

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Advisory committee recommends climate legislation Energy advisory report calls for pursuit of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction**

**The Hague, 24 September 2015 - Although the Netherlands has had a climate policy for some years, the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with energy supply have not fallen. If the agreed climate goals are to be achieved, a trend change is required. That is the central conclusion of the advisory report 'A prosperous nation without CO<sub>2</sub>: towards a Sustainable Energy Supply by 2050', which the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli) submitted to Henk Kamp, Minister of Economic Affairs, today. In the report, the Council argues that CO<sub>2</sub> reduction should be a stated aim of energy policy and formalised in legislation.**

#### **Legislate on CO<sub>2</sub> reduction**

Rli recommends that energy policy should be based on the aim of bringing about an 80 to 95 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, compared with 1990. At the moment, CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction is just one of the policy goals, along with energy conservation and energy sustainability. Rli also argues that energy policy should no longer focus on particular technologies or energy carriers. Instead of a policy agenda that sets out progression routes for solar energy, wind energy, gas, biomass and so forth, Rli proposes working with transition pathways for the four basic social functions of energy: low-temperature heat (1), high-temperature heat (2), transport and mobility (3) and lighting and appliances (4). The Council believes that gearing policy to the need for (sustainable) energy, rather than focusing on energy carriers and sources, will make it possible to take the fullest possible account of social, technological, (geo)political and economic change in the decades ahead.

#### **Pathways for the four social functions of energy**

A separate transition pathway is required for each basic function of energy, reflecting the distinct opportunities and obstacles and allowing for an appropriate rate of change, the Council reasons. The details of each pathway should be defined by businesses, citizens, social organisations and knowledge centres. The government's role should be creating the conditions under which that can happen, e.g. by negotiating international and European agreements on CO<sub>2</sub> reduction, providing tax incentives, removing obstacles and facilitating new initiatives. Rli recommends making an additional several hundred million euros available for long-horizon innovation programmes, because new ways of working, knowledge and techniques are required for a successful energy transition.

#### **Flexible and adaptive policy**

Policy flexibility and adaptation are central to the Rli's advice, but the pursuit of transition is certainly not optional. Securing the CO<sub>2</sub> reduction objective is an absolute requirement, whose realisation will necessitate agreements between government and CO<sub>2</sub> producers. If agreed intermediate goals are missed, the government will in the final resort need to enforce the goals through legislation and regulations. Intermediate goals serve to ensure that sufficient progress is being made with energy transition. The Council says that in the speed of transition planned for each of the four energy functions has to reflect the extent to which policy is defined nationally or internationally. It is also important to assure a level playing field within Europe. Where the low-temperature heat functionality is concerned, the Council wants the transition pathway to lead to a carbon-neutral urban environment by 2035.

#### **Government commissioner**

The Council believes that the energy transition goal and the required approach should be formalised in legislation and that the energy transition should be overseen by an independent body that is isolated from political and sectoral interests. The Council accordingly recommends the appointment of a government commissioner to independently drive and oversee transition and to ensure continued progress towards realisation, unaffected by governmental succession.

#### **Information for editors**

If you have any questions about the advisory report, please contact Project Leader Folmer de Haan

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The advisory report and press release are available at [www.rli.nl](http://www.rli.nl) from 24 September at 12:00 noon.

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**General information**

The Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (*Raad voor de Leefomgeving en Infrastructuur*, Rli) advises the Dutch government and Parliament on strategic issues concerning the sustainable development of the living and working environment. The Council is independent, and offers solicited and unsolicited advice on long-term issues of strategic importance to the Netherlands. Its Chair is H.M. (Henry) Meijdam.