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domestic product in 2020. “There is a cost, but it is manageable,” Barroso told parliament. “Implementing the package will cost €3 per week per EU citizen. Inaction will cost them €50–60 per week.” The commission estimates that “by 2020 a household’s overall energy bill would rise by an average of €150 per year”.

“Finally, we move from targets to tools,” says Lena Ek, a Swedish member of the Liberal Democrat party. British parliamentarian Graham Watson called the package “the most important act of the Barroso commission so far”.

Auctioning emissions allowances could generate state revenues of up to €50 billion per year. At present, roughly the same sum is tantamount to a windfall profit for the power industry, which has passed on to consumers the ‘costs’ of emissions trading. The commission has not specified how member states should use the extra money, but does suggest that climate and energy research should benefit.

“Energy research and development in the European Union is shamefully low,” says Ottmar Edenhofer, an economist at the Potsdam Institute of Climate Impact Research in Germany. “The proposed scheme will increase pressure on industry to develop low-emissions technologies. The revenues from auctioning emissions rights should be channelled into research and innovation.”

The emissions market is volatile and has reacted nervously to political interference in the past, but experts say that the scheme will benefit from the amendments. “Industry, banks and investors need planning reliability,” says Stefan Kleeborg, a carbon-market analyst with the 3C group near Frankfurt, Germany. “Knowing the post-2012 trading rules early will stabilize the market and will ultimately make it more efficient.” Realistically, a price of €24–30 per tonne of CO₂ can be expected at auctions, he says.

Other proposals include sectors not covered by the ETS, such as transport, agriculture and buildings, which will on average have to reduce emissions by merely 10% of 2005 levels by 2020. Wealthier member states will need to cut more emissions than poorer countries.

In addition, the overall share of renewable energy in the European Union’s final energy consumption is to increase from 8.5% to 20%, with specific targets for each member state. Countries that fail to deliver the legally binding target might face financial penalties.

The commission also calls for a 10% biofuel component in vehicle fuel by 2020. As excessive production of raw materials for biofuels has sparked serious environmental concerns, it will outline stringent sustainability criteria for their use. ■

Quirin Schiermeier

See Editorial, page 499.

Canada abolishes its national science adviser

The Canadian government is closing its Office of the National Science Advisor at the end of March, after just four years of service. The top-level science and technology adviser post will also be abolished in the move; it was already sidelined in 2006 when the new conservative government reassigned the adviser’s responsibilities from reporting to the prime minister to reporting to the industry minister.

“I’m dismayed that the office is disappearing after four years and that it hasn’t become a permanent fixture in science and technology in Canada,” says Arthur Carty, who has held the post since its inception. Carty decided to retire from public office when he was told that the government was discontinuing the position.

Industry Canada said that the decision to phase out the office followed the establishment of the Science, Technology and Innovation Council (STIC) in June 2007. “The STIC will function as a single committee, providing the government with independent and integrated advice on science and technology,” it said. It consists of a chair, Howard Alper, a chemistry professor at the University of Ottawa who is former president of the Royal Society of Canada, and 17 members, including university leaders, scientists, industry executives and government ministers.

Canadian scientists are undecided as to whether the council can replace the role and function of a national science adviser. “I don’t think what they have now in its place is any more likely to succeed than anything else,” says David Anderson, director of the Guelph Institute for the Environment in Ontario and former federal environment minister.

“The jury is still out,” says Elizabeth Dowdeswell, chair of the scientific advisory committee of the Council of Canadian Academies in Ottawa, Ontario.

Some scientists have criticized the move as evidence of the government’s lack of

interest in science and understanding of how it is done. Anderson says that Carty must have had a hard time giving science advice while the administration was trying to discredit the science of climate change.

Carty is a British-born organometallic chemist who ran the National Research Council Canada from 1994 to 2004. When Prime Minister Paul Martin revived the science adviser post to harness Canada’s science potential and offer insight on international science issues, he appointed

Carty. It was the first such post in Canada for 30 years (see *Nature* 427, 91; 2004). The office’s small budget and vague mandate soured its chance of success from the start. Its finances, including salaries, hovered around Can\$1 million (US\$1 million), and the office didn’t secure any permanent staff to help Carty until its third year.

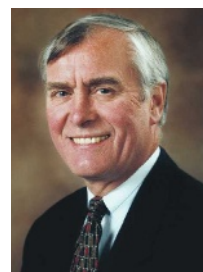
During his tenure, Carty spearheaded the 2005 creation of

the Council of Canadian Academies, like the US National Academy of Sciences. The council provides independent assessments of the science underlying key issues, but does not make recommendations to the government. Carty helped to establish Canada as a leader in the International Polar Year, ensuring that it provided \$150 million in funding. He also represented Canada at the Carnegie Group’s meetings of science ministers and advisers.

But some work, including a national consultation on how major science initiatives should seek funding, “never saw the light of day”, Carty told *Nature*. “I don’t really think the government has understood the role that a national science adviser — or that office — can play.”

The news comes shortly after the government sacked Linda Keen, the president of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, the country’s independent nuclear watchdog. Critics have said that Keen was fired for “doing her job”. The move suggests that the independence of advisers and committees is on shaky ground, says Anderson. ■

Hannah Hoag



Science adviser Arthur Carty has retired.