



Council of the
European Union

012634/EU XXVI. GP
Eingelangt am 26/02/18

Brussels, 26 February 2018
(OR. en)

6519/18

ENV 125
RECH 81
COMPET 112
IND 56
MI 108
TRANS 84
ENER 85
AGRI 100

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: 21st European Forum on Eco-innovation for Air Quality
(Sofia, 5-6 February 2018)
- Information from the Presidency and the Commission

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Presidency and the Commission on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 5 March 2018.

**21st European Forum on Eco-innovation for Air Quality
(Sofia, 5-6 February 2018)**

- Information from the Presidency and the Commission -

1. The 21st European Forum on Eco-innovation for Air Quality was held on 5 and 6 February 2018 in Sofia. The Forum was part of the calendar of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and was co-organized by the European Commission and the Ministry of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria.
2. The Forum was attended by more than 500 participants from the EU Member States, Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership and the Black Sea region, the European Commission, the European Parliament, diplomatic corps, business, non-governmental sector, academia and local authorities.
3. The Forum made an overview of the air quality challenges faced by Europe. There was a general understanding that improving air quality is not only an environmental but also a socio-economic issue the resolution of which requires a long-term and integrated approach by different government sectors and wide public support for introducing profound changes in policies, practices, lifestyles and mind-sets.
4. The Forum's focus was on eco-innovations which play a key role in addressing air quality issues by providing cleaner technologies and new business and governance models based on more scientific knowledge and effective monitoring.
5. Forum participants pointed out that technical solutions for effectively reducing air pollution are already available and we need to focus on scaling up and replication; bringing them to those parts of Europe that have not benefitted so far.

6. The transport, energy and agriculture sectors were identified as major sources of air pollution. The Forum participants had the opportunity to share successfully introduced new technologies and innovative business and governance models that address local, regional and national air quality issues in these sectors. Special emphasis was placed on air pollution from domestic solid fuel heating and the measures to curb it.
7. Participants emphasized that strong regulations and enforcement, citizens awareness, coordinated action across different administrative levels (local, regional, national, EU, international) and the private sector are vital drivers of success. In addition, there is also a need for additional cross-sector cooperation to mobilise all solutions available in areas of relevance to the air quality challenge, such as energy, residential heating, transport, agriculture, industrial emissions, climate change etc.
8. The case study presentations also demonstrated that beyond the environmental benefits eco-innovation also contributes to a more competitive and high-tech economy, new market opportunities and higher employment.
9. Special attention was also paid to the main mechanisms for financial support (Horizon 2020, SME Instrument, LIFE Programme, EU Funds for Competitiveness) and the existing opportunities for transition to a green economy. The message that came through was about the need for additional efforts on the dissemination and publication of successful projects that receive financial support in view of their further replication and for encouraging and facilitating applications from countries with low success rate.
10. An exhibition was held within the Forum displaying environmental solutions and products contributing to the improvement of ambient air quality.
11. The results of the 21st European Forum on Eco-innovation for Air Quality will be addressed during the Informal Meeting of the EU Environment Ministers which will be held on 10-11 April 2018 in Sofia.