



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Letter by President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy
to the members of the European Council**

We are two months away from an important Spring European Council. On our agenda are a number of key issues directly related to our continuous efforts for growth, competitiveness and jobs. First, we will have our regular March European Semester session, during which we will take note of the first evaluation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, our ten-years strategy for growth and jobs. Second, we will focus on industrial competitiveness, including its innovation and skills aspects. Third, I would like us to hold, as decided in May 2013, an in-depth discussion on policy options related to the 2030 framework for climate policy, based on the Commission's communication. Fourthly and finally, we will come back to energy policy.

All these topics are closely related. It would, for instance, be artificial to discuss energy policy without taking into account the climate dimension, and vice versa. Each and every one of these issues deserves our utmost attention. In due course indications on the handling of these themes on the March European Council agenda will follow.

In this letter, I would like to highlight in particular one issue from this broader agenda: our energy policy. We adopted important orientations in this respect at our May 2013 meeting. The Spring European Council will be a good opportunity to see where we are in terms of follow up and implementation.

P R E S S

Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19
Preben Aamann - Deputy Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 2060 - +32 (0)476 85 05 43
press.president@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/the-president>

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As we are nearing the 2015 deadline for the completion of the Internal Energy Market, it is important to ensure that this market operates on a truly European basis. We must overcome fragmentation and uncoordinated national decisions running against the proclaimed objective. With this in mind, our May 2013 conclusions, while fully respecting national choices in terms of energy mix, noted the value of regularly exchanging information on major national energy decisions with a possible impact on other Member States and the Union as a whole. We also asked the Commission to provide guidance on a series of measures and instruments which could lead to inconsistent policies or market distortions.

Meanwhile, the Commission gave guidance, for instance on State intervention in the electricity market, on support schemes for renewable energy and energy infrastructure projects, a significant milestone towards a fully interconnected energy market. I look forward to further input by the Commission, notably its analysis of energy prices and costs in Member States, and a preliminary state of play on the completion of the internal energy market. This will be an important basis for our discussions.

In the run up to our March European Council it would be most useful if you could inform partners on any major recent or pending energy policy decisions which could have an impact on other Member States, in order to improve coordination among our countries. I would also be interested in hearing your key priorities, to make sure that we can progress towards the completion of the internal energy market and towards ending energy isolation by the end of this year.

Therefore, I would welcome your thoughts on this before the end of February, well in time for our March meeting. This would also allow for an exchange of views on this topic at the Energy Council meeting on March 4, thus allowing for an adequate preparation at ministerial level of our own discussion.
