



**Friends of  
the Earth  
Europe**

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***Energy Council conclusions on an “Energy Policy for Europe”***

Dear Minister,

The IPCC's fourth assessment report, released on 2nd February 2007, has confirmed the grave impacts we are to expect from unchecked climate change. Together with last year's Stern report showing the sensational economic costs of climate change, this new report provides a robust basis for concerted action by the European Union to drastically and rapidly reduce its greenhouse emissions. But we believe Europe is not taking the necessary steps. The ongoing debate on Europe's future energy policy is largely shaped by a conventional approach of securing Europe's long-term energy supply. Instead, the prime pillars of Europe's energy policy should be to drastically cut the appalling waste of energy and substantially increase the use of renewable energies.

**When you and your minister colleagues, on 15 February 2007, agree the Energy Council's contribution to the 2007 EU Spring Summit, we call on you to ensure that the following key issues are properly addressed in the final Council conclusions:**

1. The Energy Council must explicitly recognise that a drastic increase in energy efficiency must be the main element of Europe's energy policy. Reducing the waste of energy is the most effective way to reduce Europe's climate impact and secure the supply of energy at the same time. **The energy savings ‘potential’ of 20% by 2020 must be made into a concrete ‘target’** - to create the necessary momentum to actually achieve it. The upcoming National Energy Efficiency Action Plans should explicitly demonstrate how Member States will contribute to achieving the target.
2. On renewable energies, the European Commission has suggested an overall target of meeting 20% of the EU's energy use from renewable sources by 2020. **This target should be 25%**, which is easily possible and also necessary for the rapid development of renewable energies in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the EU's 2°C goal. Also, the **Council must call for breaking down the overall target into sectoral targets for electricity and heating & cooling**. Even the European Commission itself has noted that failing to set sector-specific targets will delay technological development and commercial uptake of renewable energies and increase climate change abatement costs in the long-term.
3. The draft Council Conclusions call for a 10% target for the share of biofuels in overall transport fuels by 2020. At present, **biofuels production is leading to grave environmental damages in producer countries**, such as the destruction of rainforests. It can also severely undermine the livelihoods of people, expelling them from traditional lands and increasing food prices. **As these problems have not been properly addressed, the EU should not move ahead with setting a target for biofuels**. Instead, the EU should develop strict sustainability criteria and the necessary enforcement mechanisms for biofuels for the European markets; any future target for biofuels should be based on first examining the potential for truly sustainable biofuels production. It should be noted that biomass can be far more efficiently used e.g. in the power sector. Instead of relying on biofuels to reduce oil consumption, the **unsustainable trends in the transport sector should be reversed**, e.g. by triggering a modal shift from road to rail and by forcing carmakers to build more fuel-efficient cars.

4. The draft text reaffirms the aim to improve the functioning of the internal market, including increasing competition and security of energy supply. It is vital that any **further integration and harmonisation actively contributes to trigger the wide uptake of renewable energies**. Existing market distortions that favour large centralised coal-fired and nuclear power stations must be removed, starting with full ownership unbundling, to separate energy production from energy distribution. Also, in order to reflect the true cost of conventional energy, its external costs, such as health costs from air pollution, must be fully internalised into the price of energy.
5. The draft Council conclusions leave it up to Member States to decide on whether or not to use nuclear power. We believe **nuclear power is a dirty and dangerous technology that has no role to play in Europe's energy mix**. In any case, the price of nuclear electricity must include the full costs of plant decommissioning and all environmental costs associated with the whole nuclear fuel cycle, including long-term waste treatment and storage. Also, nuclear operators must ensure full insurance cover for all costs of any potential nuclear accident.
6. We notice with concern unduly optimistic support for Carbon Capture & Storage (CCS). CCS is an untested technology, in technical, environmental and economic terms, that will not become a viable option before 2020, if ever. In contrast, renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are available already today - but they need strong support for mass commercial uptake. Diverting attention to CCS is the wrong choice. **No public money should be given to CCS, neither for research & development or in order to help commercial use** - energy companies are making record profits every year; they do not need taxpayers money. Also, any operational framework for CCS must ensure **complete legal liability by operators** for the full economic, environmental and social costs of potential leakage over the lifetime of the storage.

We believe by including the above concerns into the deliberations on Europe's future energy policy, and by ensuring that they are properly addressed in the Council conclusions on 15 February, you can make a vital contribution to securing sustainable energy for Europe while helping in the global battle against climate change.

With sincere regards,

Jan Kowalzig

Friends of the Earth Europe