



, 22.10.2008

EU Member States Must Not Be Allowed to Water Down Climate and Energy Package

The Spokespersons of the European Green Party have severely criticised several EU Member States for attempting to backtrack on many of the key CO2 emission reduction targets contained in the EU's climate and energy package.

EGP Co-Spokesperson Ulrike Lunacek said: "During the EU Environment Council in Luxembourg on Monday 20th October, several Environment Ministers, led by those of Poland and Italy, attempted to weaken the EU's targets for reductions in carbon emissions. By doing so, those governments have clearly shown that they put the short-term interests of certain industries ahead of the need to prevent the most disastrous impacts of climate change. The irresponsible behaviour of those member states occurred on the same day that a new report from the highly respected ngo WWF revealed that climate change is accelerating at a quicker rate than previously predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change(IPCC). This report offers yet more evidence of how vital it is that EU Member states commit to an emission reduction target of at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2020, regardless of whether or not other leading economies in the world also make this commitment. We also agree with Daniel Cohn-Bendit, co-president of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament, that President Nicholas Sarkozy, as representative of the current French Presidency of the EU, has made a potentially very costly mistake by postponing the decision on adoption of the Climate and Energy Package to the next European Council in December, where individual member states will be allowed to derail the whole process by using their right of veto. "

EGP Co-Spokesperson Philippe Lamberts continued: "As European Greens, we will be continuing to put pressure on the EU so that those member states who are attempting to use the current financial crisis as an excuse to weaken the Climate and Energy Package and win exemptions for heavily polluting areas of industry are not allowed to do so. Not only are the arguments used by certain industrial lobbyists, including those employed by car manufacturers, and their political allies unacceptable

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from an environmental point of view, but they don't stand up to scrutiny from an economic perspective. Rather than supporting outdated and wasteful industries, EU governments must grasp the economic opportunities offered by moving towards a low carbon economy, including the possibilities of millions of new jobs which could be created by investment in renewable energies. In the run up to the next international climate change negotiations in December in Poznan, Poland, it is crucial that the EU does not shirk its responsibility to show, by its actions and not just by making noble-sounding statements, that it is a global leader in the fight against climate change."
