Good morning ladies and gentlemen

I should like to begin by saying how honoured I am to have been invited to give this opening address at today's meeting within the framework of the eighth edition of the EU Sustainable Energy Week in Brussels.

It was also with great honour that I have awarded 6 prizes this week: five to the winners of the Sustainable Energy Europe Awards (categories: Communicating, Consuming, Learning, Living and Travelling) and one to the winner of the ManagEnergy Award, recognising the best practice in local and regional energy action.

This event, in particular, will offer a significant support to the debate on the need to restructure and coordinate Europe's energy policy at EU level. It will provide an opportunity to underline the added value of multidisciplinary approaches, including ethics, in energy research and innovation policies

During the crisis that we have today we need to make the right investments in key sectors for European competitiveness and industry. Clean energy is one of the keys – it helps all of us to be able to pay less for energy, to have better health and air quality and protect against climate change.

I’m an optimist in the sense that after each crisis there has been a technological breakthrough followed by a boom. The next industrial revolution is powered by clean energy.

The debate on "Bridging the gaps in energy related socio-economic research" has to be done with a European perspective.

This supposes an integrated policy that will allow us to meet, simultaneously, a number of different challenges. These include meeting our energy needs, preventing damage to the environment and fostering enhanced industrial competitiveness.

In pursuing these goals, I should like to stress

- the importance of technology (+ H2020),
- the need for legislative certainty
- the consolidation of the internal market
- and finally, the ethical considerations in the formulation of European Union policies

If we are to achieve our aims, we must coordinate our activities at the different levels of the Commission, the 28 member states and Europe's neighbouring states. It is of prime importance that Europe is able to speak with one voice with regard to energy policy and that we present a united face to the external world.

In this respect, a determined effort is particularly urgent given that some EU member states are currently phasing out nuclear energy whilst renewables are not yet in the position to fully take up the slack.

At the same time, the US has undergone a revolution in its energy supply through its development of shale gas and this is something, I believe, that will enable the United States to increase their competitiveness considerably over the course of the next few years.

Actions

How then can we ensure the smooth and efficient functioning of the EU energy market?

a) Firstly, we must seek to both develop existing technologies and foster new technologies in such a way that we improve the supply of cheap, available energy whilst ensuring that such technology does not impact negatively on the environment. In this respect, H2020 - and the synergies that have been developed with the structural funds - will function in such a way as to promote clean and affordable technologies.

b) Secondly, it is important that we supply industry with legislative certainty as this involves outlining objectives that go beyond

2020 to 2030 and even further. At this point, let me say a few words about binding targets for C02; renewables and energy efficiency. Whilst we must set out our targets for the future, it is also necessary that we supply ourselves with the means to achieve these goals.

Europe, we have set out a series of ambitious targets but a number of our member states still remain heavily dependent on coal. As a result, it will be difficult to actually hit the ambitious targets that we have laid down for ourselves.

By contrast, in the United States -- where there are no such binding targets -- the country

has forged ahead with the transition to shale gas, a source of energy that is less polluting in terms of C02. Progress, in this domain, has been further facilitated by the existence of a legislative framework that has enabled often quite small firms to enter the market.

The regrettable conclusion is that

- we have set ourselves objectives that we do not have the means to attain,
- whilst the United States has actually developed the means to
- achieve significant advances without setting binding targets.

My argument is not that binding targets are necessarily to be rejected but when we do specify targets, we should make sure that we are actually in a position to attain them. In other words, they should be smart: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely.

c) Turning now to the consolidation of the internal market, thirdly, we should

- consolidate and extend our energy infrastructure
- whilst implementing internal market law and enforcing competition rules.

In this respect, we must design our legislation in such a way that it empowers consumers and

ensures flexible market design. This is key to completing the internal market as this supposes increased diversification in terms of both gas and electricity.

d) Finally, it is of paramount importance that Ethical considerations are integral components in the formulation of European Union policies, and these include energy policy.

An ethically sound policy design is a challenge for the formulation of such an important policy sector. We, therefore, underline the contribution of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies - EGE - to the debate on a sustainable energy mix in Europe by studying the ethical impact of

research on different energy sources on human well-being.

I am particularly looking forward to hearing the Opinion of the EGE and I am sure that the debate will bring a valuable contribution to theses questions.

Well, that is enough from me. Let me now introduce Prof. Julian Kinderlerer, President of EGE.