Ireland needs to rebalance energy policy to better protect consumers against high prices and provide energy security during the Energy Transition

Dublin, 17th November 2025

The **Irish Academy of Engineering** has, today, published a report calling for energy policy to be rebalanced to better meet the needs of consumers and to provide national energy security:

Rebalancing Ireland's Energy Policy
The Energy Trilemma – Project Delivery – Authority & Accountability

Eliminating all GHG emissions from energy by 2050 is not achievable. Laws, carbon budgets, and policies to achieve this objective are demonstrably, and inevitably, failing. Energy prices, energy security, and long-term (25 year) planning of critical electricity infrastructure are being ignored. A new rebalanced policy approach is needed.

Consumers must be protected from increasing price levels in already high electricity bills. Cost benefit analysis in advance of future RESS and ORESS[1] schemes to determine, not only their effects on reducing emissions, but also their impacts on electricity prices is essential. There is a limit to the amount of renewables Ireland should have and it is far lower than the current policy target of 54,000 MW. Imports already provide a significant alternative to renewables, and more interconnectors are coming.

The effectiveness of retail competition in energy markets should be critically and transparently assessed. Consumers have been promised lower prices as renewables increase but this is not happening.

Eirgrid / ESB Networks jointly should be given both the authority and the accountability to deliver a masterplan - with unequivocal political and policy support - to deliver the hundreds of kilometres of new high voltage overhead transmission lines and the doubling in capacity of back-up generating plant that will be needed to enable the Energy Transition.

National energy security has been all but lost because of the singular focus in policy on reducing GHG emissions. Whilst it is welcome that the need for an LNG facility has been recognised, a much larger capacity facility than is currently proposed is required to provide both

[1] RESS: Renewable Electricity Support Scheme
ORESS: Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme

the diversity and security of supply needed to guarantee that peak demand for natural gas can be met out to 2050 and beyond. Paradoxically, as peak demand for natural gas rises, overall consumption - and related GHG emissions - will fall as renewables and imports increase to meet a doubling in electricity demand from 6,000 MW today to 12,000 MW by 2050.

Fossil fuels will continue to be required as the power source of last resort to enable the electrification of transport and heating and to offset the intermittency of renewables. This dependency cannot be wished away.

If the elimination of all energy-related GHG emissions by 2050 is not possible, emissions can still be significantly reduced. A rebalanced energy policy to better protect consumers and provide energy security will do more to reduce emissions and preserve economic welfare than the current failing policy approach.

Future energy policy needs to be pragmatic and informed by a balanced consideration of inescapable engineering and economic realities.

==== END ====

NOTE FOR EDITORS

1. Protecting consumers from high energy prices

The Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) has a key role in protecting the interests of consumers and it is important that it holds itself accountable by:

- Publishing an annual analysis of the costs - including the aggregate gross margin of electricity and gas retailers - which set the price of energy so that consumers can understand why electricity and gas prices are at the levels they are at.
- Critiquing the effectiveness of retail competition in the electricity and gas markets to determine whether the aggregate gross margin of multiple retailers results in any net benefit for consumers.
- Completing an assessment of the impact on consumer prices of future RESS and ORESS auctions before they are launched to determine whether they should proceed or not.
- Preparing projections of energy prices to provide an indication of their likely future trends.

2. Electricity imports are growing and more interconnectors are coming

a. Big electricity exporting countries have a lot of hydro and nuclear:

2024 *Imported: "+"* *Exported: "-"*	Electricity imported / exported	% of electricity imported / exported	% of electricity from nuclear and hydro
Ireland	**+ 5.1 TWh**	**+ 17%**	**2%**
Sweden	- 33.4 TWh	- 27%	67%
France	- 90.0 TWh	- 22%	80%

