Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

280 Republic Street
Valletta VLT 1112
Malta

Svetlana R. Curmi
Media Officer
T: *2590 9318*
E: *svetlana-rose.curmi@gov.mt*

PRESS RELEASE

MEUSAC DISCUSSES EU ACTION PLAN ON ENERGY

A meeting of the Core Group of the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) was held on the 28th November 2008, chaired by Hon. Dr. Chris Said, Parliamentary Secretary for Public Dialogue and Information.

The main topic on the Agenda was:

A Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Second Strategic Review – An EU Energy Security and Solidarity Action Plan.

A presentation on the Communication was delivered to the Core Group by Mr. Antoine Riolo, Chief Executive Officer of the Malta Resources Authority (MRA), which is directly involved in the sector.

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This Communication is placed in the context of the climate change/energy package and the EU initiatives to be attained by 2020 – 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, an increase to 20% of total consumption in the share of renewable energy sources, and an improvement in energy efficiency by 20%. The Action Plan's focus is directed towards infrastructure and diversity of energy supplies; external energy relations; stocks of oil and gas and crisis response mechanisms; energy efficiency, and; the best utilisation of the EU's indigenous energy resources. The 2nd Strategic Review, which was published this month, presents proposals such as developing a Mediterranean Energy Ring which would include the production of energy from alternative sources and the decarbonising of the electricity supply.

Issues of direct relevance to the Maltese scenario were further highlighted. Discussion among members focused on, amongst other matters:

- The European Commission is proposing building sustainability with the aim of providing energy efficiency. Locally, energy regulations of residential buildings will come into force by the 2nd January 2009 while for other buildings, these will come into force by 1st June 2009.
- The purchase of electricity from Italy.
- The Mediterranean Solar Plan: MRA is participating in meetings relating to such plan.
- Nuclear energy and nuclear energy plants in the Mediterranean particular in neighbouring countries. It was mentioned that EU Member States selling technology to non-Member States should bind such third countries with the same stringent controls existent within

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the Member States. The tapping of nuclear energy by Malta was also raised particularly in the context of the possibility of joint investment with neighboring countries. Problems relating to use of nuclear energy in Malta would be the network for access to such energy and the storage of waste.

- Investment in wind energy and in photovoltaic energy and the costs involved.
- The need for studies to be carried out in Malta relating to the costs of the EU Energy Plan.
- The importance of energy efficiency and that EU Structural funds be utilised for measures in this field.
- The EU should ensure that its measures in relation to carbon emissions are equitable in comparison to other economic blocs around the world in order for the EU to remain competitive.
- The need for incentives to eliminate energy losses. Representatives of industry and the MRA expressed a willingness to set up focus groups to discuss such issues.

Other matters

MEUSAC Head, Dr. Vanni Xuereb provided a status report on the Sectoral Committees, outlining current developments and issues that may need to be looked into. The Core Group confirmed the decisions it had taken in September on the criteria for the participation of civil society organisations in the Sectoral Committees. It reiterated its desire to work closely with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and with the Council for the Voluntary Sector while

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also guaranteeing the widest possible representation from civil society organisations in the Sectoral Committees. On November 25, MEUSAC issued a call for expression of interest by civil society organisations to register in order to form part of the Sectoral Committees. These Committees should start meeting regularly after the 1st January 2009.

Present for the meeting of the Core Group were the following members: Parliamentary Secretary Dr. Chris Said (Chairperson), Dr. Vanni Xuereb (Head), Dr. Godwin Grima (Principle Permanent Secretary), Mr. Richard Cachia Caruana (Permanent Representative to the EU), Ms. Cecilia Attard-Pirotta (Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Mr. Julian Micallef (A/Head, Consultation MEUSAC – secretary to the Core Group), Mr. Carmel Cacopardo (Alternattiva Demokratika), Mr. John Spiteri (Azzjoni Nazzjonali), Ing. Ray Muscat (FOI), Ms. Abigail Mamo (GRTU), Dr. Paul De Battista (MEA), Dr. George Abela (PL), Mr. Karl Gouder (PN), and Dr. Romina Bartolo (UĦM) as well as a number of substitute members who attended as observers. Members of staff of MEUSAC and of the EU Secretariat at the Office of the Prime Minister were also in attendance.

Also present for the discussion on the European Commission's Communication were MRA officials.

