



Brussels, 16th March 2011

Raising the EU 2020 climate target at the Spring European Council

Dear President Van Rompuy and Prime Minister Orban,

In recent weeks, oil prices soared above \$100 US per barrel, underlining once again the importance of a resource-efficient European economy that is much more resilient to fossil fuel price volatility. Our over-dependence on fossil fuels is hampering economic recovery and growth.

We would welcome a discussion on the European Commission Communication “A Roadmap for moving to a low carbon economy in 2050” at the 24 and 25 March European Council.

The scientific and moral imperative for climate protection is as urgent as ever: human-induced climate change impacts mostly the poor and vulnerable people living in developing countries. NGOs, therefore, welcome the emergence of a long-term EU climate analysis and vision. Investing in a modern and resource-efficient economy will enable the EU to close the innovation and investment gaps with its closest economic competitors.

NGOs strongly encourage European leaders to adopt a greenhouse gas target of at least 30% domestic emission reductions by 2020 compared to 1990 levels¹. Recent research² commissioned by the German government points out that limiting our ambition to a mere 20 per cent carbon target for 2020 will actually harm the EU’s economic growth and employment. Other research³ shows that moving to 30% comes with significantly lower public healthcare costs due to the co-benefit of enhanced air quality.

We call for your strong personal engagement in the debate on the EU’s low carbon future. Your decisions with regard to the European Council’s agenda and priorities are vital in

creating a framework in which European industries and citizens can operate in a sustainable manner. Specific policies and instruments are required to achieve these ambitious emission cuts. We therefore also ask you to:

- Speak out in support of a 30% EU 2020 reduction target, make this topic a priority of the next European Council and call on the European Commission to present legislative proposals for a move to a 30% target.
- Agree on binding energy saving policies and measures, including economy-wide energy savings targets for Member States. Current energy prices and their impact on the EU's economy show that this has to happen as soon as possible.
- Engage with other EU member states, the European Commission and the European Parliament to develop new EU financial mechanisms for leveraging private investments in energy modernisation and emission reduction measures in Central and Eastern Europe.

The European economy could be shifted into a new high-employment and resource-efficient equilibrium through a decisive move to a 30% target. Such a move would also make Europe more resilient to fuel price shocks and fuel imports.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss these proposals further.

Yours sincerely,



Matthias Duwe, Director of Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe on behalf of CIDSE, Friends of the Earth Europe, Germanwatch, Greenpeace, Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), Health Care Without Harm, INFORSE Europe, Sandbag, WWF EU Policy Office.

Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe is Europe's largest coalition working on climate and energy issues. With over 140 member organisations in 25 European countries, CAN-Europe works to prevent dangerous climate change and promote sustainable energy and environment policy in Europe.

¹ [“Why Europe should strengthen its 2020 climate action”](#), CAN Europe

² [“A New Growth Path for Europe, generating Prosperity and Jobs in the Low-Carbon Economy”](#), Potsdam Institute on Climate Impact Research, Oxford University, Sorbonne, E3M-Lab

³ [“Acting NOW for better health: A 30% reduction target for EU climate policy”](#), Health and Environment Alliance (Heal)