

Speech for the
“Energy Efficiency in the Construction Sector in the Mediterranean”
MED-ENEC Workshop in Istanbul

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1- On behalf of the European Commission, it is a pleasure for me to welcome you to this regional workshop which takes place in the framework of the MED-ENEC project supported by the European Union. I also look very much forward to participate in this workshop today and tomorrow here in Istanbul.

The region – and indeed the world - is currently undergoing major changes related to the energy sector.

Therefore it is not surprising that Energy has become one of Europe’s main policy priorities where the European Commission clearly recognizes the importance of enhancing energy efficiency, energy savings, use of renewable energies, and international cooperation. Consequently, the MED-ENEC as a regional project greatly contributes to Euro-Mediterranean Co-operation in these areas.

Improving energy efficiency is indeed the most immediate and the most cost effective manner to achieve the three interlinked goals of sustainability, competitiveness, and security of energy supply.

The Ministerial Declaration on the Euro-Mediterranean Energy Partnership issued in Limassol, Cyprus, on 17 December 2007 states that it is decided to devote an increasing attention to the development of energy efficiency and renewable energies, in the light of the necessity to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

The Priority Action Plan for 2008-2013 attached to the Declaration emphasised the need to "review the experience gained in the framework of the MED-ENEC project on energy efficiency in the construction sector in the Mediterranean, and mandated the Energy Experts’ Group of the Euro-Mediterranean Energy Forum to set up new regional and/or sub-regional initiatives focusing primarily on aspects, such as improved energy performance of buildings, including energy efficiency measures and the use of new and renewable energy, especially for heating and cooling purposes".

Effective action to address climate change is urgent and the European Union will continue to lead by example and work towards the widest possible international action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, constant climate change and improve the management of natural resources.

At the EU level, the Commission’s Communication entitled “A new Energy Policy for Europe”, approved by the EU Council in March 2007 established that reducing green house gases emissions and developing EE and the use of RE, including at the international level, are of primary importance. This was one of the key messages from the Commission on the occasion of the publication of its Third Energy Package in January 2008, which also stresses the necessity to develop RE on a much larger scale.

A number of buildings-related projects carried out within the Union were also supported in the past few years under the SAVE component of the EU Intelligent Energy programme. Useful information can be drawn by non-Member countries from these experiences and from the pieces of legislation produced at the EU level, concerning directly or indirectly, the building sector.

The European Union is already committed to cutting down its own emissions by at least 20% and would increase this reduction under a satisfactory global agreement. To reach this target, the European Union aims at improving energy efficiency by 20%; raise the share of renewable energy by 20% and reduce electricity consumption by also 20%.

It is clear that energy efficiency also needs to become a global priority in order to make progress in combating climate change. That is why the European Union attaches great importance to energy efficiency and renewable energies in the neighbouring countries and particularly in the Mediterranean where electricity consumption has more than tripled over the past three decades and is expected to be multiplied by the same

factor between now and 2025. It is the construction sector that accounts for 40% of total electricity consumption on average.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very glad to be on this podium today as the launching of several regional actions supported by the European Union is currently taking place which confirms the plans of the Commission to enhance cooperation in these specific areas.

One of the examples of such cooperation is the support provided by the Commission to the Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in order to tighten the regional links and to satisfy the energy demand in the region in an efficient, harmonious and mutually advantageous manner while joining forces to tackle climate change more effectively.

The support of both GTZ and DANIDA to the Centre of Excellence will be from the operational side to get the Centre up and running, and the support of the EC will follow the demand-driven approach.

In operational terms, such demand-driven approach will be done through the following two regional EC initiatives which the Centre will not only host, but implement parts of them.

The first initiative is for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation for Energy Market Integration (Euro-Med EMIP) amounting to €4.3 million.

The MED-EMIP will play a catalytic role to reinforce the EU-Mediterranean Partner Countries energy cooperation with particular emphasis on securing energy supply, promoting sustainable development and giving a boost to the regional integration process.

The second initiative is the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of Energy Efficiency (Med ENEC II) for €5.0 million. With the foreseen regional role of the Centre this initiative aims at speeding up the development of the regional expansion of implementing various EE applications, in the construction sector and related industries.

It is important to highlight the fact that complementarities regarding policy dialogue between these two regional initiatives will be strengthened by the Centre and accordingly should streamline RE & EE policies throughout the entire region. As you also know, the “Union for Mediterranean” initiative is also supposed to support several large scale projects in the Mediterranean in Renewable Energies including in particular solar energy.

Improving energy efficiency will give rise to job opportunities, management improvements in the economy and increased energy security, in addition to bringing about environmental benefits.

Europe and its Mediterranean partners are dependent on each other for ensuring energy security, stable economic conditions and effective action against climate change.

Our gathering here today acknowledges that New and Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency are cornerstones for our cooperation aiming at ensuring a more sustainable future, establishing a broad trans-regional coordination based on areas of common interest and having the right tools in place to achieve that.

Therefore, we all look forward to seeing the results of this cooperation which should contribute to meeting some of the most important challenge of our century: increasing energy efficiency, mitigating climate change and, while doing so, increasing prosperity and improving the environment for all.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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