

EURACOAL Press Release

European Association for Coal and Lignite calls for MEPs to vote against ETS back-loading proposal

Brussels (22 January 2013) – At today’s European Round Table on Coal in the European Parliament – the 19th hosted by MEPs Christian EHLER and Bogdan MARCINKIEWICZ – two important topics were debated by MEPs, industrialists, academics and NGOs: carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) and the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS).

On CCS, all agreed that a new impetus was needed and called on the European Commission to devote its energies to the successful demonstration of this important technology. Participants felt that the leaked draft communication on CCS was not focussed enough on the demonstration question. As the largest trading bloc in the world, with an ambitious climate and energy policy, the EU now had to prove its commitment to a range of technology solutions, including CCS. MEP Chris DAVIES criticised the sclerotic decision making in a number of member states. This needs to be replaced by a new dynamic: one that capitalises on the good work that has been done to date and pushes ahead with those demonstration projects that are close to fruition. EURACOAL members said that greater attention should be given to how CCS infrastructure – pipelines and storage – can be developed. The 2010 infrastructure package addressed this question, but more assessment is needed. To this end, Prof. Ulrich van Suntum of Münster University presented a new approach under the “infrastructure first” headline, dealing with the benefits, design and financing of a CO₂ transport and storage infrastructure. The importance of infrastructure is well known in other areas. In the field of CCS, its importance for industry and power generation must be carefully assessed: how its development can be linked to the economic needs of countries and regions, and how its financing and operation can be designed to make it happen. EURACOAL supports further research on this issue and invites interested stakeholders to collaborate.

On the ETS, a warning on the de-industrialisation of Europe was well made by Mr. Marek KŁOCZKO, Secretary General of the Polish Chamber of Commerce. More specifically, there was universal dismay that the Commission wanted to interfere in a market-based system based on the hard-won agreement between member states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020. Dr. George MILOJCIC of the German Brown Coal Association said that the back-loading proposal went against this agreement and threatened the stability of the EU given that certain member states were so clearly against any tightening of the 2020 target. He was sanguine about individual member states taking on more aggressive targets, but felt that this should not be imposed by the Commission without due process.

MEP Lena KOLARSKA-BOBIŃSKA observed that the voting in Parliament would be finely balanced. She said that whilst this week’s ITRE committee vote was important, next month’s decision of the ENVI committee on the Commission’s proposal would set the tone for the Plenary vote, probably in April. Mr. Philip GARNER, Vice President of EURACOAL concluded by saying that a policy framework that encouraged innovation and investment was crucial. Industry, jobs and wealth creation do not happen by chance; they require stability, not successive changes to instruments which undermine investor confidence, he said, adding that the EU needs to remain an attractive place to do business.

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