

**G8 Environment Ministers Meeting  
Siracusa  
22-24 April 2009**

**STATEMENT TO THE PRESS BY STAVROS DIMAS, EUROPEAN  
COMMISSIONER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (23 APRIL)**

**Key messages**

- I would like to express my thanks to Minister Prestigiacomo for hosting this meeting here in Siracusa, which is a beautiful and historic location, and of special importance to me as a Corinthian.
- This meeting is addressing two of the most pressing environmental challenges of our times. The importance of these challenges is reflected in the range of participants taking an active part in the meeting.
- Let me first address the issue of climate change. Yesterday we spoke about low carbon technologies. These will be essential to get us onto a low carbon path. This will only be possible with the full engagement of business. I was encouraged by what I heard yesterday from industry representatives as to their commitment to fully contributing to this effort.
- It is clear that we need to put in place the right structures and incentives to move towards a low carbon economy.
- It is my conviction that G8 environment ministers will need to send a strong message to the G8 Summit on the contribution of tackling climate change to the economic recovery.
- The EU Climate and Energy package, together with the European Economic Recovery Plan amounts to a "Green New Deal" which puts "smart" investment upfront, particularly in energy efficiency and clean and green technologies.
- This morning, we discussed biodiversity.
- The G8 is an excellent forum to send the message to the world that biodiversity remains at the top of the global environmental agenda. I would like to thank Italy for having made biodiversity a key issue on its G8 agenda, maintaining the momentum of the two previous G8 Presidencies.

- There is both a moral and economic imperative to tackle this challenge. This meeting has shown that there is common understanding of the problem, but we are still lacking the necessary concrete measures which address, for example, the severe economic and social impacts of biodiversity loss.
- I welcome the fact that this meeting will adopt a message on biodiversity. This should make clear that efforts need to be redoubled, and that we need to start looking beyond 2010.