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No mandatory renewables targets, says EU Harmonising renewable energy support mechanisms and setting mandatory renewable targets in the EU will not happen for a long time, Karina Veum, from the policy office of the European Commission's energy and transport directorate general, said this week in Berlin.

The EU in 2003 set a target of 12.5pc of power from renewables by 2010, but these targets are only indicative and will remain so in the foreseeable future, Veum said on the sidelines of the fifth European conference on green power marketing. "We have discussed mandatory targets, but it was too difficult to push them through at council [member state ministry] level," Veum said. He argued that setting mandatory targets would be difficult as a number of countries have recently changed their support schemes. "We have to give them a few years time," Veum added. With regard to the different support mechanisms, Veum said it was too early to think of harmonisation. All the EU can do for the next few years is "monitor continuously", Veum concluded. A new EU publication, due out in a few weeks, will offer a description of the funding mechanisms being implemented in the EU25, and monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of each member state's promotion of renewable energy. When it comes to financial support for onshore wind energy, Finland, Denmark and Ireland are most efficient. The countries doing worst — where there is a big gap between generation costs and a much higher support level — are Belgium and the UK, and, to a lesser degree, Italy, Spain and France. And some countries still have unsatisfactory administrative procedures and grid access, which hamper development Veum said. France, Greece and Portugal are worst in this respect, while the Irish situation is positive in terms of administrative procedures, but negative with regard to grid access. Conversely, in the Netherlands, grid access is good but administrative procedures are a problem. In terms of both grid access and easy administrative procedures, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Spain and Sweden topped the list of EU countries.