

Portugal  
11.12.03

Thank you Mr. President

We are today in Europe at a crucial stage of implementing our national and international climate change commitments.

Portugal is playing its part in a determined and forward-looking manner.

As you have heard from other EU colleagues, we have undertaken far-reaching policies and measures to combat climate change.

We have both a European and Member States' climate change programmes, some of which already with targets beyond 2012.

That's only reasonable, as climate change policy requires structural, long-term decisions on the energy, transportation, industrial and residential sectors.

We are also in the EU preparing to set up the first-ever continental-wide CO<sub>2</sub> trading scheme, which will start in 2005 and will cover thousands of European installations.

This is a powerful and cost-effective instrument to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across Europe.

Allow me, Mr. President to briefly outline some of the challenges of tackling climate change from the perspective of my country, which is an open, small economy of Europe.

Our emissions of greenhouse gases are growing at a pace that requires decisive action in Portugal, consistent with EU climate policy.

However, we see this challenge not so much as a threat but rather as an opportunity, one that will lock Portugal in a sustainable development path.

Our climate change plan is, hence, premised on the energy efficiency of our economy as a key competitiveness lever.

That's why, for instance, we're investing over 3 billion Euros on renewables during the current decade.

We realise that coherent and economically sound climate policy require a complex set of decisions and behaviour changes to many, many actors.

In preparing our national allocation plan under the EU trading directive, we're facing hard questions and decisions in terms of long-term energy supply and demand, rail and road infrastructure relationship, modal shift.

We have, therefore, realised that we need to strike the proper balance between the sectors covered and those outside the trading system.

That has prompted the proposal of a carbon tax for activities outside the trading system.

This is part of a new proposed set of climate measures under our climate programme, which is currently up for public comment.

Mr. Chairman,

As we move towards the implementation of our international commitments to tackle climate change, we cannot but realise its impacts, such as the raging forest fires Southern Europe and many other parts of the world experienced this year.

In so many parts of the Globe societies are simply lacking capacity and resources to adapt to a changing climate.

We must all therefore in the coming years invest heavily and decisively on adaptation.

The EU and its Member States are playing a key role in this respect, with a wide range of programmes at the multilateral, regional and bilateral levels.

We must all continue our dialogue internationally on the interplay between adaptation and mitigation measures to tackle climate change.

Both developed and developing countries alike will need to play their part in a global effort beyond the current decade.

In a sense we are all already acting in diverse paths. We need to begin a process that will bring us together coherently, taking into account countries' circumstances, and ultimately contribute to the Convention's objective.

Thank you Mr. President.