

LETTER TO COMPETITIVENESS Council

Brussels 28 April, 2005

Concerning: EU Competitiveness Council discussions on 'Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs' [Lisbon Strategy]

Dear Minister

On the 10th of May, the EU Competitiveness Council will discuss the micro-economic components of the draft "Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs" published by the Commission on the 12th of April 2005.

On behalf of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) I am writing to you to call for substantial improvements of these guidelines. The EEB is astonished about the neglect the Commission has shown for the clear message that the European Council gave in March this year, insisting that the environmental dimension of the Lisbon Strategy should not be weakened, because it in fact contributes to growth and employment.

On the contrary, the Commission's draft presents a clear marginalisation of the environmental dimension. This is a missed opportunity for promoting economic innovation in the EU that strengthens the economy also in the longer term, by integrating fully the environmental constraints and challenges the EU (and the world) are faced with.

The Commission's proposal is even a step backwards compared to the *Broad Economic Policy Guidelines* (BEPG) that the Council agreed on two years ago.

Reference to Kyoto Protocol and decoupling have completely disappeared from the current Proposal and the four important environmental guidelines that were in the BEPG have been replaced by one which hardly gives any concrete guidance.

The *Integrated Guidelines* need concrete proposals to respect sustainable development objectives and give 'integration' the meaning it deserves. Particularly, more emphasis is needed to ensure that the 'polluter pays principle' is systematically applied to economic activities so that environmental costs are integrated into economic activities, as reflected in the BEPG. Additionally, more concrete action is needed on eco-innovation, as recommended by the High Level Group led by Wim Kok, in November 2004.

Please find attached EEB's proposed amendments of the *Integrated Guidelines*.

Yours Sincerely,

John Hontelez
Secretary General
European Environmental Bureau.

