

Citizen's summary – Energy package November 2008

What is the issue?

The issue is **energy security** – how to ensure a reliable supply of **clean, affordable energy** for EU energy users.

Energy security is at risk from

- **fossil-fuel-based energy systems**, hampering large-scale use of renewable sources – biofuels and solar, wind and wave power
- **poor energy efficiency** and waste
- **rising prices** – and extreme short-term price fluctuations
- **shrinking** EU oil and gas **reserves**
- the need to reduce **energy-related pollution**
- **poor EU coordination**, notably in relations with energy suppliers outside the EU.

How will I benefit from EU action?

EU action now will help to maintain a secure supply of energy in future, keep prices down, and curb climate change. In more concrete terms, EU policies mean:

- **more energy**-efficient buildings and products – electrical appliances, cars, heaters, machines
- a **wider range of energy sources** ("diversity") – including more renewables, low-carbon fuels and indigenous oil, gas and coal, and a choice of suppliers and supply routes – reducing our dependence on any single source
- a **bigger energy pool** for more reliable supplies ("flexibility") – through investment in energy infrastructure, cross-border interconnections and new energy supply networks
- better **support mechanisms between EU countries** ("solidarity"), so they can help each other deal with shortages
- **better diplomatic relations** with non-EU energy suppliers, for peaceful energy trading and secure investments

Hasn't the EU already done something on energy?

Yes, but the scale of the challenges demands further action, to avoid a serious energy crisis and even higher energy prices in future.

So what does this package add?

The package includes:

- a [strategic energy review](#) to guide decisions on short and medium-term measures
- new [rules and standards on energy efficiency](#):
 - energy efficiency rules in the EU buildings directive [link?] will be applied to more buildings

- fuel-consumption ratings for tyres, to guide consumer choice
- a [green paper on energy networks](#), launching a public consultation on a more **coordinated system for developing energy networks**, featuring:
 - better coordination of EU funding for **energy networks**
 - more structured support for **large projects benefiting several countries**, e.g. [linked power grids in the Baltic](#) or a Mediterranean solar network
 - revised **guidelines for managing trans-European energy networks**, taking account of climate change and the need for diversified power-generation
- a [policy paper on offshore windpower](#)
- a revised [nuclear illustrative programme](#) (PINIC) exploring options for nuclear power – alongside proposals to improve nuclear safety coordination between EU countries

Why does action have to be taken by the EU?

CO2 emissions, price fluctuations and unstable markets are **global problems requiring a coordinated response**. EU countries must support each other in facing these tough challenges, and work together in pushing for change internationally.

In practical terms, **EU countries are linked by energy supply systems** – e.g. pipelines and power grids – that extend across national borders. So they need to work together on managing and developing them.

What happens next?

After discussion – and public consultations on the green paper – the ideas in the package will be transformed into specific proposals, probably in March 2010.

The draft rules on oil stocks and efficient buildings included here, as well as any future proposals from the Commission, will become law after the European Parliament and EU governments have agreed them.

In the meantime, the EU must agree on common rules for energy trading between member countries and on targets for renewable energy and cuts in greenhouse-gas emissions.