



Press Release

On the EEAC Statement 2009

“Make electricity networks and transport infrastructures sustainable” say Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils

19 Councils from 11 countries, all established by their governments to give expert advice on environment and sustainable development issues, endorsed a statement on sustainable European infrastructures. The EU will need a new more integrated and strategic approach in planning for electricity, transport and green infrastructure networks, in the view of its long term decarbonisation, biodiversity and sustainable development targets. The Councils therefore call for a review of the conventional “predict and provide” approach. A key challenge will be to establish a Trans-European long-distance grid for renewable electricity based on sustainability principles.

Climate Change and renewable energy

The international consensus to limit global warming to 2 °C requires that emissions in industrialised countries are cut between 80 and 95%. Particularly, the power and transport sector must become carbon neutral. The European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils agree that renewables must become the main energy source by 2050 in order to achieve this target.

The Advisory Councils therefore propose amongst other things to the European Commission and the Member States:

- A road map with definite renewable energy targets beyond 2020 and with assurance for preferential grid access for electricity from renewable energy sources.
- Large investments and greater political support for flagship projects of European electricity networks: Examples include the North Sea grid for the connection of offshore wind power and the Mediterranean Solar Plan for the connection of wind and solar power from the Southern Mediterranean.

- The establishment of a European wide network operator for high power long distance connections.
- Impact Assessments for all energy policy support measures and decisions by the EU and its Member States on the compatibility of other low carbon options (such as nuclear and CCS) with renewable energy targets.

Goal-oriented infrastructure planning is needed

Infrastructure decisions are long-term decisions. Once they have been made, the development path is set for the next decades. The Advisory Councils therefore advocate the abandonment of infrastructure planning on the basis of a “predict and provide” model. Instead, goal-oriented planning, which takes European climate and biodiversity targets as its starting point, is necessary: Transportation, power generation as well as associated structures of urban development will have to differ substantially from existing patterns by the middle of the century. Infrastructure planning must anticipate such concerns. Moreover, integration of electricity networks, transport infrastructures and an extended European habitat system is needed more than ever. A strengthening of European spatial planning based on sustainability principles thereby becomes necessary as an addition to national and regional planning.

The statement of the 19 Environment and Sustainable Development Councils from 11 European countries can be downloaded at

http://www.eeac-net.org/download/EEAC1762Stat_3_7-10-09_final.pdf

For further information please contact:

Jakob Smets, EEAC Communication Officer: jakob.smets@eeac-net.org, Tel.: 0032 2 558 01 51

Dr. Christian Hey, Chair EEAC Energy Working Group: christian.hey@uba.de; Tel.: 0049 30 263696-0;

.....

The EEAC network is a unique collaboration between the councils set up by European governments to provide independent and scientifically based advice on the environment and sustainable development. The network is a powerful tool for sharing information and experience across Europe.

Co-operation between advisory councils under the EEAC network started in 1993. More than 30 councils from 16 European countries with around 400 key senior actors from academia, civil society/NGOs, stakeholder organisations and the private sector now participate in the network.