

Press Release

Budapest, 7th November 2008

"European Union: Eco-Brake instead of Climate-Queen"

European Parliamentarians urge for the transition into an energy efficient renewable energy-based economy

On November 7th 2008, the 8th Inter-Parliamentary Meeting on "Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency" (IPM8) organised by EUFORES brought together over 60 Parliamentarians from EU27 National Parliaments as well as the European Parliament.

The Parliamentarians discussed in two sessions the new European Directive for Renewable Energy (RES) as well as the status of the national Energy Efficiency Action Plans (NEEAPs). A special focus was given on potentials of and benefits for Central and Eastern European Countries.

While Energy Security and the Climate Change crisis were always in the background, as the "permanent crisis, which will not go with the time", the financial crisis and its spill over effect into the real economy were also on the minds of participants. It was recognised that the downturn in the economy meant there was an imperative need for a new industrial relaunch.

"Only 18 months ago the European Union acknowledged its responsibility for climate protection - now the EU risks to turn from the world's Climate-Queen into an Eco-Break!" says MECHTILD ROTHE, President of EUFORES and Vice-President of the European Parliament. As some EU Member States are trying to step back from their commitments ROTHE warns against playing the current international financial crisis off against a sustainable climate and energy policy: "Countries that transform their energy-wasting fossil fuel based economy into an energy-efficient renewable energy based economy will benefit from security of supply, climate protection and competitiveness at the same time!"

CLAUDE TURMES, Vice-President of EUFORES and rapporteur of the Renewable Energy Directive underlines that already more than 350,000 jobs have been created in Europe's renewable energy sector: "Now is the time for a clear and ambitious legislative framework for the promotion of Renewable Energy. We must build the basis for renewable energies being the number one energy in Europe. This is not only a pro-economy and pro-environment programme, but also a vital part of peace policy in a resource constraint world. In this respect, I welcome the 'pro renewable energy' drive of the newly elected President of the US, Barak Obama."

FIONA HALL, Vice-President of EUFORES and rapporteur on the Energy Efficiency Action Plan report points out on energy efficiency: "Whereas energy efficiency is the cheapest and easiest means for Europe not only to reduce its energy import dependency and its CO₂-emissions, but also to tackle the alarmingly increasing number of energy poor, the actual rate of progress on energy efficiency is disappointing."

The European Parliament has called for a binding 20% energy efficiency target by 2020, and the Commission is proposing ambitious recasts of legislation on energy-using products and buildings. "Unfortunately", says HALL, "Member States are still not translating these ambitions into action. In particular, more needs to be done at a national level on setting up accessible financing arrangements so that households and small businesses can invest now in major energy efficiency improvements. At the moment, we are burning money that could be spent in the local economy and by the same token failing to move fast enough to cut carbon emissions and stop climate change."

About EUFORES

EUFORES - the European Forum for Renewable Energy Sources - is a European parliamentary network and an independent Non-Profit Organization aimed at promoting renewable energy in Europe.

EUFORES - European Forum for Renewable Energy Sources

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