

Comments to the Green Paper - A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy by TERRA Mileniul III

While welcoming the draft energy policy of the European Union, we express our concern regarding continued support for the use of fossil fuels and nuclear power. But first of all, the present strategy is assuming that current energy practices should continue in the future, while decoupling energy consumption from economy growth is only vaguely mentioned, that is probably why the main focus is on energy supply and how it will be secured.

From our perspective the focus should move to demand side management and the strategy should start from the appropriate needs of consumers, including better management in energy efficiency and energy conservation. For these very reasons each Member State should provide prognoses for economic development that would include an inventory of all possibilities for reducing energy intensity, in order to decouple energy consumption from economic growth. We should consider that Member States are in different stages of development, there are differences in geographic and climatic regime, but a minimum standard of energy intensity per unit of product should be adopted. An international agreement on energy efficiency and a market for white certificate could contribute to energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emissions. Regarding the improvement of energy efficiency for appliances we appreciate that if public procurement rules request standards for them, their quality will improve.

It is also important for each Member State to evaluate and provide reliable data on the potential of renewable energy sources and an action plan with binding targets should be adopted at the level of EU.

The strategy should be built based on the utilization of EU's internal resources and only the deficit should be covered from non-EU countries (excluding especially those with high political risks).

Regarding the energy supplied from fossil fuels we propose that its price incorporate the costs of CO₂ emissions produced along the entire life cycles, as well as all other environmental costs. Carbon sequestration and "clean" coal are not proven technologies and would require perhaps decades of investment in research and development. On the other hand, it is clear that renewable energy technologies have turned economic and a proper energy mix for the European Union should exclude the further promotion of fossil fuels, while offering security of supply.

Regarding nuclear energy we consider that it is not an option for sustainable development. We need to underline that due to its numerous problems and impacts related to uranium mining, radioactive waste management, safety, decommissioning, externalities, it will continue to bring major distortions to the European energy market. A genuine single energy market will definitely not work with heavy subsidies for nuclear power and fossil fuels.

The draft policy recognizes that Europe must act now to limit the forthcoming rise in global temperature, in particular on energy efficiency and renewable energy. The European Union needs to set clear binding targets in this respect and monitor their implementation closely if the climate change challenge is to be taken on seriously. The promotion of investments in research and development of "clean" coal, carbon sequestration and nuclear fission is not in line with EU's climate change commitment. Setting a target for the share of low-carbon energy sources (to be read nuclear and coal) in the EU's energy mix is a non-ambitious measure to address climate change and energy security. The energy policy should address the phase-out of fossil fuel and nuclear power, not the promotion of less dirty such technologies.

Lavinia Andrei President , Ionut Apostol Executive director

