



Wednesday 8th May 2011, Brussels

Open Letter To: Members of European Parliament, Commissioners Oettinger, Hedegaard, Potočnik, Ciolos, Kallas, Tajani, Hahn, Piebalgs and Member State permanent representatives

CC: President Barroso, European Commission

Subject: *A higher priority, in practice, for energy savings.*

Dear Members of European Parliament, Commissioners, and Member State permanent representatives;

When considering the demands of sustainable energy security, it must first be considered whether we are looking at how we **use** energy today, or simply at how we can **replace** it. The Quaker Council for European Affairs urges you to consider the former. The sustainability challenge is well identified, and 'business as usual' will not get us there. We urgently need a new appreciation of our energy choices, reflecting their true social and environmental costs.

Recommendations

- 💡 QCEA recommends a far higher political priority for energy demand reduction. Be ambitious! An overwhelming body of research has shown that behavioural and cultural changes are the most powerful, cost-effective and fastest means to achieving a sustainable future (see attached briefing).
- 💡 Following the Commission's Energy Efficiency Plan of March 2011, QCEA advocates that the legislative proposals due in June 2011, to put that plan into practice, put the urgency and action back into the energy savings agenda. To reflect this, there must be greater prioritization in funding for energy efficiency and savings, particularly in the built environment, in the next Multiannual Financial Framework.
- 💡 QCEA urges the Commission to have the courage, as the European Parliament has had, to recognise that being on track to miss a target by half (as is the case with the energy savings target) is sufficient evidence to incentivize further action **now** to make that target binding. Putting it off for first one, two, then three more years is not evidence-based policy making.

🌱 QCEA seeks to draw the attention of those in the policy making world to the underestimated role of individuals -- the public have been greatly underestimated in their potential to deliver on energy policy. There are growing numbers of people changing their lives to live in a more sustainable manner. Projects like the Transition Network and the UK-based Living Witness Project illustrate the commitment and vision of European citizens to live in ways that contribute to a world that is *transformed*, that is *sustainable* and that is *just*, challenging the rest of us to ask just how progressive our vision is today.

As individuals, we can all share the joys of a sustainable life. To do so, we need to develop a new, closer relationship with the energy we use, which will encourage us to value our energy more, and to use it less. In sustainability terms, the key question is not whether we have to accept being powered by nuclear, coal, shale gas or agrofuels, but how long we remain too comfortable to bring our careless consumption under control.

The challenges facing the world today - climate change, energy supply, growing economic inequality, global poverty, financial crises, food security, water stress and conflicts relating to many of these issues - are increasingly recognized as being interlinked. Minimising our impact on the planet and our use of its resources is the best option we have for a sustainable, peaceful and just future, in Europe, and the wider world.

Yours Sincerely,

The Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA)

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