



THE EESC AND THE STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL MODULAR REACTORS

Pursuant to Article 194 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which enshrines the Member States' sovereignty over their energy mix, and the Regulation on the net-zero emissions industry (2024), nuclear energy is not only recognised as a strategic net-zero technology, but is also essential for achieving some of the Member States' decarbonisation targets and could, furthermore, contribute significantly to a massive and rapid phase-out of fossil fuels in the European Union. For this reason, the Opinion TEN/884, adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) at its last Plenary Session before the summer recess and concerning the "Strategy for the development and deployment of small modular reactors in Europe", is of particular importance. Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) are

low-power nuclear power stations (up to 300 MW per unit), built using factory-mass-produced components to save time and money, and designed to be transported and assembled on site. During the debate at the Committee, it became clear that Europe needs small modular reactors as a viable alternative for generating energy at competitive prices. The EESC also noted that the various technologies relating to small modular reactors require different fuel cycles. Consequently, decisions regarding reactor technologies should be accompanied by a corresponding assessment of the requirements relating to the manufacture, transport, storage and recycling of fuel, as well as waste management. According to Councillor Ulgiati «as we need to address the vulnerabilities of the Old Continent and support European industry, it is important that the va-

lue chain for small modular reactors ensures the necessary security of electricity supply, whilst promoting not only the creation of skilled jobs in Europe but also the reskilling of workers in the fossil fuel sectors, for a just transition that can offer opportunities in industrial, economic and environmental terms».



EU: ITALIAN PLAN TO TACKLE HIGH FUEL PRICES APPROVED

A few days ago, the European Commission officially gave the green light to €300 million in state aid allocated by the Meloni Government to counter the rise in fuel costs for road haulage companies, triggered by tensions in the Strait of Hormuz. The measure falls within the temporary framework for state aid introduced by the European Union to address the economic consequences of the Middle East crisis (METSAP), which was approved by the European Commission on the 29th of April 2026. The decision from Brussels follows an analysis of data relating to the crisis in the Middle East, which caused significant volatility in diesel prices across Italy during the spring of 2026. The aim of the measure is to alleviate the burden of rising fuel prices on companies in the road haulage sector. According to data analysed by the Commission, the cost of diesel in Italy has risen sharply compared with February 2026: +16.9 per cent in March, +23.3 per cent in April and +18 per cent in May. The support will take the form of a tax credit. This is a mechanism that allows eligible companies to use the

amount granted by the State to reduce their tax liability. Specifically, the credit may be used to offset various types of taxes and social security contributions that the company is required to pay, including income tax, VAT and social security contributions. Compensation will be available until 31 December 2026. Road haulage companies with their registered office or place of business in Italy will be eligible for a grant of up to 70 per cent of the additional costs incurred for fuel purchased during the four-month period from March to June 2026, provided that these increases are linked to the effects of the crisis in the Middle East. This measure aims to safeguard the operational continuity of road transport services, which are vital to supply chains, by preventing rising fuel prices from leading to financial default or a drastic reduction in logistics services.

