



Brussels, 7 February 2007

To: Ministers, Members of the EU Energy Council

Concerning: Council Conclusions on Energy Policy for EU, 15 February 2007

Dear Minister,

On the 15th February you will, with your colleagues, respond to the energy policy proposals the European Commission published on the 10th of January. Herewith I would like to present the views of the European Environmental Bureau, the largest federation of environmental citizens' organisations in Europe. It will be up to the Spring European Council to draw the final conclusions on behalf of the Member States, but your message will certainly be of great importance.

I would like to call upon you to take our views into account and agree on conclusions that will ensure EU's global leadership in climate and energy policies beyond Kyoto globally and at home.

EEB appreciates the Commission's efforts to work towards a better-coordinated EU Energy Policy, where environmental objectives are clear priorities alongside security of supply and competitiveness. But EEB believes that the Package contains weak and dangerous elements, which must be addressed if the Package is to move the EU towards an effective climate policy that does not have worsen other environmental problems.

- **Renewable Energy Roadmap:** although we support a legally-binding target, along with other NGOs, we consider the proposed target of a 20% share of renewables in the EU's energy mix by 2020 to be unambitious and regard the refusal to launch specific targets for the electricity, heating and cooling sectors as a missed opportunity to give a real boost to the necessary developments. On the other hand, we oppose the proposed sectoral target proposed of a 10% share of biofuels in vehicle fuel by 2020. This proposal fails to take account both sustainability of production and consequences for land use change, and the existence of alternative renewable energy sources that might work better.

We therefore call on the Council to:

- *press for an overall binding 25% EU renewable energy target by 2020, backed by*
- *a 35% binding target for the share of electricity produced from renewable sources by 2020 and a 25% share of heating and cooling from renewable energy sources by 2020*
- *reject the proposal to set minimum binding targets for biofuels and demand a system of environmental safeguards, including mandatory certification, based on a solid and comprehensive life cycle analysis, to be the central element of the revised Directive.*

- **Nuclear energy:** we are concerned at the Package's positive language on nuclear power as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We oppose the promotion and use of nuclear energy as we consider the risk of serious accidents and the unproven security of nuclear waste handling to pose unnecessary and expensive risks to people, the economy and the environment. We therefore call on the Council to:

- *Ensure that the fight against climate change is not used as an excuse for building new nuclear power stations and that public funds are not spent either on promoting nuclear power generation or building new nuclear plants*

- **Energy efficiency:** we welcome the Commission's Action Plan on Energy Efficiency released in October last year and call on the Council to include this Action Plan in its advice to the Spring European Council. We think that the Commission's combined proposals can indeed substantially contribute to reducing EU energy use, quantified in the Plan as a 14% absolute decrease by 2020. But this does require implementation of all the proposals. The first step to ensure that would be to make the target legally-binding.

EEB is concerned at the Energy Council's lukewarm first response on 23 November 2006. While it welcomed the potential, it made it clear that each individual measure must undergo a robust impact assessment, subsidiarity should be respected, and, where appropriate, voluntary agreements with industry considered. It thus imposed a heavy burden of proof on the Commission. Two particularly negative elements in the Council's response were its request to the Commission not to move too quickly with new proposals on buildings, and that it should ignore the Action Proposal on a "coherent use of taxation".

EEB agrees with the Commission's statement that: "*taxation, as a means to internalise external costs, is a powerful tool in promoting energy efficiency.*" It therefore calls for major initiative from the European Council to launch an Open Method of Coordination triggering environmental tax reform in all Member States.

The EEB calls on the Council to request:

- *substantive steps clearly to support the EU Energy Efficiency Action Plan, including by setting a legally-binding absolute reduction target*
- *insist on accelerating its implementation, particularly with standards and market instruments and the promotion of market instruments, including the introduction of an Open Method of Coordination initiative on Environmental Tax Reform, which would shift the tax base in each Member State by 10%, away from labour to energy and resource use within ten years.*

Yours sincerely,



John Hontelez
Secretary General
European Environmental Bureau