

K4I Forum Dinner Debate

“Eco-Innovation as a Driver for a Resource Efficient Europe”

Tuesday, 24 May 2011, 19h30 – 22h00

Members’ Restaurant, European Parliament, 60 Rue Wiertz, 1047 Brussels

Improving our rationalised use of resources, including fuels, minerals, water, soil and so forth, is a necessity to accommodate the needs of future generations in a finite world. European institutions have been front-runners in acknowledging this situation. A “resource efficient Europe” has become one of the first policy priorities and a “flagship initiative” in the EU 2020 strategy.

Achieving optimal use of natural resources in production processes not only contributes to EU’s climate change mitigation objectives and environmental protection, it is also in everyone’s interest. Using resources efficiently in the production process can help streamline business models, lower prices and bills for consumers. Therefore, eco-innovation can be a key driver for resource efficiency in a variety of industry sectors.

However, the uptake of the most resource efficient technologies is still slow, partly because of short to medium-term financial costs as well as lack of awareness among professionals and the public. Shortly before the publication of a “Roadmap for a resource-efficient Europe”, K4I members would like to invite Members of the European Parliament and other interested parties to exchange views on the contribution of eco-innovation to resource-efficient patterns. Examples from the different sectors are the followings:

In the heating sector, a greater uptake of best practice solutions by consumers and substantial investment in innovative hybrid technology combinations and controls by equipment manufacturers can result in primary energy savings and further resource efficiency along the whole energy supply chain. Solutions are available but the implementation gap must be solved.

In the building sector, a large potential of energy savings is available through retrofitting the existing stock and developing positive energy buildings and districts. Today, buildings are responsible for 40% of the total European energy consumption and a third of CO₂ emissions. Through successive waves of development and promotion of green technologies and energy efficient systems and materials in new and renovated buildings, energy consumption and CO₂ emissions can be radically reduced.

In the agrochemical sector, eco-efficiency is a priority for the agrochemical industry which applies to their processes and products including the whole life cycle from raw materials to waste management. The adequate, safe and efficient use of Plant Protection Products contributes to a sustainable increase of agricultural productivity, by preventing up to 50-70 % of potential crop losses from pests and diseases. This is crucial in a context of an increasing food demand, natural resources scarcity (water, land) and threatened biodiversity.

Precisely the questions will be the followings:

- How can eco-innovation deliver on resource efficiency gains?
- What should be the level of regulatory requirements (e.g. eco-design standards), in order to promote resource efficiency without hindering innovation?

- Are further policy tools necessary to speed up resource efficiency in the buildings sector? In the chemical/manufacturing sectors?
- How can we follow an innovative approach, integrating stakeholders from several industrial sectors such as construction, ICT, energy, chemistry and materials and the broader stakeholder community including public authorities, owners and users representatives, in order to target a resource efficiency scenario?

This dinner debate will coincide with the launch of the EU's Green Week, which focuses this year on resource efficiency.

Welcome and Introduction

Lambert Van Nistelrooij, MEP, Member of the Committee on Regional Development, Member of the Delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia, Chair of the K4I Forum of the European Parliament Governing Board

Speakers

Judith Merkies, MEP, Member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Member of the Committee on Petitions, Member of the K4I Forum of the European Parliament Governing Board

William Neale, Member of the Cabinet of Commissioner Janez Potocnik, European Commission

Beatriz Yordi Aguirre, Head of Unit, Responsible for Eco-Innovation Initiative, Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation, European Commission

Fernando Diaz Lopez, Scientific Researcher on Eco-Innovation, TNO – Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research

Christian Küchen, President, Eurofuel

Paul Cartuyvels, Director European Affairs, Bouygues

The introductions will be followed by a discussion with the participants.