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The Commission today presented its new strategy for a competitive, sustainable and secure energy. The Communication "Energy 2020" defines the energy priorities for the next ten years and sets the actions to be taken in order to tackle the challenges of saving energy, achieving a market with competitive prizes and secure supplies, boosting technological leadership, and effectively negotiate with our international partners.

Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger said: "The energy challenge is one of the greatest tests for us all. Putting our energy system onto a new, more sustainable and secure path may take time but ambitious decisions need to be taken now. To have an efficient, competitive and low-carbon economy we have to europeanise our energy policy and focus on a few but pressing priorities."

In the Communication adopted today, the Commission identifies five top priorities. On the basis of these priorities and the action presented, the Commission will come forward with concrete legislative initiatives and proposals within the next 18 months. This communication also sets the agenda for the discussion by Heads of States and Governments at the very first EU Summit on Energy on 4 February 2011.

The Commission proposes to focus its initiatives on the two sectors with the biggest energy saving potential: transport and buildings. To help house owners and local entities to finance renovation and energy saving measures, the Commission will propose investment incentives and innovative financial instruments by mid 2011. The public sector should take energy efficiency into consideration when buying works, services or products. In the industrial sector, energy efficiency certificates could be an incentive for companies to invest in technology which uses less energy.

The Commission sets a target date for completing the internal energy market. By 2015 no Member State should be isolated. Over the next ten years, overall energy infrastructure investments in the EU of Euro 1 trillion are needed. To speed up essential EU strategic projects, the Commission proposes simplified and shorter building permits, setting a maximum time frame until final authorisation and EU funding. A "one-stop shop" should coordinate all the permit requests needed to realize a project.

It is proposed that the EU coordinates its energy policy vis-a-vis third countries, especially in its relation with key partners. Within the neighbourhood policy, the Commission proposes to extend and deepen the Energy Community Treaty to further integrate countries willing to participate in the EU's energy market. A major cooperation with Africa is also announced, which aims at providing sustainable energy to all citizens of this continent.

Four major projects in key areas for Europe's competitiveness will be launched, such as new technologies for intelligent networks and electricity storage, research on second-generation biofuels and the "smart cities" partnership to promote energy savings in urban areas.

The Commission proposes new measures on price comparison, switching suppliers, clear and transparent billing.

For more information on Energy strategy 2020 please see:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/strategies/2010/2020_en.htm