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WRITTEN ANSWER (Rule 130)

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Priority question

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SUBJECT: Renewable Generators Facing Unfair Competition in UK  
(please specify)

TEXT:

Since the arrival of the UK's majority Conservative government in May, renewable generators have come under an assault that is destroying jobs and tilting the energy playing-field against them.

- The government has decided to impose the Climate Change Levy (CCL) on renewable generators, which seems both illogical and punitive.
- Local communities will enjoy enhanced powers to challenge planning for windfarms but not for fracking installations; a policy introduced without consultation.
- Subsidies for wind turbines are being removed and subsidies for solar power are under review. Even projects with millions spent in development costs will not be able to access subsidies without full planning consent by 18 June 2015. Subsidies will continue for nuclear power.

Inconsistent policy with sudden changes is undermining the nascent renewables industry. Member states have the right to choose their energy mix, but Treaty law suggests this must be done within a framework of fair competition.

- Did the UK government consult the Commission over its decision to extend CCL to renewable generators, and what was the Commission's response?
- How does the UK's requirement to meet mandatory carbon reduction targets interact with its freedom to choose its energy mix?
- Does the Commission acknowledge the negative impact on renewable generators of frequent policy changes, and do these in themselves constitute the basis for a claim of unfair competition?

Jill Evans

Signature(s):

Date: 22/07/2015

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