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Coalition Clean Baltic
FOR PROTECTION OF THE BALTIC SEA ENVIRONMENT



José Manuel Durão Barroso
President of the European Commission
1049 Brussels
Belgium

RE: Roadmap for the reform of environmentally harmful subsidies

Brussels, March 15th 2011

Dear President Barroso,

We are deeply concerned that the European Commission has failed to live up to its own commitments and ignored calls from the European Council and the European Parliament by not publishing the roadmap for the reform of environmentally harmful subsidies. It is regrettable that public funds continue to be used to subsidise environmentally harmful activities.

The EU has repeatedly committed to removing environmentally damaging subsidies internationally¹. At EU-level, the Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy requested, in 2006, that the Commission put forward a roadmap for the sector-by-sector elimination of such subsidies by 2008.² The Commission reiterated this commitment in the mid-term review of the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme in 2007.³ The Europe 2020 Strategy also emphasises that “at national level, Member States will need to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies, limiting exceptions to people with social needs”.⁴

In 2009, the Council again asked the Commission to review, as a matter of urgency, sector by sector, subsidies that have considerable negative effects on the environment, including the EU climate and energy targets, and are incompatible with sustainable development with a view to gradually eliminating them.⁵ Moreover, in December 2010, the Council renewed their longstanding request for a roadmap to eliminate environmentally harmful subsidies.⁶ These repeated requests for such a roadmap indicate that the Member States would greatly appreciate guidance from the Commission, particularly in the context of the fiscal consolidation many EU Member States will undertake in the coming months.

Also the European Parliament has urged “the Commission to put forward, in keeping with the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, and as a matter of urgency, a Road Map for the sector-

¹ For instance in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, agreed by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya in October 2010, and the G20’s declaration in Pittsburgh in 2009.

² EC (2006): Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy.

³ COM(2007)225 final.

⁴ COM(2010)2020 final.

⁵ Council Conclusions 2968th Environment Council meeting in Luxembourg, 21st October 2009.

⁶ Council Conclusions 3061st Environment Council meeting in Brussels, 20th December 2010.

by-sector reform of subsidies that have a considerable negative impact on the environment, with a view to gradually eliminating them".⁷

The undersigned organisations strongly support this demand and are convinced that only a roadmap can ensure a harmonised approach to eliminating environmental harmful subsidies. Currently, discussions on a new funding period and major legislative reforms, such as the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and Common Agricultural Policy, are advancing without any apparent analysis of the environmental effects of the funding instruments⁸. However, a prerequisite for eliminating harmful subsidies is an agreement on their definition.

In light of the numerous, strong commitments by the Commission and the requests by Council and the European Parliament briefly described above, we now call on the Commission, under your leadership, to present a roadmap for sector-based efforts to eliminate environmentally harmful subsidies without further delay and to ensure its implementation by all means possible.

We would be pleased to discuss this subject in a face to face meeting and look forward to your reply. We will be sending this letter for information to relevant Commissioners, representatives of Member States and Members of the European Parliament. In view of the public interest in this matter, we will be making this letter available to the media in the coming days.

Yours sincerely,



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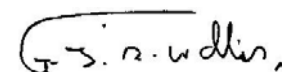
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⁷ INI/2009/2152: 6th May 2010.

⁸ DG Environment has commissioned a study (Contract 07.0307/2008/514349/ETU/G1) providing methodology for identification, assessment and quantification of environmentally harmful subsidies, but it does not have an official status.

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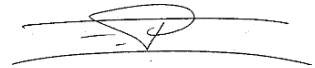
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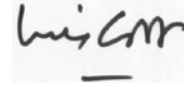
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