



***Informal Council Meeting of the Ministers for Energy  
6 and 7 September 2010 – Brussels***

**“Fuelling a Secure, Low-Carbon and Affordable Energy Future  
for Europe”**

During this informal meeting of Energy Ministers, views on three main themes will be shared.

The first one will focus on **the consumer related aspects** of the European energy policy. Particular emphasis will be given to the treatment of the vulnerable consumer in this context. In Europe, over 50 million people are unable to pay their energy bills or, in exchange, need to deprive themselves of other basic levels of comfort.

Protecting the European energy consumer is an overriding priority for the EU to improve the quality of life for all citizens. The European year for combating poverty and social exclusion offers an excellent opportunity to look into the issue of affordable energy for all citizens. We also need to look into how we can empower consumers so they can become active participants in the energy market and lastly we have to ensure that energy consumers can contribute to reducing their own energy bills.

The issue of **the construction of a modern and integrated European energy grid** will be on the table on the second day. The outcome of these discussions should deliver a maximal input for the upcoming infrastructure package for energy, which will be presented by the Commission in November. A well-functioning and interconnected energy infrastructure is fundamental for guaranteeing the EU’s security of energy supply and the completion of the internal energy market. Furthermore, ensuring the development of the European energy grid is necessary to permit the achievement of the EU’s renewable and climate change objective.

The EU has made considerable progress towards achieving a functional internal energy market. However market failure and regulatory shortcomings persist in certain areas. Market integration is still hampered by a lack of interconnections, especially in energy islands and in Central and Eastern Europe, and hence the market remains fragmented.

In the second part of the debate, the delegates will focus **on the financing of energy infrastructure projects**. The Trans-European Energy Networks instrument (TEN-E) is a perfect example of how EU money can be used as a

leverage to attract funds from the financial market by giving political visibility to a selected project.

The evaluation rapport of the Commission on the TEN-E guidelines, which was published in May of this year touched upon the shortcomings and indicated where there remains room for improvement, e.g. the definition of the EU energy infrastructure strategic priorities or the approach to select projects.

Furthermore, the European Union was able to financially secure infrastructural projects not only in the field of gas and electricity infrastructure, but also in offshore wind energy production and CCS by allocating almost € 4 bln to the European Energy Programme for Recovery. These projects would otherwise have come to a halt because of the global economic and financial crisis. Currently, this programme is being reviewed so that unused budgets can be redirected to projects in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy.

And finally during the closed lunch session, Ministers will discuss **the energy efficiency challenges and opportunities**. Energy efficiency will be one of the main tools which will enable us to make the energy transition economically affordable.

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