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**Renewables are the solution to the energy crisis**

**At the European Economic and Social Committee's March plenary, EESC President Christa Schweng and** **European Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson reiterated the bloc's strong commitment to Europe's clean energy future.**

Increasingly investing in renewable energy sources as a way to secure a greener, safer and more affordable future for Europe. This is the common position that **Christa Schweng**, EESC President, and **Kadri Simson**, European Commissioner for Energy, highlighted at the EESC plenary session on 22 March 2023.

Mentioning that skyrocketing energy prices, inflation and low economic growth had led to a very challenging year for citizens and businesses, **Ms Schweng** said that "working towards a clean energy transition in Europe, accelerating the roll-out of renewables, affordable energy prices, and securing and diversifying our energy supply remain top priorities for the EESC".

Along the same lines, **Ms Simson** outlined the way forward for EU energy policy: "If I were to answer this in just one word, it would be 'renewables'. Because this is the Commission's top energy policy priority – to push forward and deliver on our renewable energy objectives".

For the first time ever, the EU is no longer dependent on Russian energy. Through gas supply diversification, reduced demand, increased efficiency and a stronger push on renewables, the EU has put an end to its massive dependency on Russia.

39% of the EU's electricity now comes from renewables. 2022 was a record year: the EU generated more electricity from wind and solar than from gas, with wind capacity increasing by 15 GW, and solar energy by 41 GW.

Looking ahead and assessing the Commission's [2022 State of the Energy Union report](https://commission.europa.eu/news/2022-state-energy-union-report-highlights-challenges-2022-10-18_en#:~:text=The%202022%20State%20of%20the,Europe's%20long%2Dterm%20climate%20goals.), the EU has to take more action towards strategic autonomy in the field of energy, and invest more in renewables than has ever been done before. EESC member **Andrés Barceló Delgado** believes that there are still too many political declarations and not enough concrete content in the Commission's plans.

**Séamus Boland**, president of the EESC's Civil Society Organisations Group, pointed out that for the energy transition to be successful, a citizen-based approach with the constant involvement of civil society organisations is vital.

According to the EESC opinion on the [2022 State of the Energy Union](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/state-energy-union-2022) drafted by **Marcin Nowacki**, **Angelo Pagliara** and **Lutz Ribbe** and adopted at plenary, Europeans should be placed at the centre of the Energy Union and be empowered and integrated into the market as real 'prosumers'.

In order to help consumers and business who suffered during the energy price crisis, **Angelo Pagliara** and **Thomas Kattnig** urged the Commission to make progress on the issue of windfall profits, and use them to uphold the social aspects of the energy transition and to re-skill the workforce.

**Baiba Miltoviča**, president of the EESC Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN), underlined the importance of ensuring a common EU answer to the energy price crisis, stressing that many Member States had promoted different measures at national level, each producing different results.

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*The European Economic and Social Committee represents the various economic and social components of organised civil society. It is an institutional consultative body established by the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Its consultative role enables its members, and hence the organisations they represent, to participate in the EU decision-making process.*

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