

VALLETTA 18 May 2017

POLITICAL DECLARATION on CLEAN ENERGY FOR EU ISLANDS

Inhabited EU islands are often well placed to employ innovative solutions and attract energy investments that integrate local renewable production, storage facilities and demand response in order to achieve interoperable, economic, environmentally friendly and sustainable energy systems, to implement the key priorities of the Clean Energy for all Europeans package;

Recognising that with their strong sense of community and their territorial potential, EU islands can be the architects of their own energy transition. We underline that several of them are already global frontrunners with innovative approaches for integrating variable renewable energy into energy systems and for reducing the emissions from transport, in particular with alternative fuels for transport both on the islands and for the connections to them;

Underlining that EU islands are very diverse and, inter alia, their location, geographic and climatic potential, size and population, provide specific opportunities and challenges that require tailor-made solutions;

Acknowledging that most EU islands face high energy costs and challenges regarding energy security of supply due to their geographic insularity, small economies of scale, and in many cases, reliance on imported fossil fuels and limited or lack of connection to the EU single energy market;

Noting that many EU islands still rely heavily on diesel fuel and oil to generate electricity, with significant negative impacts on emissions, the competitiveness of businesses, and the economy driven by the frequent use of administrative measures and financial aid to mitigate cost reflective high electricity prices for local consumers;

Taking into account that tourism is a key sector for many EU islands' economies, resulting in seasonal energy demand which puts a strain on natural resources and infrastructures;

Acknowledging that alternative fuels, indigenous renewable energy including marine energy, energy efficiency measures implemented with innovative solutions, and connection, where relevant, with the EU's electricity and gas networks are important drivers for sustainable and resilient economic growth and the development of local skills and jobs for the communities on EU islands;

Recognising that many islands and their marine waters are unique ecosystems that require special attention during infrastructure planning and development;

Highlighting, in the context of the 2015 Paris Climate agreement, the vulnerability of islands to climate change and the important role that a clean energy transition along with increased climate resilience plays to mitigate this risk;

Having regard, among other initiatives, to the European Parliament's resolution on the special situation of islands (2015/3014(RSP)) stressing the European islands' potential to contribute to strengthening sustainable development in the Union.

We:

- State our joint determination to further promote and support tailor-made clean energy transitions for islands, while preserving security of supply;
- Will work towards initiating a forum bringing together concerned Member States, representatives of islands, academic institutions, international and civil society organisations, and private sector stakeholders including investors, to share best practice in financial and regulatory tools and promoting best available technologies, with the aim to take action on the ground;
- Endeavour to support the Clean Energy for EU Islands Initiative with a perspective of a long term framework to promote replicable and scalable projects with funding, from private sector investors and where relevant existing EU funding, and technical assistance, to accelerate the clean energy transition on all EU islands; and
- Invite other Member States to join this declaration.

Political nature of the Declaration on Clean Energy for EU Islands

This document records a political intent alone. It does not establish any new legal commitments or replace or modify any existing legal obligations with regard to the signatories or third persons.