

Good afternoon 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 together with my colleague and MEP Françoise Grossetête.

In order to pursue an efficient energy policy, we should restructure and coordinate Europe's energy policy at EU level.

While restructuring and coordination Europe's energy policy at EU level we need to ensure affordable, clean and secure energy for all.

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, it is important to stress the value of technology.

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.

In this line, the Parliament stressed the importance of energy, proposing an increase of 7.5% to 8.4% of the budget for Horizon 2020 to challenge societal energy along with an ambitious program of work and very thorough.

During the crisis that we have today we need to make the right investments. That means investing in research, education and training, and the sectors that will be key 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. But we need to be prepared. We need more engineers and researchers. 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

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 the process, we must offer industry legislative certainty over a time span that extends beyond 2020.

The necessary consolidation of the internal market includes extending our infrastructure whilst implementing internal market law and enforcing competition rules.

Completing the internal market also supposes the key importance of properly managed diversification, both in terms of striking a balance in terms of energy sources, on the one hand, and in terms of covering countries of origin and countries of transit, on the other hand.

To this end, there are a number of projects --
including LNG -- that will enable us to
achieve this goal.