The new energy and climate package of the European Commission
Improving energy efficiency

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On 9 March 2007, the EU Heads of State have agreed on a comprehensive package of measures to establish a new integrated climate change and energy policy to combat climate change and boost the EU's energy security and competitiveness. as proposed in the Commissions' Communications of 10 January 2007 "Limiting Global Climate Change to 2° Celsius: The way ahead for 2020 and beyond" and "An Energy Policy For Europe". Key features of this new EU policy are:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from developed countries by 30% by 2020 in the framework of an international agreement
- Committing the EU independently to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020 even in the absence of an international agreement
- Improving energy efficiency by 20% by 2020
- Raising the share of renewable energy to 20% by 2020
- Increasing the level of biofuels in transport fuel to 10% by 2020

Improved energy efficiency has the potential to make the most decisive contribution to achieving sustainable development, competitiveness and security of supply. Reducing its primary energy use by 20% would mean that by 2020 the EU would use approximately 13% less energy than today, saving € 100 billion and around 780 millions tonnes of CO_2 each year.

Key measures include:

- Accelerating the use of fuel efficient vehicles for transport, making better use of public transport; and ensuring that the true costs of transport are faced by consumers;
- Tougher standards and better labelling on appliances;
- Rapidly improving the energy performance of the EU's existing buildings and taking the lead to make very low energy houses the norm for new buildings;
- Coherent use of taxation to achieve more efficient use of energy;
- Improving the efficiency of heat and electricity generation, transmission and distribution;
- A new international agreement on energy efficiency to promote a common effort.