

PRESS RELEASE

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Climate conference Paris: a climate agreement indeed, but not an economic cemetery

Febeliec asks for an international climate agreement, but also for more balance between competitiveness, security of supply and environmental objectives

Febeliec, the federation of industrial users of electricity and natural gas, asks for an international climate agreement at the Paris Summit. "Global problems ask for a global approach", says Peter Claes, director of Febeliec, "and only balanced, widespread actions can lead to solutions to the climate issue".

Febeliec expects that, during the Climate Summit in Paris, the European Union and Belgium will require not only West-European countries to deliver efforts. With an expected share of 10% of the worldwide emissions in 2020, Europe can indeed not solve this problem alone. "If countries such as Belgium continue to go further than others in this matter, this will bring about a social and economic cemetery", says Peter Claes, director of Febeliec. Febeliec signals that industrial energy consumers already offer various technological solutions to the climate issue. In order to be able to realize them, it is however necessary that political decision makers avoid that competition between the big economic zones is being further distorted, in order to avoid delocalization of industrial activities and crumbling of the European innovation power that would go with it. "The big issue is: how far can Europe and Belgium go in this? Where do we want industrial employment to be? Here? Or in countries far away where climate is much less an issue than here?", says Peter Claes.

Febeliec calls upon the European and Belgian authorities to take into account competitiveness of our industry and cost efficiency. "Within the Belgian industry, there is a huge basis for a serious, international approach of the climate issue", says Peter Claes. "But society must realize that costs can no longer be borne out of proportion by the industry without particularly severe consequences for wellbeing and employment". In concrete terms, Febeliec asks that federal, Flemish, Brussels and Walloon representatives in our country only approve an agreement if efforts are fixed equally and with special attention paid to cost efficiency, and are not imposed unilaterally to industry. "At a political level, this may seem to be the easiest solution, but there are other actors who have a larger potential to reduce their emissions at a lower cost", says Peter Claes. Febeliec thus pleads in favor of paying prior attention to better building isolation and a more efficient organization of the transport sector.

According to Febeliec, the European and Belgian authorities must apply the following principles at the Paris Summit and in view of a balanced European climate policy: cost efficiency, balance between competitiveness, security of supply and environmental objectives, attention for technological progress, and a burden sharing between federal and regional authorities, based on facts and rational arguments. This is the only way our industry can deliver a continued and most needed contribution to our country's economy, to the wellbeing of our citizens. As regards renewable energy, Febeliec thinks that they are only a means to reduce CO₂ emissions to the extent they replace fossil production. In order to allow these technologies to contribute worldwide to the climate objectives, it is crucial to first render them efficient and competitive.

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