



ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF
CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

The Minister

M. Vella, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs
and Fisheries

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*M. Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European
Commission, in charge of Better Regulation, Interinstitutional
Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental
Rights,*

*M. Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission for
the Energy Union,*

*M. Katainen, Vice-President of the European Commission for
Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness,*

M. Cañete, Commissioner for EU Climate Action and Energy,

*Ms. Bieńkowska, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry,
Entrepreneurship and SMEs*

Your ref

Our ref

Date

14/3787-

9.12.2014

Dear Commissioner,

With reference to the letter dated 1 December 2014, sent by eleven EU environment ministers on the Commission's Work Programme 2015, I would like to present the view of the Norwegian government.

Norway, as a member of the European Economic Area (EEA), closely follows the development of EU environment policies. Resource efficiency and waste management is also given high priority by the Norwegian government. The EU Commission's Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy package includes central building blocks towards a green economy. For Norway it is therefore important to support this package as well as the Clean Air policy package, and to support their inclusion in the Work Programme 2015.

In order to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, we need to stimulate and give direction to economic development and innovation. Norway has a long tradition using national policy goals combined with regulations, economic incentives and extended producer

responsibilities. In order to encourage a shift to a green economy, we need to send strong signals to the market and develop robust policy instruments. This is necessary in order to stimulate innovation, as well as research and development.

As one of several proposals, the Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy package includes ambitious recycling targets. According to our experience, ambitious targets are needed in order to create significant change. However, we must ensure that these targets do not conflict with other important policy areas. With regard to e.g., the hazardous substances of highest concern, both Norway and the EU have the ambitious goal of eliminating the use of them by 2020, as far as technically and economically feasible. Thus it is also important that the recycling targets are designed in such a way that they do not encourage recycling of hazardous substances. I hope the creation of material cycles without hazardous substances will be a central issue in the upcoming discussion of the proposals.

Regarding the Clean Air Policy Package of December 2013, Norway strongly welcomes the EU's efforts to further reduce air pollution in Europe. International cooperation to reduce air pollution is of great importance to Norway, both under the framework of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and under the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA). The Clean Air Policy Package sets important new environmental goals to be achieved by 2030. Thus, the proposed directives will take us a new step forward in our common efforts to protect human health and ecosystems from adverse effects of air pollution.

For Norway further recovery from acidification of ecosystems in our rivers and lakes is important. Therefore, further reductions in emissions of sulphur and nitrogen in Europe are needed. Air pollution is a threat to human health as well as to the economy in the form of e.g., hospital costs, illnesses and absence from work. In order to improve air quality in our cities we need to further reduce emissions of NO₂ and particulate matter (dust).

Norway attaches great importance to the effect-oriented approach of the Gothenburg Protocol and the Directive on National Emission Ceilings. This approach will contribute to a cost-effective distribution of emission reductions among countries in the European region. Thus, we also welcome the scope of the proposed new directive on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants.

Yours sincerely,


Tine Sundtoft