

Summary report

“REPowering Cyprus: Ensuring energy affordability, security of supply and sustainability”

Online event, 5 July 2022

The Energy stakeholder dialogue in Cyprus was organised by the Representation of the European Commission in Cyprus, the Directorate-General for Energy in cooperation with the Energy, Environment and Water Research Centre of the Cyprus Institute. The event was held on a digital platform and it was a great opportunity for EC policy makers and relevant stakeholders from the public and private energy sector to discuss REPowering Cyprus to ensure energy affordability, security of supply and sustainability. The main objective was to steer an open and constructive dialogue among participants in order to get feedback on the adopted and upcoming legislative initiatives, but also to address considerations of the stakeholders. The event was held in English and Greek with simultaneous interpretation. More than 55 people participated representing Energy stakeholders widely.

The session has started with the welcome from Christos Paschalides from the Representation of the EC and member of the Recovery and Resilience Task Force, followed by three speakers from the European Commission: Melina Boneva, member of the Recovery and Resilience Task Force who gave an overview of the REPowerEU plan; Ignacio Asenjo, policy officer for renewable energy who spoke about accelerating the renewable energy deployment and the new energy solar strategy and Feodora Petit, team leader for energy gas markets who presented the role of gas in the REPowerEU plan agenda.

Theodoros Zachariadis, Professor at the Energy, Environment and Water Research Centre of the Cyprus Institute, was the moderator with the speakers, the panellists and the stakeholders, on the challenges and the opportunities of the REPowerEU plan for Cyprus.

The discussion started with the brief interventions from three panellists from the academic, professional and non-governmental sectors in Cyprus.

Dr Venizelos Efthymiou, Chairman of the FOSS Research Centre for Sustainable Energy of the University of Cyprus put the focus on the importance of urgently implementing the European Green Deal and proceeding with the use of the REPowerEU package. Particularly, Cyprus could reduce its dependence on fossil – and expensive – fuels, and to pay off its advantage on the technological advancements on solar and wind energy use, through a long-term planning, by focusing on innovative solutions in the electricity networks, on making citizens energy active, and the flexibility from the demand side, especially in heating and cooling systems, storage systems, electro-mobility and not only. Moreover he expressed the wish to see a massive acceleration in the production of energy, as this will reduce the dependence of Cyprus and will reduce the cost of electricity, while pushing to green transition. It is important that the Recovery and Resilience Plan is used correctly for the enhancement of the needed innovation.

Dinos Nicolaidis, Chair of the Energy Policy Committee of the Scientific and Technical Chamber of Cyprus (ETEK) stressed the importance of CO₂ emissions in Cyprus. Half of them come from the transport sector, while 40% come from buildings and the tertiary sector. In the transport sector there is a big gap in

Cyprus, therefore there is a need to promote actions to use alternative fuel or promotion of electro-mobility, bicycling and walking. Regarding buildings, there are 300 thousand buildings that need thermal insulation. Cyprus could also promote photovoltaics more, with accelerating permits and development of solar parks. It is a big challenge, and the European Commission should push as much as possible for the implementation of these investments and reforms.

Charis Kordatos, Head of the Climate Change & Environment Department at the Cyprus Energy Agency focused his intervention on the National Energy and Climate Plan and the need for a stronger supervisory mechanism for ensuring its implementation. He focused on the importance of regions in developing energy reduction measures, adjusted to their areas. He supported that regions that have shown commitment to those targets should be rewarded. He suggested that taxation and other incentives should be introduced for energy reduction and cleaner energy production and the promotion of energy communities.

Points that were discussed include the high potential of Cyprus to use photovoltaics, and the need to make maximum use of financing instruments for the energy transition. Following the proposal for reduced import duties for photovoltaic panels, DG ENER explained that import duties are already low, at the lowest possible levels. Also, a criticism was made to the Commission, on not having included Cyprus in its planning for natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean, despite the agreement between the Commission, Israel and Egypt. The representative of the Technical Chamber of Cyprus asked the Commission to support Cyprus in being part of this planning, and to support the development of the relevant infrastructure.

Similarly, in the (slido) question “which is the biggest challenge regarding the implementation of the REPowerEU plan in Cyprus?” the replies were:

- Political will [a participant suggested the Commission provides a technical assistance to provide best practices on the direction and focus of the green transition]
- Procedures
- use of storage
- town planning
- grid reliability
- remoteness

