

Brussels, Friday 12 December 2008

**Statement by José Manuel BARROSO
President of the European Commission**

on climate change deal at the European Council

Today's political agreement on climate change and energy is of momentous importance. The leaders of Europe's 27 Member States have agreed to work together to transform Europe into a low-carbon economy. To make a real difference to energy security in Europe. And to make Europe the pioneer in developing tomorrow's technologies.

This is the fruit of two years of hard work by the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council. It has shown the European Union at its best: able to take courageous, long term decisions; to debate problems and find compromises; and to end up with an agreement with teeth – not just a political commitment, but a legally binding text with a guarantee to deliver.

Over the next few days, the EU institutions will finalize this deal. A positive vote in the European Parliament next week would set the seal on a remarkable story. As President of the Commission, I am proud that the proposals we made less than a year ago are securing such a strong endorsement.

At the heart of this success has been the EU's determination to stay focused on the overriding goal: the 20-20-20 targets for 2020. A 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, a 20% share for renewable energy, and a 20% boost to energy efficiency. The commitment to reach these targets remains 100% intact. From 2013, the amount of emissions allowed by industry will be cut, year by year. Industry which fails to respond will have to pay more. Europe has already shown that the market can be used to create the incentive for change – now the year by year cuts will use this system to drive emissions down. All in a way carefully designed to spread the costs across the EU in the fairest way possible, and to drive jobs and investment towards tomorrow's technologies.

This agreement is the most powerful demonstration possible that Europe is prepared to show the way in the global effort to tackle climate change. Europe is the first key player to make a commitment to a 20% reduction by 2020; and the first to accept legally binding rules to make this happen.

We are looking forward to working with the new US Administration to seize the moment, and to build a transatlantic and indeed global carbon market to act as the motor of a concerted international push to combat climate change. We are sending the signal to developing countries that our system is specifically designed to mobilize extra resources to help them make their own contribution. And Europe now has a clear offer on the table that, with an agreement at the UN negotiations in Copenhagen next year, we will go even further and commit to a 30% cut.

There remains a lot of work to be done before we can say that the world is giving climate change the attention it needs. But this is the most concrete and the most substantial step taken against climate change since the Kyoto Agreement.