Winning the battle against global climate change

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The Council held a policy debate on climate change and sustainable energy, that provided the Commission with indications on Member States concerns and priorities to be taken into consideration inter alia when the Commission develops its Action Plan on Energy Efficiency and Review of the European Emissions Trading Scheme.

At the same time the medium and long-term EU strategy to combat climate change called for by the Spring European Council 2005 should :

- focus in particular on environmental effectiveness;

- take account of the need for promoting competitiveness and affordable energy supply;

- promote cost-efficient measures to cut emissions;

- recognise the need for global joint efforts, in line with common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities;

- provide certainty for public and private investment.

The Council stresses :

- the need to raise the profile of energy efficiency across all sectors, including in the public sector which should lead by example for other sectors;

- the importance of the exchange of best practice across the Union and the need to ensure synergy and consistency with other policy areas, particularly environment and transport policy;

- that the transport and building sectors, in particular, hold a large potential for increased energy efficiency;

- an increased emphasis on research, development and deployment of energy efficient products and technologies is needed, which could also be beneficial to the EU export potential;

- the potential of more efficient energy generation, including with low or zero emissions.

It urges the Member States to :

- ensure effective application of Community legislation on energy efficiency including Directive 2002/91 /EC on the Energy performance of Buildings, Directive 2004/8/EC on the promotion of co-generation and Directive 2005/32/EC on eco-design requirements for energy using products;

- make good use of energy efficiency-related provisions under Directive 2003/54 on the internal market in electricity.

The Commission is invited to :

- ensure that energy efficiency is explicitly covered in its proposals on a revised EU sustainable development strategy and on the new European Climate Change Programme;

- consider in detail when developing its cost-benefit analysis of climate change measures the contribution that can be made by energy efficiency measures and report on the effects of emissions trading instruments on other instruments in the energy sector as announced at the Spring European Council 2003;

- take the need for long term regulatory certainty and transparency and cost-effectiveness into account in its forthcoming review of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, in the context of the ongoing development of the EU's medium and long-term strategy to tackle climate change. The Commission should thus review this scheme and should table as soon as possible proposals, as appropriate, to make this scheme more effective while taking into account the need for promoting competitiveness and an affordable energy supply;

- base this review on comprehensive and reliable data and ensure that remedies to possible market disturbances in sectors affected by the EU Emissions Trading Scheme are provided in good time;

- do its utmost to provide guidance early enough for the preparation of the 2nd national allocation plans;

- move swiftly to implement measures within the framework provided by the eco-design directive.