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Earth Hour 2013

Raising awareness about the importance of energy saving

The initiative 'Earth Hour' launched by the NGO WWF attracts a growing number of participants each year. This year, the European Parliament will once again commit to turn off all its lights on Saturday 23rd March from 20.30 to 21.30 to raise awareness about the importance of energy saving. Energy saving is central to the Greens/EFA group's energy vision: Our group has always pushed for more energy efficiency, energy reduction and the switch to renewable energy sources. Decreasing our energy consumption will only bring benefits: it will empower European citizens to control their own energy needs and thus reduce their energy costs, spur innovation, encourage the development of green energy sources, create more jobs, reduce dependence on polluting fossil fuels and their corresponding political regimes, position the EU as a world leader in emissions reduction and protect our climate. This year, for Earth hour 2013, the Parliament will switch off all its lights to show the example. But the Greens/EFA group wants to encourage the entire institution to go beyond this event and take further actions to really ensure that Europe does reduce its energy consumption, not only for an hour but also all year long and for good! The group therefore challenges the Parliament - but also the Commission and the Council - to continue showing the example to all EU citizens through the whole year and to support policy measures that really go this way. At the moment the EU Heads of States are discussing Europe's energy and climate targets for 2030. Most of them are still very reluctant to have a legally binding target for energy efficiency that would enable the EU to make substantial reduction, and it may even fail to reach its 20% energy efficiency target for 2020. Energy efficiency continues to be the 'poor cousin' of the EU climate and energy vision, and despite all the numerous benefits it would have for the EU citizens and the EU economy as a whole. Reducing EU's energy consumption must be an EU objective! The Greens/EFA group call for the EU institutions to lead the way on the energy and climate debate by agreeing on **three different legally binding climate and energy targets for 2030**

- **A Greenhouse Gas emissions reduction target (also known as 'Climate target')**
- **A EU-wide renewable target**
- **An EU-wide energy efficiency target**

The EU Parliament and the other EU institutions must commit to real measures to cut our energy consumption for good, not just for one hour!

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