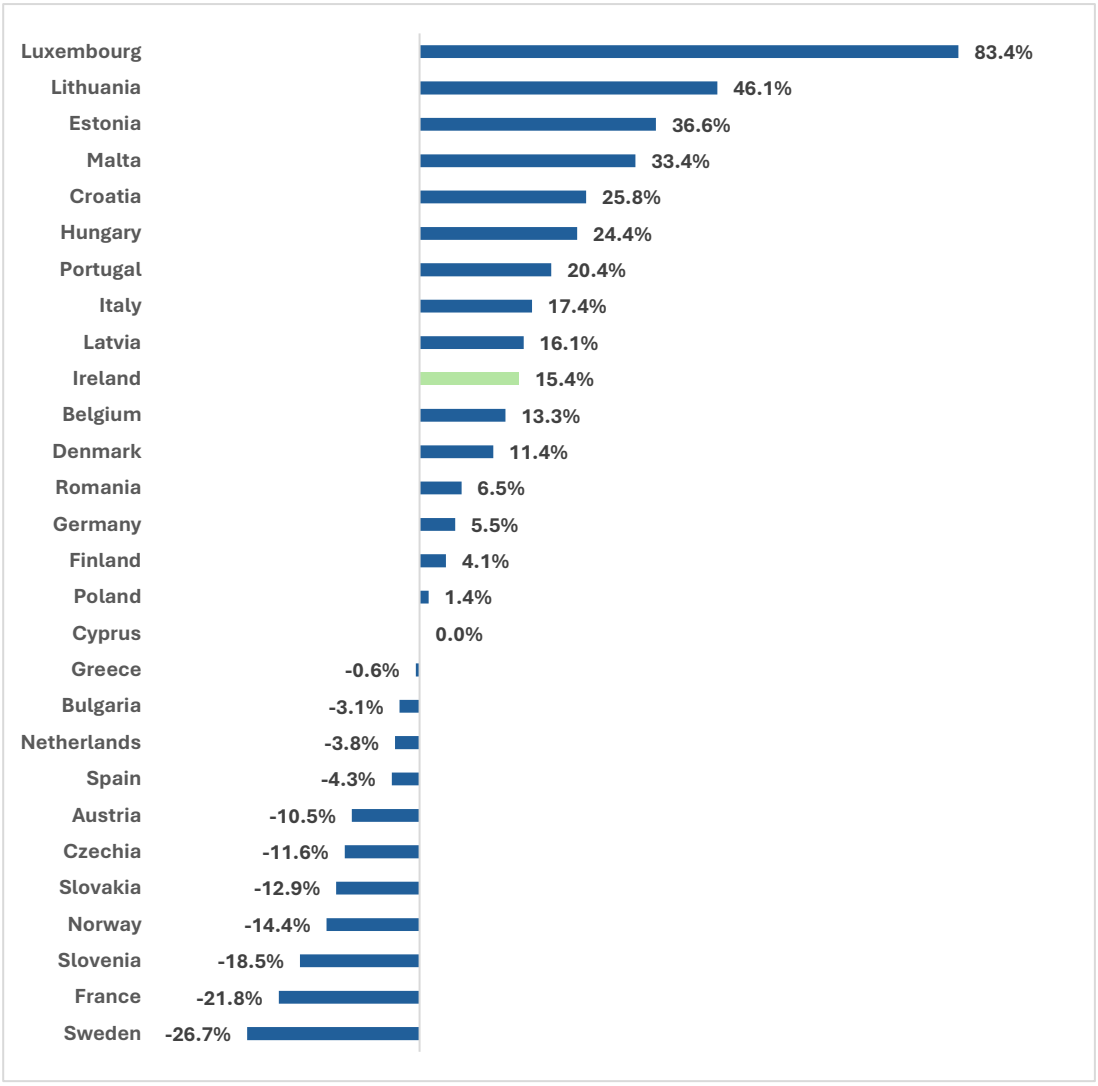
b. Geography determines that Ireland will never have a lot of hydro. Nuclear is outlawed and is not even being considered.

c. Imports are growing:

Ireland	% of electricity imported
2023	+ 10%
2024	+ 15%
2025	+ 17%

d. The 700 MW Celtic Interconnector will start in 2026. The 750 MW MaresConnect and 700 MW LirIC interconnector projects are progressing.

e. There is nothing unusual about some countries having a high dependency on imports:



Imports " + " / exports " - " of electricity as % of national demand in 27 EU Member States and Norway in 2024

f. Neither interconnectors nor renewables can be relied on 100%. The availability of imports from interconnectors is outside Ireland's control and renewables are intermittent. Back-up fossil fuel generation plant is needed to cover the exposure in either case.

Background to the Irish Academy of Engineering

The Irish Academy of Engineering is an all-island academy founded in 1997.

The Academy is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and has charitable status in the Republic of Ireland.

The aim of the Academy is to advance the wellbeing of the country by marshalling the expertise and insights of experienced engineers to provide independent, evidence-based advice to policy makers on matters involving engineering and technology. Its members are prominent Irish engineers, drawn from a wide range of disciplines, and membership currently stands at 190.

Further details and all of the Academy's publications are available at www.iae.ie.

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