

Progress on renewables and energy efficiency is slowing across the EU, mostly due to rising energy consumption in transport, according to latest data from the European Environment Agency.

Renewable energy represented 17.4 % of the total energy mix in 2017, up from 17% the year before, according to preliminary data from the EEA, published on Monday (26 November).

Although the EU as a whole “remains on track” to reach its 20% renewable energy target by 2020, the pace in reaching that objective “was only up marginally”, the EEA said, warning of a general slowdown in the uptake of clean energy in Europe.

Progress has been particularly “insufficient” in meeting the 10% target for renewables in transport, the EEA noted in its updated assessment on the EU’s progress on renewable energy and energy efficiency targets.

“With 2020 approaching, the trajectories needed to meet the national targets are becoming steeper,” it warned.

According to the EEA, the declining pace of progress is mostly due to rising total energy consumption, “which caused the share of renewables in energy consumption to fall”.

Energy consumption began to increase in 2015, and the EEA’s preliminary estimates for 2017 indicate it is above the indicative trajectory for 2020.

Again, “rising energy consumption, particularly in the transport sector, is to blame for the slowdown,” according to the agency.

“While the EU as a whole remains on track to meet its 2020 targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase renewable energy use, recent increasing trends in energy consumption need to be reversed in order to meet the 2020 targets,” it added.

By 2020, the EU committed to source 20% of its energy needs from renewables, and reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 20% on 1990 levels. A similar 20% objective was adopted for energy efficiency, although that target is not legally binding on EU countries.

The European Union is currently finalising a new set of energy and climate targets for 2030, including new CO2 emission goals for cars and the EU’s first ever law to cut emissions from trucks.

On Wednesday, the European Commission will present new scenarios for 2050, including a net-zero emissions objective.

Source: euractiv.com