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BETREFT Summary NCA audit report Energy policy: need for coherence

Energy policy: need for coherence. A look back at a decade of energy policy audits (2006-2015)

Published in December 2015

1 Conclusions

Emphasis in the energy policy changes with the government

The current energy policy focuses on three goals: affordability, reliability and sustainability. Looking back at energy policy, we can see that there has been little change over the past decade but the emphasis has been shifted by each new government.

Energy policy ambitions higher than achievements

We can also see that the focus on affordability and reliability has had reasonably good results but the results in the field of sustainability have not been so positive. Other EU member states are ahead of the Netherlands when it comes to the proportion of sustainable energy in the total energy supply.

Lack of coherence in energy policy

Our audits have found that the greening of energy policy has been held back by lack of coherence and prioritisation of the three policy goals. The three goals have not always been compatible with each other. Priorities have not been set for the three main goals nor for secondary goals, such as sustainable energy versus a reduction in CO2 emissions. Optimising one may be at the expense of the other. This might be unintentional but it might also be a deliberate choice. The politicians are responsible for the choices, of course, but their reasons must always be transparent so that parliament and the public are aware of the consequences. The absence of a coherent approach to the policy has consequences for its impact. Many of the instruments used to green energy policy are not effective or efficient



enough. Lessons have been learnt, however, from subsidy schemes for sustainable energy. The lack of a coherent approach to energy issues also influences the quality of supervision. The Minister of Economic Affairs' accountability to parliament is also open to improvement.

2/2

2 Recommendations

To improve the coherence of energy policy, the Minister of Economic Affairs should first operationalise the goals and specifically compare them against each other. He should then closely monitor his policy and adapt his ambitions, instruments or budget to any setbacks in its implementation. Finally, we recommend that more of the instruments selected be more compulsory in nature, especially regarding energy savings.

3 Response

The minister acknowledges the importance of coherence. It will be a central theme in the Energy Report 2015 and the forthcoming Energy Dialogue. He recognises our description of energy policy and thinks the emphasis we place on sustainability supports his ambition to have a completely sustainable energy supply in 2050.