



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Energy Transition - promoting environmentally friendly forms of energy in the EU
- Information from the Austrian delegation

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Austrian delegation on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Environment Council meeting on 4 March 2016.

Energy Transition - promoting environmentally friendly forms of energy in the EU

Information from the Austrian delegation

At the Paris Climate Conference (COP21) in December 2015 a universal and legally binding agreement to tackle climate change was adopted with the long-term goal of keeping the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and the aim to limit the increase to 1.5°C.

Parties to the Paris Agreement aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible and to undertake rapid reductions thereafter, so as to achieve a balance between emissions and sinks of greenhouse gas emissions in the second half of the century. To this end, Parties are obliged to communicate climate action plans every five years that successively strengthen climate action over time.

Energy transition and environmentally friendly forms of energy will play a key role on the pathway to limiting global warming in the near future. This can be realized through the increased use of energy forms from renewable energy sources together with the control of energy consumption by energy savings and enhanced energy efficiency.

Austria has already gained substantial experience in producing energy from indigenous and renewable sources, including water, wind, solar and biomass. Environmentally friendly forms of energy show economic benefits and are able to contribute to both green jobs and green growth. This development is underpinned by the fact that renewable energy enjoys a growing share of the energy production of the Union.

With this initiative, Austria aims to start a discussion process with partners at EU level to promote a long-term system change towards safe, environmentally friendly and sustainable energy production. Since renewable energy will stay vital to tackle the challenges of climate change, more attention must be paid to this sector also at the level of EU primary law.

Without prejudice to the ongoing process on the follow-up to COP21, Austria proposes to enter a discussion on this initiative leading to a future EU Protocol (annexed to the TEU and TFEU) aiming to contribute to the following common objectives:

- enshrining the energy policy objectives in terms of renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy saving
 - promoting research and investment in the field of renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy saving
 - supporting Members States actions promoting environmentally friendly forms of energy.
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