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COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of 18.6.2019

**on the draft integrated National Energy and Climate Plan of Ireland covering the period
2021-2030**

{SWD(2019) 230 final}

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

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on the draft integrated National Energy and Climate Plan of Ireland covering the period 2021-2030

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action, amending Regulations (EC) No 663/2009 and (EC) No 715/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Directives 94/22/EC, 98/70/EC, 2009/31/EC, 2009/73/EC, 2010/31/EU, 2012/27/EU and 2013/30/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Directives 2009/119/EC and (EU) 2015/652 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹, and in particular Article 9(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1999, each Member State is required to submit to the Commission a draft of its integrated national energy and climate plan covering the period from 2021 to 2030 in accordance with Article 3(1) and Annex I of that Regulation. The first drafts of integrated national energy and climate plans had to be submitted by 31 December 2018.
- (2) Ireland submitted its draft integrated national energy and climate plan on 21 December 2018. The submission of this draft plan represents the basis and first step of the iterative process between the Commission and Member States for the purpose of the finalisation of the integrated national energy and climate plans and their subsequent implementation.
- (3) Pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1999, the Commission is required to assess the draft integrated national energy and climate plans. The Commission made a comprehensive assessment of the Irish draft integrated national energy and climate plan, taking into consideration the relevant elements of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999. This assessment² is published alongside the present recommendation. The below recommendations are based on that assessment..
- (4) In particular, the Commission's recommendations may address (i) the level of ambition of objectives, targets and contributions with a view to collectively achieving the Energy Union objectives and, in particular, the Union's 2030 targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency as well as the level of electricity interconnectivity that the Member State aims for in 2030; (ii) policies and measures relating to Member State- and Union-level objectives and other policies and measures of potential cross-border relevance; (iii) any additional policies and measures that might be required in the integrated national energy and climate plans; (iv) interactions between and consistency of existing and planned policies and measures included in the integrated

¹ OJ L 328, 21.12.2018, p. 1.

² SWD(2019) 230.

national energy and climate plan within one dimension and among different dimensions of the Energy Union.

- (5) In developing its recommendations, the Commission considered, on the one hand, the need to add up certain quantified planned contributions of all Member States in order to assess the ambition at Union level, and, on the other hand, the need to provide adequate time for the Member State concerned to take due consideration of the Commission's recommendations before finalising its integrated national energy and climate plan.
- (6) The Commission's recommendations with regard to the Member States' renewable ambitions are based on a formula set out in Annex II of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 which is based on objective criteria.
- (7) With regard to energy efficiency, the Commission's recommendations are based on the assessment of the national level of ambition put forward in the draft integrated national energy and climate plan, compared to the collective level of efforts needed to reach the Union's targets, taking into account the information provided on specific national circumstances, where relevant. The final national contributions in the area of energy efficiency should reflect the cost-effective potential for energy savings and be supported with a robust long-term building renovation strategy and measures to implement the energy savings obligation stemming from Article 7 Directive 2012/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council³. Member States should also demonstrate that they have properly taken into account the energy efficiency first principle, by explaining notably how energy efficiency contributes to the cost-effective delivery of the national goals of a competitive low-carbon economy, security of energy supply and to address energy poverty.
- (8) The Governance Regulation requires Member States to provide a general overview of the investment needed to achieve the objectives, targets and contributions set out in the integrated national energy and climate plan, as well as a general assessment on the sources of that investment. The national energy and climate plans should ensure the transparency and predictability of national policies and measures in order to ensure investment certainty.
- (9) In parallel, as part of the 2018-2019 European Semester cycle, the Commission has put a strong focus on Member States' energy and climate related investment needs. This is reflected in the 2019 Country Report for Ireland⁴ and in the Commission's recommendation for a Council Recommendation to Ireland⁵, as part of the European Semester process. The Commission took into account the latest European Semester findings and recommendations in its assessment of the draft integrated national energy and climate plans. The Commission's recommendations are complementary to the latest country-specific recommendations issued in the context of the European Semester. Member States should also ensure that their integrated national energy and climate plans take into consideration the latest country-specific recommendations issued in the context of the European Semester.

³ Directive 2012/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on energy efficiency, amending Directives 2009/125/EC and 2010/30/EU and repealing Directives 2004/8/EC and 2006/32/EC (OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 1).

⁴ SWD (2019) 1006 final.

⁵ COM (2019) 507 final of 5.6.2019.

