

Günther OETTINGER

EU Commissioner for Energy

Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

Speech by Commissioner Oettinger at the Presentation of
Greenpeace / DLR – Study "Energy [R]evolution" on the future of
European energy use

Brussels, 8 July 2010

Ladies and gentlemen,

I welcome the publication of the study. The title "energy [r]evolution" signals that we are faced with challenges. The solutions in response to the challenges will have major impacts, some like a revolution - others will resemble more an evolution. Your study is an important contribution to this debate.

The Commission has begun work on the long term vision for European energy policy up to 2050. This is a core part to achieve a low carbon, resource efficient, and climate resilient economy by 2050. Our 2020 agenda lays the foundations. But it will not be enough. In parallel to the policies and programmes which Europe needs to deliver on its 2020 commitments, the 2050 horizon must not get out of sight. However, as you have outlined in the two possible energy pathways (named basic and advanced) in your study it becomes clear that the transition to a low-carbon energy system will involve bold changes which will affect the lives of everyone.

I am encouraged by the main message which comes from the scenario analyses of your study: that very substantial decarbonisation of energy in Europe by 2050 is both technically and economically feasible.

You have looked at the characteristics of possible solutions for Europe's energy system. In these solutions, I note two essential factors:

1. To remove barriers in the electricity market and to make energy infrastructure smarter and stronger. This is important; it is in all of our interests. We are looking at step changes in the planning, construction and operation of infrastructures, in the integration and operation of markets.

2. To set the right incentives on the demand side. Energy efficiency has indeed a large potential which is still not exploited.

Finally, let me underline your work on smart grids, super grids and virtual power plants. Here again, the infrastructure requirements are particularly important for intermittent energy sources like wind and solar. We are faced with the problem to combine wind energy – in the northern part of the continent – with solar energy – in the South. This calls for an EU-level solution!

Europe-wide development of infrastructures, Europe-wide development of resources – the two go together. As we move to a renewed energy system, each Member State should benefit from the common market and truly European infrastructures to develop their indigenous energy resources to best effect.

Again, the challenges are many but the shared benefits are evident. This is another point highlighted in your analysis: the long-run accumulated benefits of fuel savings will be enough to fund the entire additional investment needed. However, we have to think of smart financing which allows to balance the burden of up front investments required now with the benefits of low fuel costs in the future. I think this is an important message to pass! It is about economics but also about public acceptance.

With our achievements in EU energy policy in the past few years, we are in a position to work together. The foundations have been laid, notably with the 3rd internal energy package and the climate and energy package.

I look forward to the discussions your work will stimulate. It comes at a very good time. The Commission plans for a Roadmap Communication in spring 2011. In such a venture – a 2050 energy policy roadmap – a diversity of perspectives is needed. The 2050 energy policy roadmap is an opportunity for cooperation amongst all interested parties. I do not see it as an academic exercise, rather as a vehicle for building consensus amongst us on possible development paths for energy production and use in Europe and in particular, on the decisions of strategic importance needed today.

Thank you!