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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 MT 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.

MALTA

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?

Malta reiterates its support for the agreed global objective to limit the increase in global average temperature below 2°C above preindustrial levels, and strongly supports the EU in its commitment to achieve an ambitious, fair, balanced and legally binding agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, applicable to all Parties, to be agreed at the COP in Paris in 2015, and to be implemented from 2020.

In this context Malta believes that it will be important for the EU to agree on its greenhouse gas emission reduction objective for 2030 as part of the EU's negotiating position for the upcoming international climate change negotiations, and to be able to communicate such objective well in advance of the Paris Conference.

Malta appreciates the UN Secretary General's prioritisation of climate dialogue and considers the Climate Summit of world leaders in September 2014 as an important event to manifest global leaders' commitment to tackle climate challenge.

Malta welcomes the Commission Communication on the 2030 Framework as an important basis for timely discussions on these key areas of EU policy, and supports the establishment of a roadmap with a view to reaching early agreement on an ambitious and realistic EU position for emissions reductions up to 2030, in line with the agreed EU objectives for 2050.

Malta's believes that the 2030 Framework should deliver sufficiently ambitious policy to drive environmentally sustainable economic growth and enhance EU access to cleaner energy sources. At the same time, the 2030 Framework should provide the necessary flexibility to allow Member States to make the shift to a low carbon economy in the most cost-effective way possible. This should be done without jeopardising the security of energy supply and the affordability of energy for households and industry alike, whilst also safeguarding national and European competitiveness.

Malta strongly believes that increasing both ambition and flexibility are required to ensure the success of this framework, and that neither one should be sacrificed at the expense of the other.

The 2030 Framework should therefore take into account the specific geophysical, economic and social circumstances of Member States (such as issues related to economies of scale) which could limit their individual contributions to the overall EU goals. Malta's conviction in this regard stems from experience in the attainment of current climate and energy targets. Using Renewable Energy as an example, Malta's typography and size physically limits its RES potential, and this reality will need to be factored in a future process; the same applies to Energy Efficiency, in view of this summer's review of the Energy Efficiency Directive.

In this regard Malta recognises the need for an ambitious Framework for climate and energy policies to achieve the EU's long term climate and sustainability goals. However such policies should be framed in a manner which fully recognises that the progress to a low carbon economy should be achieved in a cost-effective manner, also taking into consideration the fact that delayed action could result in relatively much higher costs in the longer-term.

Malta believes that the distribution of additional effort between Member States will be one of the crucial elements in discussions on the 2030 Framework. Malta therefore agrees that discussions on the criteria as to how such distribution should take place, and the flexibilities which will be made available to Member States in contributing to the overall EU effort, should start as soon as possible.

Malta believes that Flexibilities must also be considered in terms of the Governance Structure proposed in the Communication, which is key to providing the necessary flexibility for Member States to define their own most cost-effective transition to a low carbon economy according to their specific circumstances and energy security needs. In this regard, Malta is highly concerned by the lack of clarity of the proposed Governance Structure and reiterates its request for further information from the Commission on the scope of the Governance process and how it envisages that it would work in practice. Malta considers such clarity as a foundation for upcoming negotiations.

Malta notes that the Communication retains the existing approach with respect to the additional effort regarding non-ETS emissions. Malta therefore enquires whether there has been any consideration of alternative approaches, such as the possibility of applying a similar approach for non-ETS emissions as is being proposed for renewable energy.

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?

Malta believes that in order for the EU to be able to agree on an EU greenhouse gas emission reduction objective for 2030 as part of the its negotiating position for the upcoming international climate change negotiations, a roadmap should be established precisely with the aim of achieving early agreement on an ambitious and realistic EU position for emissions reductions up to 2030, in line with the agreed EU objectives for 2050.

The roadmap should take into account strategic considerations in respect of the tabling of the EU's proposed emission reduction contribution, as well as the commitment made by the EU at the international level to communicate its emission reduction contribution well in advance of the Paris Conference.

Malta believes that further substantial and technical work will be required in order to identify the most appropriate mechanisms for achieving the overarching goals on the basis of considerations, such as:

- defining the scope of EU-wide targets and the level of legally binding or voluntary quantified sharing of effort among Member States and sectors;
- defining the coverage of the ETS and non-ETS sectors;
- determining the role of voluntary approaches by Member States; and,
- setting out a clear and well defined framework for the Governance Structure.

Malta believes that a key element which will need to be analysed and discussed further will be to obtain clarity on the distribution of the additional EU effort between Member States, which should include defining the criteria and underlying principles on the basis of which sharing of effort should be established. In this respect, Malta believes the Commission should carry out additional assessment of impacts on Member States based on the principles that would be agreed and taking into account Member States' specific situations and limitations including economic, financial, and geophysical specificities. Member States should be fully and actively involved in the development of such impact assessments. Furthermore, a 'competitiveness assessment' of the framework, should be carried out prior to the start of internal EU negotiation on the detailed design of the 2030 Climate and Energy Package. This would help to prevent any possible distortion of competition.