

Citizens' summary

ENERGY 2020: A strategy for competitive, sustainable and secure energy

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

- The EU committed to cut its greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change. The energy system must become low-carbon.
- Dependence on imports of oil and gas is growing. The EU needs to save energy and find new energy alternatives and to produce more of its own energy.
- Energy prices are rising. Citizens and businesses are entitled to have access to affordable energy.

WHO WILL BENEFIT AND HOW?

- All citizens will benefit from lower greenhouse gas emissions, more secure and affordable energy if strategic decisions and measures are taken now to save energy, invest in low-carbon energy alternatives and build intelligent and diversified energy networks.
- The development of new energy alternatives will sustain Europe's competitiveness in growth and job-creating new industries.
- Saving energy will lower the energy bill for industries and households; it will lower the level of investments needed to replace aging capacity and infrastructure and it will increase our energy security.

WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?

- EU countries' energy interdependence is growing. National energy decisions have an impact on other countries. Energy security needs a European policy on security of energy supply, the development of infrastructures and relations with transit and producing third countries.
- Policies for the development of renewable energy and research on new technologies are more efficient if coordinated at European level.
- The continental energy market offers much more efficiency and economies of scale.
- Energy infrastructure modernisation is needed to integrate growing renewable energy, increase energy security and develop intelligent networks. EU coordination is needed to fix priorities, facilitate financing and speed implementation.

WHAT EXACTLY WILL CHANGE?

The strategy will drive major efforts in:

- energy market regulation, grid management and the security of energy systems;
- technical innovation and investments;
- education and incentives for domestic and business consumers to save energy, reduce wastage and switch to low-carbon technologies and fuels.

WHEN IS THE PROPOSAL LIKELY TO COME INTO EFFECT?

The strategy will be implemented until 2020. Several major proposals will be made in the coming months:

- A Communication on the development of energy infrastructure in November 2010;
- An Energy Efficiency Action Plan in February 2011;
- A Roadmap towards a low-carbon energy system by 2050 in May 2011;
- A Communication on external energy policy in June 2011.

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