

Concluding remarks
Mr. Benny Engelbrecht,
Chairman of the Danish Parliament's Transport Committee

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our meeting is coming to an end. Please, allow me to give a quick summary of the discussions we have had these last two days.

Most of yesterday was devoted to Energy Efficiency in Production and Buildings.

First, we heard views on the proposal for a new Directive on Energy Efficiency – from the Danish Presidency, from the European Parliament as well as from national parliamentarians. There is no doubt that difficult negotiations still lie ahead. However, it seems clear that there is a lot of potential – in terms of energy saving, growth and jobs – in an ambitious European instrument on energy efficiency.

The need for investment in energy was also important to the representative from the private Energy Sector. The Danish experience with early investment and regulation in new energy sources and energy saving tells a positive story

of how the private sector can - in the long run - profit from public regulation.

We also had an interesting insight into the possibility of constructing houses in such a way that energy needs can be reduced to a minimum. After all the cheapest energy is the one you don't use. Extra costs for energy saving houses can be as low as 12 %.

I think one of the main lessons from the discussion yesterday is that even if it can be difficult for Member States to find resources for energy investments – in particular at a time of economic crisis – most stakeholders can agree that the cost of not investing in energy is much higher. And this is a price we would then pay in terms of climbing oil and gas prices as well as energy dependency on countries outside the European Union.

Yesterday evening and today the debate focused on Energy Efficiency in Transports. Today's discussions show that we're only in the early stages of this debate on transport. We started yesterday with a visit to the European Environment Agency. Here we heard – amongst other things - of positive the experiences with regulation on energy efficiency in road transport.

Today we have had a look into the future possible regulation of transport in Europe.

We were exposed ideas on how to achieve low carbon transport Europe. First and foremost we need to implement already existing European legislation now that push to the technological development of more energy efficient cars and low carbon fuels. As planning within the energy and transport sectors require long term investment, we also need to consider, if additional legislation is needed especially within energy taxation.

Secondly, a more efficient transport system in Europe can be achieved through green logistics, eco driving and more shifts between different modes of transportation, even drivers education is important. Some considerations were voiced on how to limit the need for transportation - for instance through better urban planning that makes it easier to grab a train or a bike than going by car.

We also heard about initiatives to promote the use of bikes and public transportation in Copenhagen that support the urban life of the city. We even learned that citizens in Copenhagen will choose the bike in a snow blizzard.

And finally, we learned about our future vehicles from the car manufacturing industry. We heard about the technological advance already made, and we heard the plea from the industry that operates on the European and global level for a reasonable, responsible and long term strategy for transport in Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen, we recognize the challenges and we know how difficult it is to change energy and transport habits. We also know how hard it is in our parliaments to find support for investments in these sectors, especially in the middle of an economic crisis. European financing is available for some trans border projects, but most of the investment have to be done on member state level. How we do this on a coordinated manner is surely a daunting task.

None the less, future economic growth in Europe depends on a well functioning single market, where the energy and transport sectors are the back bone. If we make smart investments today, it might save our children and grand children a lot of problems and help create new technologies and jobs in Europe. I think we need both. Our discussion on biofuels demonstrates that we need to discuss matter sin broader fora.

I will end my summary by saying that the major regulatory frame work we must see to at the European level, but there are also plenty to do on the national and local levels. And for that I feel that this meeting has contributed to some exchange of best practices between us. Without European regulation, we will not meet our reduction targets.

Finally, I would like to thank you again for a very fruitful meeting. I would like to thank all speakers and participants in this meeting. And thanks to interpreters and staff.

You have all contributed to making this meeting a success.