

CSD 14: Thematic discussion ‘*Enhancing energy efficiency to address air pollution and atmospheric problems, combat climate change, and promote industrial development*’

Speaking points for the European Commission

Efforts to increase energy efficiency in the EU are steadily gaining momentum. There are many drivers, amongst them the ongoing debate on energy security, but also the realisation that improving energy efficiency can bring substantial economic gains.

Austria, speaking for the Presidency of the EU has already highlighted the key objectives of our energy efficiency policy, they can be summarised as follows:

- Limiting emission of CO₂ and other harmful air-pollutants
- Limiting import-dependence
- Improving over-all economic performance and competitiveness

At the level of the EU we have developed a **comprehensive energy efficiency policy** starting in the early 1990s. To be underlined that in doing so we have found that to be successful, we need to work with a **variety of different approaches to create a policy mix** adapted to the variety of actors and sectors to be addressed. The approaches we have come to realise work best include **labelling, standards, targets, voluntary agreements, and market-based mechanisms**. These need to be accompanied by significant investment into **research**. We have also found it useful to analyse which sectors offer the highest energy saving potential and focus measures on those. Finally, the EU believes that **international cooperation** has a major role to play; the EU is eager to share its experiences on energy efficiency policies and programmes; is open for research co-operation and ready to work with partners in establishing and adopting energy efficiency standards that are internationally compatible.

Policy measures:

- **Labelling:** Energy labelling of appliances and energy using equipment informing users about energy consumption. This has been a very cheap and effective driver for efficiency improvements as labels are generally perceived as quality labels by consumers.
- **Standards:** Minimum efficiency standards for energy using equipment: Early rules eliminated very in-efficient appliances and boilers from the market. Updated and more dynamic regulation – the Eco-Design Directive will be an important driver in the future.
- **Focus on sectors with high savings potential:** A new Energy performance of **buildings** Directive has recently entered into force. It sets:
 - Minimum performance standards for buildings on a member state level
 - Regular performance checks for heating and cooling systems
 - Energy performance certificates for buyers of buildings

- **Targets:** a new Energy Services Directive sets:
 - Indicative target of 1% energy savings annually in member states
 - Targets for energy savings in public buildings
 - Rules for public procurement
 - Requirements for large energy suppliers to promote energy awareness and savings

- **Voluntary agreements:** a voluntary EU agreement with car-manufacturers to limit average CO₂-emissions to 140 g/km in 2008 is an important driver for energy savings too.

- **Market-based mechanisms:** the EU Emissions Trading Scheme for CO₂ in large installations in the energy sector and industry starting 2005 is an important driver for energy efficiency.

- **Research:** Major spending for energy efficiency under the joint EU joint Research Programme