Another meeting of the MEUSAC Core Group with the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, Dr. Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici will be held on the 5th December to continue discussing the Commission's proposals on Immigration and Asylum. This meeting is a follow-up to the

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discussion held during the meeting of the Core Group of the 26th September and a meeting with the Minister on the 7th November.

The next meeting of the Core Group will be held on Friday, 19th December, 2008.

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STQARRIJA GĦALL-ISTAMPA

IL-MEUSAC JIDDISKUTI L-PJAN TA' AZZJONI TAL-UNJONI EWROPEA DWAR L-ENERĠIJA

Illum, 28 ta' Novembru, iltaqa' l-*Core Group* tal-Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC), taħt il-presidenza tas-Segretarju Parlamentari għall-Konsultazzjoni Pubblika u Informazzjoni, l-Onor. Dott. Chris Said,

Għad-diskussjoni fuq l-Aġenda tal-laqgħa tal-lum kien hemm:

Komunikazzjoni mill-Kummissjoni lill-Parlament Ewropew, lill-Kunsill, lill-Kumitat Ekonomiku u Soċjali Ewropew u lill-Kumitat tar-Reġjuni – it-Tieni Analiżi Strateġika dwar l-Enerġija – Pjan ta' Azzjoni tal-Unjoni Ewropea għas-Sigurtà u s-Solidarjetà tal-Enerġija.

Is-Sur Antoine Riolo, Kap Eżekuttiv tal-Awtorità ta' Malta dwar ir-Riżorsi, li hija l- Awtorità kompetenti f' dan is-settur, ta preżentazzjoni lill-Membri tal-*Core Group* dwar din il-Komunikazzjoni.

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Il-Kummissjoni ħarġet din il-komunikazzjoni fil-kuntest tal-politika tal-Unjoni Ewropea dwar il-bidla fil-klima u l-enerġija u l-miri li għandhom jitlaħqu sal-2020 – it-tnaqqis b' 20% tal-emissjonijiet tal-gass serra, iżżid b' 20% is-sehem tal-enerġija li tiġġedded fil-konsum tal-enerġija u ttejjeb l-effiċjenza fl-enerġija b' 20%. Dan il-Pjan ta' Azzjoni jiffoka fuq il-ħtiġijiet infrastrutturali u d-diversifikazzjoni tal-provvisti tal-enerġija, ir-relazzjonijiet esterni tal-enerġija, il-ħażniet taż-żejt u tal-gass u mekkaniżmi ta' rispons għall-kriżijiet, l-effiċjenza fl-enerġija u l-aħjar użu mir-riżorsi indiġeni tal-enerġija tal-Unjoni Ewropea. It-Tieni Analiżi Strateġika, li ġiet ippublikata dan ix-xahar, tippreżenta diversi proposti fosthom li jitlesta ċirku tal-enerġija fil-Meditterran li fost oħrajn jinkludi l-produzzjoni ta' enerġija minn sorsi alternattivi kif ukoll li l-provvista tal-elettriku tal-UE jitneħħilha l-karbonju.

Materji li huma ta' rilevanza għal Malta ġew diskussi f' aktar dettall, fosthom il-Membri tal-*Core Group* semmew:

- Il-Kummissjoni Ewropea qed tipproponi sostenibbilità fis-settur tal-kostruzzjoni bl-għan li l-bini jsir iktar effiċjenti. F' Malta huwa mistenni li regolamenti dwar l-energija għall-bini residenzjali, jidħlu fis-seħħ fit-2 ta' Jannar 2009, waqt li regolamenti għall-bini ieħor jidħlu fis-seħħ fl-1 ta' Ġunju 2009.
- Il-provvista tal-elettriku mill-Italja.
- Il-Pjan ta' enerġija mix-xemx għar-reġjun tal-Mediterran: L-MRA qegħda tipparteċipa f' laqgħat fejn qed jiġi diskuss dan il-Pjan.

