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EU leaders in shameful retreat on climate package

The Spokespersons of the European Green Party have said that the climate and energy package agreed by the EU heads of government and state at their summit in Brussels today is a watered-down compromise which shows a woeful lack of ambition.

EGP Co-Spokesperson Ulrike Lunacek said : "This could have been one of the most memorable days in the history of the EU if the governments meeting in Brussels had lived up to their commitments to combat climate change and showed by their actions that they were up to the huge challenge posed by climate change . The reality though is that the EU's member states have once again succumbed to the pressure exerted by big industry and put short-sighted national interests ahead of the future of our planet and humanity. The EU has set an appalling example to the rest of the world, particularly at a time when the negotiators meeting in Poznan at the UN climate conference were hoping that the EU would present a strong and effective package which would encourage other countries, particularly emerging countries, to play their part. We are particularly disappointed by the exceptions that have been made for several industrial sectors from the auctioning of emissions permits under the emissions trading schemes. We also disagree completely with the unethical and counterproductive decision to increase the levels of external offsetting so that industries and countries will be allowed to outsource a large percentage of their emissions reductions to countries outside the EU. It now falls to the European Parliament's negotiators to salvage as much as they can from the package before it is presented for a final vote by Parliament next week."

EGP Co-Spokesperson Philippe Lamberts continued: "One of the few real achievements of this Summit is the decision to endorse this week's agreement on EU legislation on renewable energies. Greens, particularly our colleagues in the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament, fought hard to ensure that this legislation will ensure major investment and job creation in one of the key industries of the future. In terms of the economic recovery package agreed on today, we Greens would have gone for a much more comprehensive and far reaching package and so will continue to argue for a real Green New Deal for Europe, which will both combat climate change and stimulate economic growth, creating millions of "green collar "jobs in the renewables sector and other areas of the green economy. It is important to stress that in our view, a stimulus package should be investment-based, not consumption based. As for the Irish Government's decision to hold a second referendum on the Lisbon Treaty,

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we hope that this will lead to the speedy ratification of the Lisbon Treaty so that the EU can move forward and that all our citizens can benefit from the advances that the Treaty, while being far from perfect, would bring."
