



19 March 2010

MEETING OF MR JANEZ POTOČNIK, COMMISSIONER FOR ENVIRONMENT WITH BUSINESSEUROPE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR GENERAL

24 MARCH 2010, BRUSSELS

EU ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

BUSINESSEUROPE is pleased to see that the EU 2020 Strategy puts a lot of emphasis on the need to promote *sustainable growth*. This is the signal that the Commission is determined to pay a lot of attention to balancing economic, environmental and social objectives. This is fully supported by BUSINESSEUROPE.

At a time when it is vital to relaunch growth, BUSINESSEUROPE underlines that many European companies are market leaders in eco-friendly products and solutions. The environmental challenges present global market opportunities for European companies. We encourage the Commission to develop smart policies that foster continuous innovation in environmental technologies by European companies. This should be done in a way that is compatible with the preservation of the competitiveness of European industry as a whole.

7th Community Environment Action Programme

In 2010 and 2011, the European Commission is going to carry out an overall assessment of the 6th Community Environment Action Programme (2002 – 2012) and to draw up its proposal for the next long-term EU policy framework in the environmental field.

The exercise is key for European companies as it lays the foundations of the environmental policy in terms of long-term priorities, levels of ambition and measures to be implemented by the EU. BUSINESSEUROPE calls on DG Environment to involve European industry in this exercise from the very start.

Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Resource Efficiency

BUSINESSEUROPE supports the need to move towards a more sustainable use of resources and a resource-efficient EU economy. As a “solution-provider”, European business is committed to work with policy-makers in order to set the right course for forward-looking policy developments on natural resources.



The 2010 review of the Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources is an opportunity to do so. The following elements should be considered:

→ *Ensure a sound knowledge base*

A number of critical questions should be examined thoroughly and in close cooperation with all interested parties in order to ensure an in-depth understanding of the nature and scale of the challenges. This “knowledge” debate should be sufficiently mature before possible policy initiatives are assessed.

→ *Provide an integrated policy approach*

A successful natural resources policy needs to build on the experience gained from existing initiatives and to give equal weight to the three inter-linked dimensions of sustainability.

→ *Avoid artificial target-based policies*

The concept of resource efficiency can hardly be restricted to a simple numerical target, such as a universal resource productivity target or to a percentage of recycled content in materials. Such strict approach could be counter-productive and jeopardise innovation.

Industrial Emissions

DG Environment’s work on an Emission Trading Scheme for NO_x and SO₂ emissions:

BUSINESSEUROPE has examined different policy approaches for dealing with NO_x and SO₂ emissions. It has led us to the conclusion that an EU-wide trading scheme cannot be the way forward, given the strong objections prompted by its putative environmental and economic benefits. A central point is that industrial emissions of these gases are already effectively regulated by several international agreements, European legislations and national measures such as site-specific permit conditions or taxation. An EU-wide trading scheme would bring double regulation and unnecessary costs.

Proposal for an Industrial Emissions Directive:

The existing Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive is already widely implemented and is delivering. BUSINESSEUROPE believes that the European institutions should keep changes to the directive proportionate in order not to upset the functioning of a well established system and to ensure that it remains a cost-effective piece of legislation. Therefore, the overwhelming majority of BUSINESSEUROPE members support the Council first reading Common Position, which has reached a well crafted compromise on which institutions should build.