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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT BREAKFAST ON EU ENERGY EFFICIENCY POLICY

**ORGANISED BY MEP BENDT BENDTSEN AND BUSINESSEUROPE
13 APRIL 2011**

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY RUDI THOMAES MEMBER OF BUSINESSEUROPE'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND CEO OF VBO-FEB

Commissioner Oettinger,
Members of the European Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Context and objective of the event:

- This breakfast has been organised with MEP Bendt Bendtsen in order to stimulate the debate with the European Parliament and the European Commission on European energy efficiency policy.
- Several weeks after publication of the Energy Efficiency Plan 2011 and a few months before the Commission's legislative proposals, this is the right time. In June, the Energy Council also expects to adopt its conclusions on the Commission's proposals.
- What is more, we are not the only ones to be discussing this issue: most of the 135 events being organised this week in Brussels as part of the EU Sustainable Energy Week will examine the same theme.

Importance of improving energy efficiency and industry's commitment:

- Today, the need to move towards more efficient energy use is not disputed. Everybody agrees in recognising the strategic importance of this question, whatever the motivation:
 - Climate agenda, to meet reduction targets for CO₂ emissions
 - Security of supply agenda, to minimise our energy dependence
 - Competitiveness agenda, to keep the European Union in the vanguard of the most competitive economies. For example, in its 12th Five-Year Plan, China sets the goal of improving its energy intensity as an important component of its strategy.



- For many years now, European companies have been fully aware of what is at stake. For this reason, and more than any other sector of the economy, industry has significantly upgraded its own energy intensity [around 30% progress in energy efficiency in industry in EU-27 since 1990] and generated a market for the most energy-efficient products and technologies.
- The actual energy efficiency of many industry sectors is even higher when not only the production phase but the whole lifecycle of their products is taken into account: materials like aluminium, steel or plastic can save enormous amounts of energy and emissions for example through making lighter transport vehicles or through insulating buildings.

BUSINESSEUROPE's general assessment of the Energy Efficiency Plan 2011:

- In this context, BUSINESSEUROPE supports the Commission's efforts and welcomes publication of the Energy Efficiency Plan 2011. It highlights the tremendous perspectives for improvement in this area, especially in the buildings sector which accounts for almost 40% of energy consumed in the European Union.
- Here is a copy of our latest position paper which comments on the main proposals advanced by the European Commission. A copy has also been distributed to all the participants.
- Energy Efficiency Plan 2011 rightly proposes a holistic approach, targeting the various levels in the energy supply chain, from energy generation through energy service providers to end-users. The diversity of industrial representatives in the room this morning illustrates this, and will enrich our debate.
- Clearly, we formulate a number of reservations about some of the Commission's proposals (as always, the devil is in the detail), but that does not detract from the fact that the Plan goes in the right direction and, I am convinced, will be a powerful catalyst for achieving the target of a 20% improvement in energy efficiency by 2020.

Two words of caution:

- Without going into details at this stage in the discussion, allow me to underline two key points:
 - The EU already has a fairly substantial legislative arsenal. To mention but a few examples, there are directives on eco-design and energy labelling, the directive on the energy performance of buildings or the European framework for green public procurement. Therefore, the potential offered by these European instruments should be fully exploited before embarking on new EU legislation, and the priority must continue to be effective implementation in the member states.



- In several member states (Netherlands, Germany, UK, Denmark, Belgium among others), long-term agreements involving industry are already in place and help to meet national objectives. Therefore, the success of Energy Efficiency Plan 2011 will depend mainly on the ability to find the right balance between measures taken at European level and the need to ensure that member states have sufficient flexibility to pursue the actions they are already developing.

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