distinct activities and one may consider different requirements for these activities. But for both planning and reporting, reliable data is crucial. The core of a reliable and transparent governance system should hence be a solid statistical fundament. Focus must be on developing methodology for measuring real and factual developments and eliminate sources of error, solid data collection and reliable reporting systems. This is essential if we are to measure and evaluate effects of policies and measures. If possible, calculation methodology and default values should be standardised across directives to a larger extent.

The Commission should thus focus on establishing good methods for reliable reporting of essential data. This forms the basis for evaluating whether the development is on the right track. It is our view that the streamlining should focus on creating reliable data sets and developing good analytic techniques for measuring and comparison.

When it comes to energy policies, it is clear that there is not one solution that fits all. Different countries face different developments and challenges, and thus the right mix of policies will, and should, vary among different countries. One country might have specific features that will not be addressed by a general guideline, or best practice from another country. Reporting on policies should take into account existing specificities in energy systems and policies on regional and national level. Comparability across countries is important, as long as a holistic presentation of national policy is secured.

Conclusions

- Good statistics and good analytical tools are essential, and should construct the fundament of the reporting systems.
- The reporting system should be flexible, taking into account existing specificities in energy systems and policies on regional and national level.
- Energy Union governance should be cost effective, assist Member States to become more effective, ease the administrative burden and have an added value, and focus on how the measures contribute to reaching adopted targets.
- A stringent analysis of cost and benefits should be the basis for potential coordination of planning and reporting systems. The governance system should not necessarily be "all inclusive". A close evaluation of added value should be carried out.
- The plans and reports should be useful tools for the individual Member State as well as for the EU.