

Increase in energy prices **Old cures won't do!**

Declaration

The rise in oil prices, regardless of the economic reasons that may be put forward to explain it, definitely marks the end of an era: that of cheap and abundant energy.

Combined with the increase in food prices, the rise in energy prices has an adverse effect on the standard of living of households, especially in the Union's New Member States which have to face global energy prices with still relatively low incomes.

Some are taking sometimes desperate actions to draw the attention of their governments, who sometimes respond with emergency "solutions" aimed at mitigating the effect of price increases on the revenues of households (through tax exemptions for example) and a number of economic sectors (fishing industry, agriculture, etc.). Such measures may help people through a difficult and limited period of time but are counterproductive in the long term as they contribute to sending the wrong signals to the population and the market.

**It is time to say that such solutions are not sustainable
and that our future rests on a complete change of direction!**

The era of cheap energy is over. We must adapt to this new context and plan ahead for ever steeper rises. This is not just simply an environmental and energy issue, it is also a matter of social cohesion and quality of life. What is at stake is the very future of our European model. We must use less energy, use it more efficiently and differently!

The transition from our current economy to this new paradigm implies giving **a new and wide-scale impetus**— both at European level and in relation to the States, Regions and Cities- **to policies aimed at really achieving the "3x20" targets**. Below are a few proposals for decisions we believe are indispensable; they are all based on the wide-scale dissemination of successful projects.

Construction:

- ensure that all new buildings are built using very high energy performance standards; this measure should start being implemented as of now and become effective in 2012 to give time for the market to organise itself.
- launch a wide-ranging energy refurbishment programme for existing buildings, and especially in housing and public buildings.

Town planning:

- stop further urban sprawl as a matter of urgency, which is responsible for fuel poverty, uncontrolled mobility and is a waste of time and land, by introducing much stricter town planning and land use regulations.

Renewable energy:

- have the largest possible part of our needs in terms of heating, cooling and electricity covered by renewable energy and develop a renewable energy sector in each region to stimulate the economy.

Urban transport:

- following the Green Paper on Urban Transport, launch a sustainable European mobility and urban transport policy that gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport and encourages intermodality.

Intra-European transport:

- prepare for a significant reduction in intra-European air transport by developing a grid network of high-speed trains linking all major European cities.

Public financing:

- earmark public funds, including European ones, uniquely for policies, buildings and infrastructure that are compatible with such orientations and are targeted at the "3x20".

Energie-Cités:

- launches an appeal, on the eve of the French Presidency of the Union, for the **EU to take a decisive step**, and turn good intentions into resolute action,
- invites its members and all the European cities to take action massively along these lines, for example by committing to signing the **"Covenant of Mayors"** with the European Commission.