

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON COMPETITIVENESS, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

CONTEXT

The Commission announced in its Communication on “Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme: a policy framework to strengthen EU manufacturing - towards a more integrated approach for industrial policy” the creation of a High Level Group on Competitiveness, Energy and the Environment.

OBJECTIVE

The Commission decided to establish a High Level Group on Competitiveness, Energy and the Environment to contribute to examining the links between industrial, energy and environmental policies and ensuring the coherence of individual initiatives, whilst improving both sustainability and competitiveness, notably building upon input from research in this field.

The High Level Group will give advice:

- to foster consistency of policy and legislative initiatives in the domains of competitiveness, energy and environmental policies, through closer coordination and the development of an integrated approach;
- to contribute to creating a more stable and predictable regulatory framework.

MANDATE

The High Level Group is mandated to provide advice to policy makers at Community and national levels, industry and civil society organizations in the most appropriate format on issues where competitiveness, energy and environmental policies interrelate and impact on basic and intermediate product industries. The mandate is given for two years: it may be extended by Commission Decision.

In this context, the Commission will invite the High Level Group to provide advice for action, in particular, in connection with the following issues:

- The functioning of energy markets, particularly the electricity and gas markets;
- Climate change, particularly the emissions trading scheme, energy-efficiency and renewables, including energy taxation and removal of harmful subsidies;
- The implementation of the Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste and related legislation;
- Improvement of resource efficiency;
- The development and uptake of environmental and other innovative technologies;
- Concrete implementation of better regulation principles

The High Level Group will fully integrate the international aspects into their reflections and opinions.

PROPOSED APPROACH

The High Level Group will establish its own working method and will decide on the items to be included in the agenda for discussion. Discussions on the different topics will be conducted on the basis of documents prepared by the Commission, industry, NGOs, other participating parties or by external consultants, where appropriate.

Each member of the High Level Group will nominate a personal representative to the *sherpa* sub-group.

The *sherpa* sub-group will prepare the discussions, position papers and advice for actions and/or policy measures to be endorsed by the High Level Group; it will work in close contact with the Commission services.

The High Level Group may decide on the most appropriate way to feeding its reflections with any substantive studies or contributions, including the creation, where appropriate, of a limited number of ad-hoc groups. The members of the *sherpa* sub-group may be involved in this process.

The High Level Group will be co-chaired by the Commissioners for Enterprise and Industry, Environment, Competition and Energy, according to the subjects being addressed and on the basis of a revolving chairmanship. The Commissioners will chair the meetings or parts of meetings pertaining to their portfolio competencies. The practical implementation of this principle will be decided on a case by case basis ahead of every meeting.

The secretariat of the High Level Group, the Sherpa sub-group and the ad-hoc groups will be provided by DG ENTR, DG ENV and DG TREN.

REPORTING AND DELIVERABLES

The High Level Group shall provide advice, in the most appropriate format (e.g. statement, report). This advice may be addressed to policy makers at Community and national level, industry, and civil society organisations. The Group may also decide to make publicly available the non-confidential conclusions of the meetings, outlining decisions taken and progress made.

MEMBERSHIP

The Vice-President of the European Commission, responsible for Enterprise and Industry, Mr. Gunter Verheugen

The Member of the European Commission, responsible for Environment, Mr. Stavros Dimas

The Member of the European Commission, responsible for Competition, Ms. Neelie Kroes

The Member of the European Commission, responsible for Energy, Mr. Andris Piebalgs

The High Level Group of up to 28 participants is as wide as required to ensure that relevant stakeholders are represented, and as targeted as possible to ensure that they can contribute relevant input.

Representation is at the highest level from different administrations and organisations including the Commission, Member States, European Parliament, and relevant stakeholders, notably industry and civil society, inter alia, consumers, trade unions, NGOs and regulators. Members of the High Level Group are appointed for their expertise in a personal capacity, without replacement by deputies or nominated representatives.

WORK PLAN AND INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

The High-level Group will meet whenever appropriate as often as required and as long as relevant matters within the scope of its mandate will require debate and advice by the HLG. It shall conclude its work 24 months after the adoption of the Commission's Decision creating it. The Commission may decide, in the meantime, on a possible extension of the duration. About two meetings of the *sherpa* sub-group are expected to be necessary to prepare the debates at the High Level Group.

The *sherpa*'s sub-group will set up a work plan to be approved by the High Level Group in its first meeting.