Second strategic energy review

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The Council held a public policy debate on energy security, in connection with the second Strategic Energy Review submitted by the Commission. The President of the European Investment Bank, Mr Philippe Maystadt, also took part in the discussion and gave explanations on the funding planned by the Bank in the following areas: renewable energy, energy efficiency, research into new energy technologies and energy security.

To structure the debate, ministers were asked to give their views on questions prepared by the Presidency which related in particular to infrastructure, solidarity, dialogue with third countries and energy efficiency.

Following the discussions, the President of the Council stressed the following factors in particular:

- **energy efficiency** is the first priority and the new package also includes significant progress in that area;
- Europe needs **energy which is clean, affordable, available in the event of crisis and sustainable over the long term**. The recent lowering of the price of energy must not allow us to forget our vulnerability over the long term and the need to increase our efforts to control demand and security of supply;
- research and development of all **low-carbon energies**: renewable, wind and solar energy, marine energy and biomass, but also carbon capture and storage;
- **each Member State is free to choose whether or not to use nuclear energy**, which today accounts for one third of electricity production in Europe. In this respect the Commission proposals, with the Illustrative Nuclear Programme, the proposal for a Directive on nuclear safety and work on waste management, are essential;
- the importance of **developing new infrastructures**, especially with regard to remote areas and particularly the Baltic States and island States: the North-South connections; the development of the southern corridor to the resources of the Caspian Sea, the Mediterranean electricity and gas ring and liquefied natural gas.

The ministers' speeches will contribute to preparation of the Council conclusions and the spring 2009 European Council.