European Energy Forum

Information Bulletin

MEP Mauri Pekkarinen
Active Member of the EEF

New Online Energy Debates
on the EEF Programme

EEF End of the Year
Virtual Drink

Summary of past
Online Energy Debates

On the EEF Programme

Offshore Renewable Energy: how can wind power contribute?

10 December; 10:00—11:15 a.m. (CET)
Online Energy Debate via Webex—registration required

EEF End of the Year Virtual Drink

16 December; 16.30—17.30 (CET)
Virtual Toast via Webex—registration required

EEF Members updates

MEP Mauri Pekkarinen becomes Active Member of the European Energy Forum

MEP Mauri Pekkarinen is in the Renew Europe group and represents the delegation of the Finnish Centre Party in the European Parliament. Mr Pekkarinen was elected to the European Parliament in 2019. He is full Member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) and a Substitute Member of the Committee on Regional Development (REGI) and the Committee on Budgets (BUDG).

Previously, he has served as Minister in five Finnish governments. As Minister for Economic Affairs, he was responsible for energy, research and innovation for more than 8 years. He also served in the Parliament of Finland for 40 years. On energy issues, Mr Pekkarinen is especially interested in promoting the potential of renewable energy sources.

Energy transition and Digital revolution: towards a zero-carbon, consumer-driven future - 17 November 2020

Every year, the EEF joins forces with the European Internet Forum (EIF) to propose a discussion on the synergies between the Energy and the Digital sectors. The event was chaired by our 2 Vice-Presidents, MEPs Pilar del Castillo and Miapetra Kumpula-Natri.

The event was moderated by Pascale Verheust and Maria Rosa Gibellini, Directors General of respectively the EEF and the EIF.

MEP Pilar del Castillo, Vice-President of the EEF & EIF Chair, explained digital technologies can increase the energy system's efficiency and benefit consumers, giving them a central role as well as access to a wide range of competitive energy services. Yet along with benefits, there also come challenges linked to data access rights, privacy, cybersecurity, the digital sector's carbon footprint, and the need to guarantee interoperability of services and applications through standardisation. Creating a single smart energy market via digital tools remains key to decarbonise the economy.
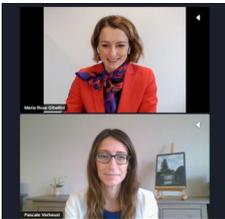
Miapetra Kumpula-Natri MEP, Vice-President of the EEF & EIF Steering Committee Member agreed that decarbonisation must be beneficial for consumers, who ask to be active players. As Rapporteur for the Data Strategy, MEP Kumpula-Natri noted that better data use and handling can greatly reduce GHG emissions throughout all sectors. Still, data growth and processing need to be developed in a way that avoids any substantial increase in the ICT sector's carbon footprint. More transparent data CO_2 emissions measurements and greener data storage techniques are also to be developed.

Mark van Stiphout, Deputy Head of Unit C2, DG ENER, reaffirmed the role of digital technologies in running the energy system efficiently and enabling RES integration. Cybersecurity of the grid, energy consumption of the IT sector, uptake of digital technologies in the energy system, and the latter's shift from products to services are key dimensions to consider. The energy system will rely more on the flexibility at the end consumer-side as enabler of RES integration. Resulting challenges related to its business model and functioning will need to be tackled, e.g. by the Digitalisation of Energy Action Plan, coming next year.

According to **Stefan Kapferer, Member of the Elia Group Management Board and CEO of 50Hertz, Elia Group**, decentralisation and digitalisation will be fundamental in reaching climate neutrality by 2050. The energy consumers' role is changing twice: by producing their own energy, consumers become both prosumer and an integrated part of the value chain. They act as resources of flexibility, which is indispensable for integrating more renewables. A decentralised, consumer-driven energy system does not eliminate the need for grid infrastructure. The EU electricity demand increases so rapidly that cross-border interconnections will be key for security of supply, ensuring electricity flows where needed. As the energy system gets more complex, digital technologies become crucial as the only tool to manage it with.

Dorothée D'Herde, Head of Sustainable Business, Vodafone, explained how connected devices can be turned into connected intelligence and make systems smart if coupled with the power of machine learning and AI. Their potential in the energy sector is huge both on the demand and supply side. One main element to address is the digital sector's footprint, which is mainly electricity. Several technologies could come to help, as the use of dynamic thermal management systems and machine learning algorithms to control the cooling in technology centres. If unleashed together, the digital and green transitions will make decarbonisation a reality.

Annika Hedberg, Head of Sustainable Prosperity for Europe programme, EPC hopes the recognition of the link between energy and digital will translate in an alignment of the sectors' policies and practices. Better management of data and deployment of digital solutions can help green the economy, also by enhancing the monitoring, implementation and enforcement of the needed rules. Among available solutions, blockchain is an interesting tool enabling e.g. the uptake of RES, monitoring of energy prices, and origin of energy certification. For digital solutions to effectively contribute to the energy transition, the ICT sector should itself be energy efficient and powered with clean energy.