

EuropeOn Reaction Paper: Renewable Energy Directive

EuropeOn is the voice of electrical contractors and installers, the 1.8 million professionals implementing the energy transition by installing and maintaining electric technologies such as solar panels and EV charging infrastructure, or advising consumers on the best available clean energy technologies. We welcome the Fit for 55 Package as a turning point to reach climate neutrality while making the EU Green Deal our European growth strategy.

We are aware that the lack of workers and skills mismatches in our segment of activity are often pinpointed as being one of the “bottlenecks” to the acceleration of the green and digital transitions. This is a top concern for our members, who report difficulties hiring new talents while their order books are full. With this position paper, EuropeOn recommends that:

- **The EU must require Member States to assess the gap between available and needed installation professionals to achieve the EU’s climate and energy objectives.** This assessment will confront Member States with the pressing discrepancy in available personnel and the challenges they will face in the attainment of said targets. This assessment must be followed by implementing measures to close this gap and ensure compliance with EU targets. Otherwise, climate efforts will miss their objectives (RED, Article 18).
- **Member States shall ensure that trained and qualified installers are available in sufficient numbers for all technologies relying on renewable energy.** For the time being, this provision is limited to renewable heating and cooling (RED, Article 18(3))

The electrical contracting sector would have less difficulties hiring professionals provided that the energy transition agenda is more predictable. Therefore:

- **The 40% Renewable energy target must be binding at national level** (RED, Article 3 (1))
- **Permitting procedures must be simplified, e.g. by exempting rooftop photovoltaic from construction permits** (RED, Article 15)

1. Attracting skilled installers in sufficient numbers is key for a successful green and digital transition

EuropeOn welcomes the Commission’s endeavour to strengthen skills and training requirements in the RED. Indeed, through the [Skills4Climate campaign](#), EuropeOn and fellow European associations have been raising EU and national policymakers’ awareness on the need to intertwine the climate and skills agendas: no matter how high our ambitions for a green and digital transition are, we need skilled professionals (e.g. electrical installers) in sufficient numbers to implement this change.

The EU must require Member States to assess the gap between available and needed installation professionals to achieve the EU’s climate and energy objectives.

Justification: Across Europe, national associations of electrical contractors and installers report severe difficulties hiring new talents, while order books are full. With higher climate and energy targets, this situation is set to worsen if not tackled head-on.

Yet, Member States have not taken sufficient action to address this shortage by promoting the attractiveness of technical education and electrical careers. To begin with, they have not assessed the potentially dire consequences of lacking installation professionals on their climate and energy targets.

A first step is therefore to thoroughly estimate the gap between available and needed installation professionals. Such an assessment should be based on national projections for the roll out of renewable installations, and assess a short to medium time period (the next 5 - 10 years).

Quantifying the recruitment needs would help Member States take appropriate action in terms of career promotion and training facilities.

Proposal: Add a paragraph under Article 18: “*Member States shall assess by 31 December 2024 and every four years thereafter the gap between available and needed renewable installations professionals and shall make the assessment and recommendations thereof publicly available.*”

Member States shall ensure that trained and qualified installers are available in sufficient numbers for all technologies that can be powered by renewable energy.

Justification: We see as a positive development that the Commission holds Member States accountable on providing enough training programs and enough qualified installers.

However, this accountability is limited to renewable heating & cooling technologies. National electrical associations across Europe report shortfalls of installers for all clean energy technologies and for their efficient integration (e.g. combining solar photovoltaic with electric vehicles’ chargers, energy management and so on).

Proposal: The new provision set out in 18(3) should be broadened to “*the installation, operation and integration of equipment and systems for the use of heating, cooling and electricity from renewable sources*” (in line with Article 18(2)).

2. A predictable energy transition agenda is paramount to invest in the human capital behind a green and digital transition

The 40% Renewable energy target must be binding at national level.

Justification: the electrical contracting sector would have less difficulties hiring professionals if the energy transition agenda was more predictable. Setting binding targets at national level can help meeting our climate and skills agendas.

Proposal: Amend Article 3(1) to make the 40% target binding at national level.

Permitting procedures must be simplified by exempting rooftop photovoltaic from construction permits.

Justification: one major hurdle for the shift to renewable electricity, identified by all European associations representing the renewable energy ecosystem and backed by EuropeOn, is the lengthy and complex permit-granting processes. In particular, such procedures disincentivise rooftop PV installation, even though it should be a priority to develop demand-side flexibility and turn consumers into prosumers.

Proposal: Amend Article 15 so that, as a principle, rooftop photovoltaic is exempted from construction permits.