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**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions: Economic aspects of the roadmap to a resource-efficient Europe

*3148th ECONOMIC and FINANCIAL AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 21 February 2012*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council of the European Union,

RECALLING:

- the Council conclusions on the Roadmap to a Resource-Efficient Europe of 19 December 2011;
- the conclusions of the European Council of 24 June 2011,
- the Council conclusions on a competitive European economy: "Industrial competitiveness in the light of resource efficiency" of 29 September 2011";
- the conclusions of the European Council of 23 October 2011;

1. WELCOMES the Communication on the Roadmap to a Resource-Efficient Europe which is a key element of the resource-efficient flagship initiative under the Europe 2020 Strategy leading the EU into economic transformation towards a more sustainable and competitive economy, and contributing to world-wide efforts to ensure a transition towards a green economy.

P R E S S

2. RECOGNIZES the proposed milestones of the Roadmap as a good basis for further discussion among Member States, the Commission and all key stakeholders with a view to the transition towards a sustainable and responsible resource-efficient economy and society in a progressive and cost-effective way, while having in mind that the purpose of the proposed indicative milestones is to point out the general directions for future actions and feed-in the discussions on potential targets¹.
3. STRESSES that actions taken must be consistent with the need for economic stability and fiscal consolidation and be economically efficient and cost – effective, and URGES Member States and the Commission to prioritise actions with the most positive impact on Europe's competitiveness, sustainable economic growth and job creation in line with the overall objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. As part of a long term strategy, indicative intermediate milestones for 2020 may be considered after broad consultation of relevant stakeholders.
4. STRESSES that environmental taxes, revenues from market-based instruments and removal of environmentally harmful subsidies may contribute to a wider fiscal consolidation process, and in that context; CALLS for the rationalization and the phasing out of environmentally or economically harmful subsidies including fossil fuels. Member States may wish to take in to account the impact of such measures on the most vulnerable groups in society through appropriate social policy instruments;
5. CONSIDERS that the identification of best practices at Member State level and national programmes could play an important role in identifying the most efficient and effective tools for improving resource efficiency.
6. UNDERLINES that market-based instruments, such as emission trading systems, are important when implementing green growth strategies, complemented by regulatory instruments, information tools and non-market instruments as appropriate and, STRESSES the importance of flexibility in order to take into account country specific circumstances.
7. STRESSES that, EU-level action, complementing action by Member States, should be based on clear justification and evidence of value added and, taking into account the national peculiarities, be consistent with full respect of the subsidiarity and proportionality principles and the Commission Communication on Smart Regulation in the EU.
8. HIGHLIGHTS that decisions in relation to taxation legislation at EU level shall be taken by unanimous decision of the Council.
9. LOOKS FORWARD to the Impact Assessments of the actions proposed in the roadmap, taking into account a country specific approach as appropriate and the interaction with (existing) market – based instruments that are already in place. CALLS upon the Commission to further mainstream resource efficiency consideration in the impact assessment of all relevant policy proposals; UNDERLINES the importance to consider effects on the whole economy when analyzing the actions proposed in the roadmap."

¹ 14632/11 of 23 September 2011.