

BBR plenary session conclusions on Energy/Climate working group proposals

1. Cross border Grid reinforcement

In October 2016, the BBR expressed its support for the intention of the Belgian and Dutch grid operators, Elia and TenneT, to upgrade electricity transmission between Belgium and the Netherlands, in line with the bilateral collaboration agreement signed in April 2016 by the Belgian and Dutch ministers of Energy and with the ambition to further integration of the Northwest-European energy markets.

The BBR calls on the Energy Ministers of the three countries to:

- assure that this process is accelerated and provide a time frame for implementation
- defend and promote further integration of the Northwest-European energy markets at the Pentalateral Energy Forum.

2. Support Innovation

The creation of an innovation-friendly environment within the Benelux, capitalizing on existing know-how of and initiatives by Companies, Universities and research centres, is of the highest importance to allow the region to become a pioneer in the EU for transition towards a low carbon industry.

Prime areas for innovation are: interwoven energy vectors, storage, geothermal heat production, with a strong preference for the latter two.

3. CO² emission and COP21

The BBR welcomes the result of the Paris Agreement as an important step towards a global approach to combat global warming. Nevertheless, the BBR is of the opinion that in the concrete implementation attention should be paid to the following concerns:

1. All efforts should be devoted to agree on a Benelux position on all matters related to Energy and Climate commitments under COP21.
2. CO² emission should not be monitored on a country by country basis. The Benelux should adopt common targets as to the reduction of CO² emission in the region and defend this position at the EU level with one voice.
3. Burden sharing should be extended to non ETS sectors

4. Funding

1. Benelux countries and companies should start to fully use the possibility for co-financing of cross border infrastructure -such as grid reinforcement – by the EIB and Juncker Fund.
2. Benelux governments should use the revenues from ETS auctioning exclusively to support companies' efforts to invest in breakthrough low-carbon technologies and network connectivity.
3. Benelux countries should take a common position regarding the ETS Innovation Fund on sourcing, technological neutrality, minimisation of administrative and overhead costs and fair risk sharing.

The Hague, May 31st 2017