

Mr Tony Long
Director
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Brussels, 1 July 2005.



Dear President Barroso,

It is a now widely reported that the two environmental thematic strategies due to be presented to the College of Commissioners in July - air quality and marine protection - have been officially removed from the agenda and postponed until an unspecified date. It is further reported that the decision to delay the presentation and approval of the two strategies is one that has been taken by you personally - or at least by your office.



Friends of the Earth Europe



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INTERNATIONAL

We are writing to you as the G10 environmental organisations with a number of questions that surround this issue. We are particularly aware that the Commissioner for the Environment was making a statement to the European Parliament only hours before the postponement decision became public to the effect that the timetable for the publication of the strategies scheduled for July was on course. The questions are therefore the following:

1. Has there been an official statement from the Commission on the reasons for the postponement and when will new dates for their presentation to the College be announced?
2. Is it the case that the decision to postpone the air quality thematic strategy was influenced by a letter sent to you by the employer's federation, UNICE, warning that costs would place an unbearable burden on industry?
3. How is the postponement of the marine strategy and its accompanying draft framework legislation linked with the postponement of the air quality decision - or are they unrelated to each other?
4. Are there consequences from this decision for the other five thematic strategies in the pipeline and, if so, what are the further delays that can be expected for them?

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We heard you promise at the Economic and Social Committee meeting on 15 April regarding the sustainable development strategy review that you are personally committed to ensuring a strong and vigorous Commission approach under your Presidency to the principles of sustainable development, which obviously includes strong environmental commitments. This looks very much at odds with the decision on the first two thematic strategies. We look forward to your assurances that your commitment has not in any way diminished.



Europe's voice for sustainable transport

We also would like to be reassured that you were not being swayed in your decisions by the sectoral representations of powerful business lobby interests. If there is even a hint of a suspicion that these issues are linked, the current European crisis of public confidence in the EU institutions can only deepen.





Perhaps your decision was inspired by the current political turmoil following the referendum results in France and the Netherlands. Our view is that any weakening of the Commission's environmental ambitions at this time would be the wrong response. All the signs are that European public opinion continues to have a strong and supportive stance in favour of EU environmental policy making. We would be pleased to explore this argumentation further with you in a meeting if you feel that would be helpful.



We look forward to your answers on the above points. In view of the widespread interest in this matter among our member groups in Europe and the specialised media we intend to make the contents of this letter more widely available. Thank you for your attention to this matter.



Yours sincerely,



Tony Long, Director, WWF European Policy Office.



On behalf of:
Claire Papazoglou, Head of EU Policy, Bird Life International.
Karla Schoeters, Director, Climate Action Network Europe.
John Hontelez, Secretary General, The European Environmental Bureau
Genon K. Jensen, Director, European Public Health Alliance.
Christian Baumgartner, Secretary General, International Friends of Nature.
Martin Rocholl, Director, Friends of the Earth.
Jorgo Riss, EU Policy Director, Greenpeace.
Jos Dings, Director, The European Federation for Transport & Environment
Magda Stoczkiewicz, Policy Officer, CEE Bankwatch Network



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