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- L-enerġija nukleari u impjanti tal-enerġija nukleari fil-Mediterran b' mod partikolari dawk f' pajjiżi ġirien. Issemma' li Stati Membri tal-Unjoni Ewropea li qed ibiegħu teknoloġija lil pajjiżi li mhumiex membri tal-UE għandhom jorbtu lil dawn il-pajjiżi terzi bl-istess kontrolli stretti li hemm fl-Istati Membri. Issemmiet ukoll il-possibbilità li Malta tagħmel użu minn enerġija nukleari permezz ta' inverstiment konġunt ma' pajjiżi ġirien, kif ukoll il-problemi assoċjati mal-aċċess għan-netwerk ta' provvista ta' enerġija ta' din it-tip kif ukoll il-ħażna ta' skart.
- Investiment f' enerġija mir-riħ u dik *photovoltaic*, u l-ispejjeż relatati
- Il-bżonn ta' studji f'Malta relatati mal-infiq marbut mal-Pjan ta' Enerġija tal-UE.
- L-importanza tal-effiċjenza fl-użu tal-enerġija, kif ukoll li l-Fondi Strutturali tal-Unjoni Ewropea jintużaw għal miżuri f' dan il-qasam.
- L-Unjoni Ewropea għandha tiżgura li l-miżuri meħuda biex jitnaqqsu l-emissjonijiet tal-karbonju jkunu ekwi meta mqabbla ma' dawk ta' blokok ekonomiċi madwar id-dinja biex tiżgura li l-UE tibqa' kompetittiva.
- Il-bżonn ta' inċentivi biex ikun eliminat it-telf ta' enerġija. Rappreżentanti tal-industrija u l-MRA esprimew ix-xewqa li jwaqqfu *focus groups* biex jiddiskutu dawn il-materji.

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Affarijiet oħra

Il-Kap tal-MEUSAC, Dott. Vanni Xuereb, ippreżenta rapport fuq il-Kumitati Settorjali, fejn spjega żviluppi kurrenti u kwistjonijiet li għandhom bżonn aktar diskussjoni. Il-*Core Group* ikkonferma deċiżjoni li kien ħa f' Settembru dwar il-kriterji għall-parteċipazzjoni ta' organizzazzjonijiet tas-soċjetà ċivili fil-Kumitati Settorjali. Hu sostna x-xewqa li jaħdem iktar mill-qrib mal-Kummissarju għall-Organizzazzjonijiet Volontarji u mal-Kunsill għas-Settur Volontarju waqt li jiggarantixxi r-rappreżentazzjoni l-iktar wiesgħa possibbli għall-organizzazzjonijiet tas-soċjetà ċivili fil-Kumitati Settorjali. Fil-25 ta' Novembru, il-MEUSAC ħareġ sejħa għall-espressjoni ta' interess mill-organizzazzjonijet tas-soċjetà ċivili biex jirreġistraw u jagħmlu parti mill-Kumitati Settorjali. Dawn il-Kumitati għandhom jibdew jiltaqgħu b' mod regoli mill-1 ta' Jannar 2009.

Preżenti għall-laqgħa tal-*Core Group* kien hemm: is-Segretarju Parlamentari Dott. Chris Said (*Chairperson*), Dott. Vanni Xuereb (Kap tal-MEUSAC), Dott. Godwin Grima (Segretarju Permanenti Ewlieni), is-Sur Richard Cachia Caruana (Rappreżentant Permanenti għall-UE), is-Sinjura Cecilia Attard Pirotta (Segretarju Permanenti, Ministeru tal-Affarijiet Barranin), is-Sur Julian Micallef (Aġent Kap Konsultazzjoni tal-MEUSAC u Segretarju tal-*Core Group*), is-Sur Carmel Cacopardo (Alternattiva Demokratika), is-Sur John Spiteri (Azzjoni Nazzjonali), l-Inġ. Ray Muscat (FOI), is-Sinjura Abigail Mamo (GRTU), Dott. Paul De Battista (MEA), Dott. George Abela (PL), is-Sur Karl Gouder (PN), u Dott. Romina Bartolo (UĦM), kif ukoll sostituti u membri tal-i*staff* tal-MEUSAC u tas-Segretarjat UE fl-Uffiċċju tal-Prim Ministru.

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Preżenti wkoll għad-diskussjoni dwar il-Proposta tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea kien hemm uffiċjali tal- MRA.

Laqgħa oħra tal-*Core Group* tal-MEUSAC mal-Ministru tal-Ġustizzja u Affarijiet Interni, Dott. Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici ser issir fil-5 ta' Diċembru fejn se tkompli tiddiskuti il-proposti tal-Kummissjoni dwar l-Immigrazzjoni u l-Ażil. Din il-laqgħa ser tkompli d-diskussjoni li saret fil-laqgħa tal-Core Group fis-26 ta' Settembru u laqgħa oħra mal-Ministru fis-7 ta' Novembru.

Il-laqgħa li jmiss tal-Core Group ser issir il-Ġimgħa 19 ta' Diċembru 2008.

MEUSAC – 28.11.2008