

By e-mail to: eac-schools-consult@ec.europa.eu

14 December 2007

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The Energy Saving Trust is pleased to have the opportunity to input into the European Commission's consultation '*Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*'. Our expertise is in the field of sustainable energy and not in education *per se*. However, I believe that some of our recent research may be of interest to you in the context of your current consultation.

The research in question is outlined in our recent publication '*The role of education and schools in shaping energy-related consumer behaviour*', which explores the role that education and schools could play in delivering energy-related behaviour change. This appears to be relevant to questions 3 of your consultation: '*How can schools systems contribute to supporting long-term sustainable economic growth in Europe?*' The Stern Review<sup>1</sup> set out in detail how economic and social costs of climate change will mount over the coming century and concluded that stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere and avoiding dangerous warming was not only possible at a cost of 1% of global GDP, but is an investment with benefits that will far outweigh the costs of inaction. Thus tackling climate change has an important role to play in supporting sustainable economic growth in Europe.

We strongly believe that education and schools more generally have a key role to play in tackling climate change – not simply by tackling the emissions resulting from schools buildings – but their ability to facilitate energy-related behaviour change. Our research concludes that education has the potential to put in place the necessary foundations for delivering energy-related behaviour change and that educational activity should underpin all existing work to deliver energy-related behaviour change. It also presents evidence that education can a) play a role in changing children's behaviour in the short-term and b) result in children encouraging and enabling household behaviour change. Schools could also have a role in facilitating action on climate change within the communities in which they are situated, however, few projects appear to have been initiated to promote such involvement and as such there is currently little available data on impacts.

We therefore believe it would be appropriate for consideration to be given to requiring all member states to implement national schools engagement programmes, which should include awareness raising and advice. This should be supported by action to ensure sufficient resources are put in place to improve the energy performance of school buildings.

I hope you will find our report an interesting read. Please do not hesitate to contact me (on: +44 (0) 131 555 7912 or at: [elaine.watson@est.org.uk](mailto:elaine.watson@est.org.uk)) should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

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Strategy Manager

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<sup>1</sup> Cabinet Office - HM Treasury, Nicolas Stern, 2007, The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review