The Europeans Take the Lead

The Europeans have, once again, proven that they are willing to lead the world on sustainability. I wrote in February how the European Union was embarking on a bold new initiative to advance their already ambitious "20/20/20" program. Well the Europeans have, after months of hearings, further study, negotiations, and the inevitable political give and take necessitated by the fact that they are 28 sovereign nations working together in a complex union, unprecedented in its scope, come up with a living, breathing, working plan. The goal? Nothing less than a 40% reduction of their greenhouse gases from 1990 levels by 2030.

This will be the crowning achievement on climate and energy of the outgoing EU Commissioners, led in this by President José Manuel Barroso and Connie Hedegaard, Commissioner for Climate Action. Barroso said "This 2030 package is very good news for our fight against climate change. No player in the world is as ambitious as the European Union when it comes to cutting greenhouse gas emissions." Hedegaard noted the new package is important "...not only to Europe and the Europeans, but also to the rest of the world. We have sent a strong signal to other big economies and all other countries: we have done our homework, now we urge you to follow Europe's example." Hear, hear!

Here is a suite of facts and comment from the EU on the new package. You can also profit by reading the Guardian's characteristically smart and comprehensive coverage on the EU's new goals and initiatives to achieve them.

Here is Connie Hedegaard giving us the high points. She and her fellow commissioners, the European Parliament, the leadership of the 28 EU nations, and indeed the great majority of Europeans can be rightly proud of this achievement. We should all be grateful for their leadership.