

## **EU Ministers Prepare For Unbundling Debate**

European energy ministers are preparing for a debate on unbundling when they meet to discuss the European Commission's third energy market opening package in Luxembourg. The key outstanding issues are whether a compromise unbundling proposal developed by the Commission and the Slovenian presidency of the EU is viable financially and practically, whether it should apply to power as well as gas, and whether any alternative to the full ownership unbundling favoured by the Commission should be allowed permanently or only temporarily. If the ministers fail to agree these issues, diplomats believe they are likely to run out of time to get the whole package passed into law before the European Parliament breaks for its June 2009 elections. This is because France, which takes over the rotating six-month EU presidency on 1 July 2008, has made agreeing the European Commission's January climate protection package its priority. EU leaders want to agree the climate package, which sets binding 2020 EU and national targets for increasing renewables and cutting carbon dioxide emissions, ahead of the UN talks on a post-2012 global climate agreement in Copenhagen in December 2009.

[Source essa news]