

Caught in the cross-hairs: how industry lobbyists are gunning for EU climate targets

by Carbon Trade Watch and Corporate Europe Observatory
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When big business comes across EU climate targets it instinctively reaches for its big guns, unleashing CEOs and a volley of lobbyists in an attempt to avoid substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The first six months of 2011 have seen the latest round of this contest, with two policy initiatives re-opening the targets debate. A new report calling upon the EU to raise its greenhouse gas emissions reduction target from 20 to 30 per cent will be voted on at the 23 June plenary of the European Parliament. This is a step in the right direction, although it still falls well short of what is needed to tackle climate change.

The second initiative is the Roadmap for moving to a competitive low-carbon economy in 2050 (hereafter “Roadmap”), which has been proposed by the European Commission, and which will be discussed on 21 June at the inter-ministerial Environment Council. The Roadmap sets out a path for the EU to reduce its emissions by 80 to 95 per cent by 2050, but suggests a route that is littered with false “solutions” such as carbon trading, nuclear energy, agrofuels and carbon capture and storage (CCS), all of which have severe social and environmental impacts.

This report shows how BusinessEurope, the European employers’ confederation; the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) and the European Confederation of Iron and Steel Industries (Eurofer) have launched a bullying campaign to prevent a rise in targets and other steps. In so doing, they have counted on support from DG Enterprise, in particular. Tensions between DG Energy and DG Clima are also being exploited by the industry lobbyists in their attempts to further weaken the EU’s climate commitments.

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