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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council

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No. Cion doc.: 5644/14 CLIMA 6 ENV 60 ENER 27 IND 24 COMPET 43 MI 69 ECOFIN 65
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Subject: Communication from the Commission on "A policy framework for climate and
energy in the period from 2020 to 2030"
- Policy debate
= Delegations' replies

Delegations will find in the Annex the replies received from BE to the Presidency questions, contained in document 6422/14, for the policy debate on the abovementioned communication, during the Council (Environment) on 3 March 2014.

BELGIUM

- *Q1: Do you consider that the overall approach of the 2030 framework for climate and energy policies provides the appropriate balance between ambition, in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with the long-term climate objective, and flexibility for Member States to define the most appropriate ways to transition to a low-carbon economy taking into account their preferences, specific circumstances and capacities?*
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- Belgium is an advocate of a unilateral domestic GHG EU target of at least 40% in 2030 with respect to 1990. The adoption of any reinforcement of the GHG target beyond 40% could be considered in the context of an international agreement.
 - Belgium agrees with a structural reform of the ETS with two objectives: a robust carbon price as to encourage low carbon investment and an adequate protection against carbon leakage in 2021-2030. However the proposal of the Commission for a "market stability reserve mechanism' on its own may not suffice. Belgium therefore calls for additional measures;
 - Concerning the non-ETS, "polluter pays", fairness and solidarity make up the basic principles for effort sharing. Any future new distributional factors should not merely be based upon GDP/capita, but should also consider cost-effectiveness and the inherent and specific characteristics of the Member States.
 - With regard to renewable energy, our country supports an EU target of at least 27% renewable energy by 2030; the proposed instruments seem inadequate. Belgium therefore pleads for a robust and strengthened governance framework.
 - Belgium calls for an appropriate ambition level or a binding 2030 EU target for energy efficiency, be it at sectorial level.

- Policy at the European level is needed in order to support the various objectives (CO₂, renewable energy, energy efficiency). Particular attention should be given to: support measures for energy efficiency , R & D and innovation , SMEs and tax harmonization. In this regard, our country wishes to point out the importance of a continuation of the Fuel Quality Directive, also after 2020.
- Regarding shale gas Belgium considers that the proposed ' recommendations ' provides insufficient guarantees on harmonization. Belgium therefore calls upon the COM to come up with a legislative proposal .

• *What do you see as the next steps in the discussion on climate and energy policies until 2030, taking into account the need to provide certainty for investors in the longer term and prepare for the international climate negotiations, and which aspects of the proposed framework would as a priority need to be further discussed and defined, for example in relation to efforts at EU and Member State level and in different sectors?*

- In response to the second question Belgium wants the European Council to agree as soon as possible and no later than in June 2014 on the main elements of the policy framework for climate and energy, including on the EU targets. In this sense Belgium pushes to have a substantial debate on the package during the European Council of 20-21 March coupled with a high level of ambition.
- The adoption of any reinforcement of the GHG target beyond 40% following the developments on the road to COP21 in Paris could consequently be considered in the context of an international agreement.