- (10) In addition, the Governance Regulation requires each Member State to take due account of any recommendations from the Commission to its draft integrated national energy and climate plan to be submitted by 31 December 2019 and, if the Member State concerned does not address a recommendation or a substantial part thereof, that Member State should provide and make public its reasons.
- (11) Where applicable, Member States should report the same data in their integrated national energy and climate plans and updates in later years as they report to Eurostat or the European Environment Agency. The use of the same source and, where available, of European statistics, is also essential to calculate the baseline for modelling and projections. Using European statistics will allow for a better comparability of the data and the projections used in the integrated national energy and climate plans.
- (12) All elements of Annex I of the Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 are to be included in the final integrated national energy and climate plan. In this context, the macroeconomic and, to the extent feasible, the health, environmental, employment and education, skills and social impacts of the planned policies and measures should be assessed. The public and other stakeholders are to be engaged in the preparation of the final integrated national energy and climate plan. These and other elements are described in detail in the staff working document published alongside this Recommendation⁶.
- (13) In the final plan, Ireland should build on the draft plan's considerations of policy interactions by elaborating on the synergies between the decarbonisation, energy security and internal energy market dimensions. One such issue is the impact of the planned coal phase-out and increasing levels of renewable energy on energy security and electricity system generation adequacy. Another issue to elaborate is the compatibility of the planned increase in biomass use with the plan to increase removals from land use, land use change and forestry. The consideration of the energy efficiency first principle in setting criteria for renewables support eligibility and in proposing policies in the energy security and internal energy market dimensions is another important element to be addressed in the final plan. Similarly, the objectives under the research, innovation and competitiveness dimension need to underpin the efforts planned for the other Energy Union dimensions.
- (14) The final integrated national energy and climate plan would benefit from presenting a comprehensive analysis on where the low-carbon technologies sector is currently positioned in the global market, highlighting areas of competitive strengths and potential challenges and pointing at measurable objectives for the future and policies and measures to achieve them, making appropriate links to enterprise and industrial policy. It could also benefit from consideration of the role of circular economy, referring to national strategies and action plans and raising their benefits and potential trade-offs in terms of greenhouse gas emission reduction.
- (15) The Commission's recommendations to Ireland are underpinned by the assessment of Ireland's draft integrated national energy and climate plan which is published alongside this Recommendation⁷.

⁶ SWD(2019) 230.

⁷ SWD(2019) 230.

HEREBY RECOMMENDS IRELAND TAKES ACTION TO:

1. Put forward additional measures, notably in the building and transport sectors, to cost-effectively reduce the significant projected gap to its 2030 greenhouse gas target for sectors not covered by the EU emissions trading system of -30 % compared to 2005.
2. Put forward, as Ireland's contribution to the Union's 2030 target for renewable energy, a share of renewable energy of at least 31% as indicated by the formula in Annex II under Regulation (EU) 2018/1999. Include an indicative trajectory in the final integrated national energy and climate plan that reaches all the reference points pursuant to Article 4(a)(2) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 in accordance with that share, in view of the need to increase the level of efforts for reaching this target collectively. Put forward detailed and quantified policies and measures that are in line with the obligations laid down in Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and Council⁸, to enable a timely and cost-effective achievement of this contribution. Ensure that the renewable energy target for 2020 set in Annex I of Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁹ is fully met and maintained as a baseline from 2021 onwards, and explain how it intends to meet and maintain such baseline share. Put forward trajectories and corresponding measures in the heating and cooling sector and the transport sector to meet the indicative target included in Article 23 of Directive (EU) 2018/2001 and the transport target in Article 25 of Directive (EU) 2018/2001. Put in place measures to overcome administrative burden and detailed information on measures on the enabling frameworks for renewable self-consumption and renewable energy communities, in line with Articles 21 and 22 of Directive (EU) 2018/2001.
3. Substantially increase its energy efficiency ambition by lowering the level of both final and primary energy consumption in absolute terms in view of the need to increase the level of efforts to reach the Union's 2030 energy efficiency target. Support this with policies and measures that would deliver additional energy savings by 2030. Express the final contribution as a specific value for both primary and final energy consumption. Detail the underlying methodology to estimate energy savings. An indication of required investments to implement energy efficiency policies is also needed.
4. Specify the measures supporting the energy security objectives on diversification and reduction of energy dependency in particular in the gas and oil sector in light of uncertainties related to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

⁸ Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (OJ L 328, 21.12.2018, p. 82–209).

⁹ Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC (OJ L 140, 5.6.2009, p. 16–62).

5. Further elaborate on the national objectives and funding targets research, innovation and competitiveness, specifically related to the Energy Union, to be achieved between now and 2030, so that they are readily measurable and fit for purpose to support the implementation of targets in the other dimensions of the its integrated national energy and climate plan. Underpin such objectives with specific and adequate policies and measures, including those to be developed in cooperation with other Member States, such as the Strategic Energy Technology Plan.
6. Build on the framework of the North Seas Energy Cooperation and the Clean Energy for EU Islands Initiative in order to deliver on the renewables target and ensure timely implementation of ongoing interconnection projects. In light of the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, provide for measures to ensure continued regional cooperation with the UK on emergency preparedness and response for electricity, and security of supply for gas and oil.
7. List actions undertaken and plans to phase-out energy subsidies, in particular for fossil fuels.
8. Present the impacts on air pollution for the various scenarios, providing underpinning information, and considering synergies and trade-off effects.
9. Integrate just and fair transition aspects better, notably by providing more details on social, employment and skills impacts of planned policies and measures. The final plan should particularly address the impact of the transition on the populations living in carbon-intensive regions. Complement the approach to addressing energy poverty issues with indicative objectives for reducing energy poverty as required by the Regulation (EU) 2018/1999.

Done at Brussels, 18.6.2019

For the Commission
Miguel Arias Cañete
Member of the Commission

