Energy efficiency: action plan

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PURPOSE : to present the Action Plan to improve energy efficiency in the European Community. CONTENT : there is a pressing need to renew commitment both at Community and Member State level to promote energy efficiency more actively. This is especially true when seen in the light of the Kyoto agreement to reduce CO2 emissions, where improved energy efficiency will play a key role in meeting the EU Kyoto target economically. This Action Plan to improve energy efficiency outlines policies and measures for the removal of these barriers and the realisation of this potential. If a proposed indicative target for improvement of energy intensity by an additional one percentage point per year above the estimated yearly baseline change is met, that can realise two-thirds of the available savings potential by the year 2010. This would result in avoided energy consumption over 100 Mtoe, equivalent to avoided CO2 emissions of almost 200Mt/year or around 40% of the EU Kyoto commitment. Meeting the Community-wide target of doubling the use of cogeneration to 18% of the EU electricity production by 2010 is expected to lead to additional avoided CO2 emissions of over 65 Mt CO2/year by 2010. Three groups of mechanisms for improving energy efficiency are put forward: - measures to enhance the integration of energy efficiency into other Community non-energy policy and programme areas such as regional and urban policy, taxation and tariff policy, etc; - measures for re-focusing and reintroducing existing successful Community energy-efficiency measures; - new common and co-ordinated policies and measures. Furthermore, the Action Plan must be read and seen against the background of the Commission Communication and the Council Resolution on energy efficiency, which are logical steps in a process. Moreover, the Action Plan must be seen in a wider context of Community energy and environmental policy and indeed other relevant Community policies. It is also constructed in such a way as to contribute substantially to the integration of energy and environmental objectives into other policy areas. Overall, this Action Plan is an integrated and coherent combination of policy instruments which reinforce each other and which the Member States are called upon to participate actively in.