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Spring European Council

Greens call on Summit not to dodge EU energy problems

The Greens in the European Parliament have warned that this week's summit looks set to miss the opportunity to solve the energy problems currently facing the EU. Speaking on the situation in the EU's energy market, Green MEPs **Claude Turmes** (Luxembourg), **Rebecca Harms** (Germany) and **Pierre Jonckheer** (Belgium) said:

"The supposed internal energy market is a shambles. The potential benefits of a competitive market have been translated into windfall profits for a handful of giant energy firms at the expense of European consumers, who are held to ransom. The current preoccupation on national or European champions and grid improvements misses the point. EU leaders need to agree on tough rules to prevent the same companies dominating both energy production and distribution (grids), while empowering independent regulators to act as true competition guardians. The absence of a strong signal on competitive gas and electricity markets makes a mockery of the 'Lisbon rhetoric'."

"Europe must reduce its oil addiction if it is not to be at the mercy of the political situation in the Middle East for its energy fix. The current approach to energy supply, which completely ignores transport, is both short-sighted and naïve: 70% of EU oil is used in the transport sector. If it is serious about addressing the problems of energy supply, the European Council must place tackling the ever-expanding car, lorry and aviation use at the heart of its energy 'master plan'. It should focus on the huge untapped potential of innovations in end-use energy efficiency in transport, as well as in the building and electricity sectors."

"Finding the right energy mix will be crucial to guaranteeing security of supply and to reducing the damaging effects of climate change. EU leaders should capitalise on the falling costs for a large range of renewables, from off-shore wind to biomass, and seek to improve the efficiency of power production, through combined heating and power. This is key to ensuring a secure and reliable supply of energy. The summit must deliver an unequivocal message that nuclear power, which provides only 6% of all energy used, does not hold the answer. Existing nuclear technology cannot address our energy needs and raises serious security and environmental concerns."

"We welcome the move by the Austrian Presidency to put a 20% target for improving the energy efficiency in Europe until 2020 and a 15% overall target for renewables until 2015 on the table. This should be completed by a strong call for a CO2 target which respects the 2°C maximum temperature raise to prevent disastrous climate change. Ambitious targets add meat to the bones of the political rhetoric."

"Creating a sustainable EU energy policy will require a new energy and transport culture from local to European level. Member States must look beyond their narrow national context and look to strengthen cooperation between national energy agencies. Insisting on controversial measures, like nuclear energy, will divide Europe and prevent the necessary consensus. The EU must build strong policies in those areas where all

Member States can agree: energy efficiency, renewables and competitive markets."

For more information on this topic read:

The Green's Vienna Declaration (pdf)

The Green's position on the last Green Paper on Energy (pdf)

The Green's motion for resolution on energy in the EP (pdf)

The Final Resolution adopted by the EP (pdf)

The Green's voting list on the amendments (pdf) to the Resolution

The Council's draft conclusions (pdf)

The Green's criticism on the draft conclusions (pdf)

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