

Letter addressed to :
Mr Janez POTOČNIK
Commissioner Environment

CABINET POTOČNIK	
Archives n°	A/
- 7. 12. 2012	
To	EUM
Cc	MM

Brussels, 7 December 2012

Subject: Impact of electrification of transport and heating on air quality

Dear Commissioner,

We write regarding the review of the EU Air Quality Policy and the important role electricity has to play in the improvement of air quality and health in Europe. Electricity has no emissions at the point of use and, when used in transport and heating/cooling for instance, can significantly contribute to improving air quality in cities and urban areas.

The electricity sector has significantly reduced its emissions over the years. Between 1980 and 2009 emissions of SO₂ and NO_x were reduced in the EU-27 by around 80% and 57% respectively, while electricity demand grew by 75%. The implementation of the EU environmental legislation and the move to a decarbonised power sector will lead to a further decline in emissions from the power sector. Furthermore the decoupling of electricity generation and emissions means that the emissions per unit of electricity generated will decline steadily.

The EU electricity sector is strongly committed to reducing carbon emissions and meeting the EU's climate targets for 2020 and its 2050 climate vision. We are also convinced that electricity will have to play a much greater role than now to contribute to the decarbonisation of transport and heating/cooling. This is confirmed by the Commission's Energy Roadmap 2050 and the European Environment Agency. EURELECTRIC believes that 2013, the 'Year of Air', is a unique opportunity to show that electricity brings wider benefits in helping the shift towards sustainable transport and residential sectors: it can not only help to de-carbonise others sectors, it can also help to de-pollute them.

In this context, we would be happy to exchange further with you and experts in DG Environment on the benefits associated with electrification and on the policy framework needed to ensure this shift in energy end-use. We are particularly concerned that the current legislative framework still discriminates against electricity and promotes the direct use of carbon-emitting fuels such as petrol or gas in heating. We would also be grateful if we were given the opportunity to present and give prominence to these issues, for instance during the 2013 Green Week.

Looking forward to your reaction and happy to respond to any questions or comments you may have.

Yours sincerely,



Hans ten Berge
Secretary General

Cc:

Mr Thomas Verheye, Head of Unit Industrial Emissions, Air Quality and Noise (DG ENV C3)
Ms Daniele Rosca, Head of Unit Clean Transport and Sustainable Urban Mobility (DG MOVE C1)
Mr Paul Hodson, Head of Unit Energy Efficiency (DG ENER C3)
Mr Philip Owen, Head of Unit Transport and Ozone (DG CLIMA C2)