Press release | 26.05.2010

Climate change

EU Commission makes case for stronger emissions reduction target, ball now in Member States court

The European Commission today presented a communication making the case for increasing the EU greenhouse gas target to a 30% reduction by 2020 (1). Commenting on the communication, Green MEP **Satu Hassi** said:

"This communication makes a welcome and timely contribution to the debate on strengthening the EU's emissions reduction target. The Commission has put forward a clear and reasoned argument for stepping up to a 30% reduction target, outlining the clear economic benefits this will bring. Yesterday's response of the German and French industry ministers, rehashing the tired arguments of industry laggards, is regrettable and baffling, displaying a complete misunderstanding of the Commission's findings.

"The Commission recognises that sticking to a 20% target is inconsistent with the EU goal to limit warming to below 2 degrees. It points out that maintaining a 20% target for 2020 will make it very difficult for the EU to meet its long-term emissions targets by leaving too much work to be done from 2020-2050. Clearly, if EU governments are serious about limiting warming to below 2 degrees, they must agree to increase to an unconditional 30% target at next month's European Council, with a view to adopting a more ambitious target – in line with the science – in the context of a UN climate deal."

Dutch Green MEP **Bas Eickhout** added:

"Strong climate policies are good for the economy and will help create jobs in Europe. We welcome that the Commission has clearly set out the role of stronger climate policies in stimulating green innovation and jobs. The report acknowledges both how it is much cheaper for the EU to deliver a 30% reduction now than was previously thought and the benefits this will bring for the European economy.

"While some EU industries are still fighting against increasing the EU target, there is more and more evidence that their arguments are completely flawed. Research commissioned by the Greens/EFA group shows that the claims of 'carbon leakage', which have been used as a smokescreen to prevent more ambitious climate policy, have been grossly exaggerated (2). There is also evidence that under current EU climate legislation, dirty industries stand to make major windfall profits. Member state governments, meeting next month, must ignore the leakage smokescreen and strengthen the EU emissions target, to stimulate green innovation and jobs."

Notes to editors:

(1) Analysis of options to move beyond 20% greenhouse gas emissions reductions and assessing the risk of

carbon leakage

(2) See the study: http://tinyurl.com/leakage-CS-study
and our summary at http://tinyurl.com/leakage-greensefa-summary

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