

## **APREN: accelerating renewables is the only way to ensure "energy independence and security"**

*APREN applauds measures set out in the REPowerEU plan presented by the European Commission last week.*

[APREN – the Portuguese Renewable Energy Association](#) welcomes the European Commission's REPowerEU strategy, which provides for a focus on renewable energy and gases, such as green hydrogen, to address the energy crisis caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

REPowerEU, presented on 18<sup>th</sup> of May, consists of a package of measures aimed at reducing European dependence on fossil fuels, particularly those from Russia. The plan will reduce Russian natural gas imports by a third before next winter, and in full by 2027.

For APREN this is a decisive step towards ending Russia's energy dependence on natural gas before 2030 and, at the same time, moving forward on the decarbonization strategy that Europe, like the rest of the world, will have to follow.

"Accelerating the consumption of renewable energy is the only way to ensure energy independence and security of supply, while ensuring that a brake is placed on climate change," said the CEO from APREN, Pedro Amaral Jorge. He welcomes the fact that the European Commission has placed renewables at the heart of a European energy security plan.

The Commission proposes to increase the 2030 target for final energy consumption from renewable sources from the current 40 % (mentioned on the "FIT for 55" package) to 45 %. This increase in ambition will create the framework for other initiatives, namely the European Union's specific solar energy strategy, which aims to double the installed capacity of photovoltaics by 2025 and reach 750 GW by 2030. The plan also provides for an initiative to produce solar energy on the roofs.

In what wind power is concerned, the European Union wants to rise from 190 GW of power currently installed to 480 GW over the next eight years.

The new European strategy promises to remove the barriers that were stopping the expansion of solar and wind power plants. The new law will include the principle that the installation of renewable projects, such as centralized and distributed power plants, electrolysers, energy storage systems, as well as electricity grid infrastructure, will become projects of public interest.

The European Commission also proposes to simplify procedures and shorten licensing deadlines in areas that may be indicated by Member States as preferred for renewables.

"The ambition of these objectives must be accompanied by a simplification of procedures", explains Pedro Amaral Jorge, who stresses, however, that the increase in power will have to protect biodiversity and involve local communities, as has been being the practice in renewable projects.

Other aspects of the strategy are setting European internal production targets of 10 million tons of renewable hydrogen and imports of 10 million tons by 2030, to replace natural gas, coal and oil in industrial sectors and transport, that are difficult to decarbonise.

The European wind industry has already shared a set of proposals to simplify and accelerate renewables including, for example, the digitalization of processes and the application of the "consent by silence principle" to all renewable energy projects.

In addition to the accelerated deployment of renewable energies to replace fossil fuels in homes, industry, and electricity production, the REPowerEU plan measures also provide for the strengthening of energy efficiency, increasing the goal in the Energy Efficiency Directive by between 9 % and 13 % by 2030, as well as the diversification of natural gas supply.

REPowerEU also proposes to unlock European funding, namely through the fund that finances the Recovery and Resilience Projects. An investment of €10 billion is planned for missing interconnections in natural gas infrastructure.

With the measures of the new plan, Europe ends the dependence on Russian fossil fuels, "used as a weapon and costing European taxpayers around €100 billion a year, while contributing to the climate cause," says Pedro Amaral Jorge.

The Recovery and Resilience Mechanism is at the heart of the REPowerEU plan, as it will support coordinated solutions for cross-border and national infrastructure planning and financing, as well as energy projects and reforms.

Lisbon, 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2022.

#### **About APREN**

[APREN – Portuguese Renewable Energy Association](#), is a non-profit association, established in October 1988, with the mission of coordinating and representing the common interests of its members in the promotion of Renewable Energies in the electricity sector.

APREN works with official governments and other similar entities, at national and international level, being an instrument for participation in energy and environmental policies through the use and valorization of natural resources for electricity production, namely in the fields of hydric, wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, biogas, and urban solid waste.