Preparation for the European Council meeting of 4 February 2011

2010/2900(RSP) - 31/01/2011

The Council examined draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held in Brussels on 4 February 2011. The European Council will focus on energy and innovation. An annotated draft agenda was discussed by the Council on 22 November 2010.

The President of the European Council restricted the agenda to the items which will actually be examined by the European Council.

1. **Energy**: the European Council will discuss energy policy, including how it can best support the shift towards an efficient low-carbon economy and greater security of supply, including through a better integrated and interconnected energy market. It is expected to set orientations on improving the functioning of the European energy market, especially as regards key missing links, on promoting innovative solutions for sustainable energy and on ensuring effective coordination and coherence of the Union's external energy action.
2. **Innovation**: the European Council will discuss how to boost Europe's innovation potential to tackle the most critical societal challenges Europe is facing. It is expected to set orientations in particular as regards completing the European Research Area, improving framework conditions for innovation, facilitating access to finance, and simplifying and rationalising EU programmes.

The conclusions of the meeting will be brief and will focus on decisions and general policies approved by the European Council. The draft European Council conclusions emphasize the need for further action at the EU level aimed at integrating the **internal energy market, achieving energy efficiency targets and promoting investments in renewable energies, as well as improving the coherence of the EU's external action in the field of energy**. The draft conclusions further call for implementation of a strategic and integrated approach to boosting innovation and for the completion of the European Research Area by 2014 to create a genuine single market for knowledge, research and innovation.