



What A Difference Two Years Makes

Posted by [Luis de Sousa](#) on January 18, 2008 - 11:00am in [The Oil Drum: Europe](#)
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Tags: [andris piebalgs](#), [energy commissioner](#), [energy policy](#), [eu](#), [european parliament](#) [[list all tags](#)]

By the beginning of 2006 the EU's Energy Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, was directly interpellated at Parliament about the coming issue of Peak Oil. "...no more than a theory" he answered. [Full text \(21/01/2006\)](#).

Peak Oil is more than a theory, and two years later the tune is different.



Crossposted at the [European Tribune](#).

Two years ago, Caroline Lucas, a member of the European Parliament representing the Green Party [asked Andris Piebalgs](#) about the EU's plans to deal with Peak Oil. He replied that there was no plan, but there was also no need to worry:

The EU's energy commissioner Andris Piebalgs has admitted he has no plan to deal with rapidly rising oil and gas prices in the face of shrinking supply and booming demand.

In a response to a parliamentary question put by Green Party MEP Caroline Lucas, he shrugs off the so-called 'Peak Oil' scenario as 'no more than a theory'.

Dr Lucas, an MEP for South-East England and a member of the European Parliament's Environment and International Trade Committees, said: "The Commission's attitude represents a frightening dereliction of duty.

[...]

Mr Piebalgs said the EU was 'reflecting on an energy policy framework' but admitted future proposals would likely be restricted to a common energy policy - a solution likely to prove politically unpopular in the UK and elsewhere in Europe.

Two years and 40 more \$/barrel later, Peak Oil looks a lot more real. [Speaking to the Swiss Energy Congress](#) (hat tip to [Rembrandt](#)) Commissioner Piebalgs sounded worried:

With the Commission set to release on 23 January a series of proposals designed to help the EU realise its commitment of reducing CO2 emissions by 20% by 2020, Piebalgs argued that while tackling climate change is crucial, policymakers should not lose sight of the issue of security of fossil fuel supply.

The combined challenge of climate change and supply security leads to the conclusion that the EU cannot "hang on" to its "old, fossil energy system", he said.

[...]

Highlighting the potential gravity of the problem, Piebalgs noted that the oil crisis of the 1970s presented a discrepancy between oil supply and demand of only 5%, but that in a post-peak oil scenario, the gap between supply capacity and demand could widen by 4% annually, leading to a 20% gap within five years.

As noted by the original article by [EurActiv](#), credit has to be given to the IEA for sending governments a clear message of urgency on energy matters during recent months. An energy shock is upon us and it is good to see that at least some of the stake holders are actually noticing it.

Commissioner Piebalgs and EU citizens in general lost two years of preparation for what will likely be the greatest challenge of their lives, not only collectively but also at an individual level. With the institutional stalemate addressed for the time being, let's hope the lag can be made up in the upcoming years.

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