CITIZENS’ SUMMARY
EU plan for a competitive low-carbon economy by 2050

WHAT’S THE ISSUE?

• The EU is examining ways to make its economy more climate-friendly and less energy-intensive by 2050 – looking at key sectors such as power, industry, transport, buildings and farming.

• To keep global warming below 2°C, the world will need to halve its emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by 2050 (compared with 1990 levels). Developed countries will need to reduce more – by 80-95% by 2050.

• In 2050, with a forecast world population of 9 billion, intense competition for oil, gas, and other resources is likely to make fossil fuels much more expensive – unless we can improve our energy efficiency and invest in non-fossil energy sources.

• Other major economies are also investing heavily in clean technologies. If Europe stands still, we risk losing our lead, together with the jobs and growth it brings.

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

• The new EU plan or 'roadmap' sets out the cost-effective route for transforming Europe into a competitive 'low-carbon' economy by mid-century.

• This would involve cuts to the EU's greenhouse emissions by 80% by 2050 (compared with 1990 levels) entirely through measures taken within Europe. Intermediate cuts of 25% by 2020, 40% by 2030 and 60% by 2040 would be needed.

• Improving energy efficiency, for instance by investing in energy-efficient buildings and transport, can make the biggest contribution to reducing emissions.

• Clean electricity – produced almost entirely without greenhouse emissions – will also have a major role to play, partly replacing fossil fuels for heating and transport (e.g. electric cars).

WHAT WOULD THE BENEFITS BE?

• Further developing low-energy technologies, such as renewable energy sources and electric vehicles, and investing in low carbon infrastructure will stimulate growth and help create new jobs and save existing jobs. Refurbishing buildings, for instance, will provide big opportunities in the construction industry.

• The EU would halve oil and gas imports. This would improve Europe's energy security, strengthen our resilience to future oil price increases and cut our fuel import bill by a considerable amount.

• Air pollution would be drastically reduced, leading to big savings in health costs and pollution control measures.
WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

- As the roadmap is discussed within the EU, the Commission will propose more detailed initiatives for individual industries. These will be in line with the plan and with the EU's Europe 2020 growth strategy (particularly resource-efficient Europe)