

25 June 2012

To all Foreign Affairs Ministers of the EU

Open letter to Ministers of Foreign Affairs, General Affairs Council

Dear Ministers,

This week the 2014-2020 EU budget train picks up speed, and vital decisions will be made concerning the direction that Europe's future investment strategies will take. At the General Affairs Council on June 26, you will make decisions on how future Cohesion Policy funds for regional development will be spent. At the European Council on June 28-29, you will present plans to stimulate growth in the EU, based in part on contributions from the EU budget.

We believe that quality EU spending has to be based on the principles of sustainability and thus environmental and social concerns must remain at the core of discussions on economic development. Yet new proposals to the framework that will guide the EU budget would jeopardise not only environmental sustainability but also undermine firm commitments to decarbonise the EU economy.

Efforts to reach a substantially greener EU budget, one that would create jobs and economic opportunities as well as improve the quality of 500 million lives across the EU, will be derailed unless decision-makers this week stand firm against last-minute efforts to provide backdoor subsidies for fossil fuels.

Specifically we refer to proposals for the Cohesion Policy's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to finance the development of gas and power distribution, storage and transmission systems; and the promotion of carbon-intensive technologies such as carbon capture and storage or the exploitation of shale gas.

These proposals follow a logic that aims to rebrand gas as a low-carbon energy source. This is a flagrant denial of its status as a fossil fuel, one that emits still substantial quantities of greenhouse gases. Any support for this false rebranding of gas would seriously impede and restrict much-needed financial support for genuine low-carbon energy sources.

The ERDF is designed to reduce disparities between Europe's regions and support their transition to sustainable regional economies. We believe that **energy efficiency investments, combined with the benefits of local renewable energy opportunities that ensure payments do not flow from the regions, would provide a win-win scenario of economic and climate benefits.**

We urge you to ensure that European regional development investments focus exclusively on the development of regional, renewable energy sources, smart energy distribution and on fully realising the potential of resource efficiency and energy savings.

The undersigning:





Friends of the Earth Slovakia

WWF European Policy Office

Friends of the Earth Czech Republic

Clean Air Action Group



Friends of the Earth Hungary

Eesti Taastuvenergia Koda Estonian Renewable Energy Association

Friends of the Earth Estonia

Independent Ecological Centre



For the earth Bulgaria



Center for Transport and Energy Czech Republic



Centre for Environmental Information and Education Bulgaria



Bulgarian Coalition for Sustainable EU funds

CEPTA - Centre for Sustainable Alternatives

www.cepta.sk

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