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Europe must not backtrack on energy efficiency

The Coalition for Energy Savings urges Energy Ministers to honour earlier commitments as they meet on 14 February.

Brussels, 13 February 2012 – The Energy Efficiency Directive, currently under discussion within European Parliament and Council, might well fall short of what is required to achieve the 20% energy savings target by 2020. Worse still, it is at risk of backtracking on the existing Energy Services Directive and Cogeneration Directive that it will replace.

Despite the apparent consensus on the need to boost existing energy efficiency policy and deliver on the 20% energy savings target, Member States have been watering down the Commission proposal for a new Energy Efficiency Directive by reducing the ambition of the proposed energy efficiency measures, introducing exemptions and allowing for the accounting of early action. The latest draft under discussion in the Council would backtrack on existing policy in terms of required annual energy savings.

Stefan Scheuer, Secretary General of the Coalition for Energy Savings said: *“In the context of looming gas cuts and the Iranian oil crisis uncomfortably reminding Europe of its increasing dependence on costly energy import, it seems incomprehensible that Member States are undermining the very policy that would reduce that dependence and put money back into citizens’ pockets.”*

Oliver Loebel, Secretary General of PU Europe, a member of the Coalition for Energy Savings, said: *“In the current climate of austerity, governments could be kick-starting the economic recovery by creating thousands of jobs renovating buildings. Instead they are throwing good money after bad – unnecessarily spending billions of taxpayers’ Euros on the energy bills of inefficient public buildings.”*

Denmark has made a priority of reaching an agreement on the Energy Efficiency Directive by the end of its 6 months Presidency of the European Council, which began on 1st January. The upcoming Energy Council on 14th February is therefore a key date on the road to an early agreement. A radical shift in thinking is needed to make that agreement meaningful.

“It is time for European leaders to make good on previous energy efficiency commitments and deliver on the much needed savings and jobs that the Energy Efficiency Directive could deliver”, said Erica Hope, Senior Policy Officer at CAN Europe, also a member of the Coalition for Energy Savings.

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Annex

The letter that was sent by the Coalition for Energy Savings to all EU Energy Ministers on Thursday 9 February 2012 in view of the upcoming Energy Council meeting on Tuesday 14 February where the Energy Efficiency Directive is scheduled to be discussed over lunch.

Notes for Editors

The Coalition for Energy Savings brings together business, professional and civil society associations. The Coalition's purpose is to make the case for a European energy policy that places a much greater, more meaningful emphasis on energy efficiency and savings.

www.energycoalition.eu

Contact for further information

Paolo Di Stefano

Tel +32 (0) 235 20 16, +32 (0) 498 10 83 38

paolo.distefano@energycoalition.eu

Brussels, the 9th of February 2012

Mr Martin LIDEGAARD
Minister for Climate and Energy
Stormgade 2-6
DK-1470 Copenhagen K

Stop roll back of EU energy efficiency policy

Dear Minister,

The Coalition for Energy Savings calls on you to honour earlier commitments on energy efficiency and step up the ambition for the Energy Efficiency Directive at the upcoming meeting of European Energy Ministers on 14th February.

In the context of economic hardship and ever increasing energy prices and import dependency, we find it perverse that national governments are watering down the very legislative proposal which would provide solutions. The latest draft under discussion in the Council would backtrack on existing commitments and legislation¹.

- Questioning the methodology of the EU's 20% energy efficiency objective is questioning the objective instead of discussing how to achieve it.
- Under existing EU law Member States have agreed to save 1% of their overall energy demand every year, and are actually doing so². This is substantially more than the 1.5% savings obligation if excluding transport and including supply side efficiency measures³ as discussed in the Council's Working Party in the context of article 6.
- Proposed exemptions and flexibility to public building renovation requirements and supply side measures are so large that the market and energy savings effects would become negligible.

Europe more than ever needs a strong and common strategy to kick start the economic recovery and achieve sustainable growth. The economic collapse or youth unemployment in one country are the other countries' problems too. Stepping up energy efficiency improvement efforts, in particular deep renovation of buildings, is a significant part of the solution to such problems, will create jobs and public revenues and reduce costs.

The Coalition for Energy Savings which unites 22 business, professional and environmental organisations in Europe, calls on you to stop casting doubts on Europe's commitment to energy savings and move on from discussing whether to save energy to how to save energy.

Yours sincerely,



Stefan Scheuer, Secretary General

This letter will be made publicly available

¹ Including: EU commitment to save 20% energy by 2020; Energy Services 2006/32/EC and Combined Heat and Power 2004/08/EC Directives both to be repealed by the Energy Efficiency Directive

² Energy Services Directive sets an indicative target of 9% savings between 2008 and 2016, in average 1% per year. According the national implementation reports these targets are achievable and often even overachieved.

³ An annual 1% economy wide (industry, transport and domestic) energy saving target as set by Directive 2006/32/EC corresponds to some 1.5% if transport is excluded and 1.9% if supply side efficiency improvements are countable as well.