

RESOURCE EFFICIENCY Position Paper of the Nickel Institute

May 2011

“Taking account of the interconnections between sectors using resources while minimising regulatory roadblocks / counterproductive effects discouraging resource efficiency and industrial competitiveness will be key for a successful roadmap”

Introduction

The Nickel Institute took note of the Communication from the Commission “A Resource Efficient Europe” and looks forward to the Roadmap for a Resource Efficient Europe. It has studied the follow up communications from the Commission and in particular it would like to engage in the debate and policy development around Raw Materials, Energy Efficiency and Transport as part of its contribution to the cross cutting Flagship of Resource Efficiency overall.

Raw materials

Europe needs raw materials in order to produce green, resource and energy efficient technology applications, electronics, consumer products and important economic infrastructure. Nickel is a vital raw material in many downstream and end user sectors as demonstrated by the criticality assessment of the European Commission Raw Materials Group as a first step in the Raw Materials Initiative.

Nickel is found in a vast array of daily objects such as coins, energy efficient batteries, pots, pans and cutlery to critical pieces of economic capital such as power plants and machines.

The Nickel Institute carefully reviewed the Communication from the Commission on “Tackling the Challenges in Commodity Markets and on Raw Materials” and the Draft Report of MEP Reinhard Bütikofer on “An effective raw materials strategy for Europe”. It would like to underline that it is important to focus on demand factors and not just supply of raw materials. To achieve this, Europe must retain an industrial base that uses raw materials.

The Nickel Institute therefore fully supports the vision of MEP Bütikofer that raw material challenges are also an opportunity to invigorate the EU's industrial base and increase competitiveness via an ambitious industrial innovation strategy.

Recycling

Recycling is of the utmost importance for achieving greater resource efficiency. Both the Communication on Resource Efficiency and Raw Materials identified this importance. However, the Nickel Institute recalls that the “*Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources*” and the “*Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste*” also set out ambitious objectives yet they could not at this point be classified as “game changers”.

Recycling of nickel-containing materials reduces emissions, energy consumption and other environmental impacts occurring during primary production and the manufacturing processes because Nickel is highly recyclable and recycling is key to increasing resource efficiency.

The Nickel Institute therefore calls for a central role for recycling in the Roadmap for a Resource Efficient Europe and for the emphasis to be placed on results.

Energy efficiency

The Nickel Institute took note of the Communication from the Commission on the “*Energy Efficiency Plan 2011*” and the “*2050 Roadmap for a Low Carbon Economy*”. Moreover, it looks forward to the release of the Energy Roadmap at the end of 2011.

The Energy Efficiency Action Plan points out that Industrial competitiveness could be improved by the full implementation of existing and new measures aimed at securing energy efficiency. However, competitiveness must not be endangered by regulatory burdens or the inappropriate implementation of regulation in other sectors.

For example, REACH is having a large impact on the mining and raw materials sector. Authorisation with a focus on substitution is quite problematic. Although substitution is easier at the end user stage, in chemistry, the scope for substitution is rather limited. While maintaining the spirit of its objectives, it should not be implemented in a way that imposes overly burdensome roadblocks.

Nickel is a high performance material that plays a key role in long-life components that enable clean, efficient energy, including wind turbines, fuel cells, and solar power.

Sustainable Mobility

The Nickel Institute took note of the recently published Transport White Paper from the European Commission. It fully supports the objective of putting mobility on a sustainable path. Efficiency gains in the area of Transport are correctly viewed as offering large potential for driving improvements. In particular, the Nickel Institute welcomes the commitment by the Commission to devise an innovation and deployment strategy for the transport sector. The White Paper correctly points out that new technologies for vehicles and traffic management will be key to lower transport emissions in the EU as in the rest of the world. Furthermore, given the massive investment in Physical Transport infrastructure that will be required between now and 2050, it is vital to ensure that this investment is highly green and sustainable.

Nickel metal hydride batteries allow hybrid cars to produce up to 50% fewer harmful pollutants and greenhouse gases than comparable petrol / gasoline cars allowing it to support greener transport.

Conclusion

The Roadmap for a Resource Efficient Europe must identify and take account of the interconnections between the sectors and stakeholders using the resources while minimising regulatory roadblocks and counterproductive effects that discourage resource efficiency and industrial competitiveness.

The Nickel Institute is a nonprofit organization that represents the interests of 27 companies which together produce more than 75% of the world's annual nickel output. We promote on behalf of our members the production, use and re-use (through recycling) of nickel in a socially and environmental responsible manner.

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