



## PRESS RELEASE

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### With ambitious EU legislation, wind energy can provide huge benefits to Europe

**“Wind has delivered the most promising results out of all renewable energy technologies so far, with 57 GW of total capacity installed in the EU by the end of 2007. In order to ensure that this trend continues, we need to have a secure and favourable EU legislative framework”, EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs told delegates at the opening session of the European Wind Energy Conference (EWEC) today in Brussels. The EU Commissioner - Chairman of the EWEC 2008 Conference also emphasised the need to consider renewable energy solutions beyond 2020 and far into the future.**

A swift adoption and implementation of the European Commission’s proposed Renewable Energy Directive is essential to ensure a secure, sustainable and competitive energy future in Europe, delegates heard this morning. Decision-makers at national and European level stressed the importance of a stable, flexible legislative framework. They outlined their vision for the EU legislation and how this will deliver a new generation of energy supply.

The European Commission’s proposed Renewable Energy Directive has generally been well received by the wind energy sector, although some improvements could be introduced by the European Parliament and Member States. Furthermore, it still remains to be established beyond any doubt that Member States are legally entitled to remain in control of their national mechanisms. Speakers at the opening session of EWEC retained the overall positive note as they presented their views on how such legislation can help achieve the EU’s binding target of 20% renewables in the energy mix by 2020.

**Andris Piebalgs**, EU Commissioner for Energy, opened the event as chairman of the conference by highlighting the European Council’s wish for a rapid agreement on the proposed Renewable Energy Directive during the French Presidency in the second half of 2008.

**Britta Thomsen**, Member of the European Parliament, stressed that there are certain important elements the European Parliament would like to see included in the proposed Renewable Energy Directive.

“Clearer guidelines are needed for the national action plans, and a list of elements to be included. The European Commission also needs to be able to monitor the action plans, and have enforcement mechanisms so it can react if Member States are not meeting their goals.” Ms Thomsen also emphasised the importance of efficient support schemes at national level, and asked for sectoral targets for electricity, heating and cooling, and transport at Member State level.

**Andrej Vizjak**, Minister of the Economy in Slovenia, which holds the current EU presidency, said, that greater investment is needed in wind energy “in order to breach the gap between the EU’s goals, and today’s reality”. Currently, 80% of energy subsidies go to traditional fuels and nuclear energy, with just 20% going to renewables.

The time to act to meet such goals and to tackle climate change is short, stressed **Paul Magnette**, Federal Minister for Energy and Climate in Belgium, who emphasised that “the window of opportunity to act is closing”. One key step for increasing and improving wind energy’s share of the power mix, he said, would be to focus on increasing research efforts.

**Manuel Pinho**, Portugal’s Minister of Economy and Innovation, warned that if quick steps were not taken towards a better use of renewables, the EU would go from importing 55% of its energy to 66% by 2030, making the economy even more dependent on energy from third countries. He presented Portugal’s renewable energy mix, a combination of hydro and wind power, as a combination ideal for providing flexible, indigenous electricity at competitive energy prices.

**Arthouros Zervos**, President of EWEA, looked at the current wind energy situation and presented the association’s new report, *Pure Power: wind energy scenarios up to 2030*. The report introduces development pathways for wind energy up to 2010, 2020 and 2030, studying the probable effects on electricity, greenhouse gas emissions and the EU economy.

He said, “There is no contradiction between economic growth and large-scale deployment of wind energy – on the contrary. Wind energy is a precious commodity that brings numerous benefits to our society. Not only does it revitalise the economy, it also creates new jobs, reduces EU dependency on imported fossil fuels, and facilitates better functioning electricity markets - which is desperately needed.”

Wind energy currently meets 3.7% of EU electricity demand. *Pure Power* shows that the European Commission’s goal of increasing that share to 12% by 2020 is certainly achievable. In 2007, wind power capacity in the EU increased by 8.5 GW, and on average, wind power capacity needs to increase by 9.5 GW per year over the next 13 years to reach 180 GW and meet 12-14% of EU power demand in 2020.

180 GW of wind in 2020 would produce 477 TWh of electricity, of which 133 TWh would come from offshore wind. This is equivalent to supplying the needs of 107 million average EU households. Wind power on this level would represent 18.1% of the total installed electricity-generating capacity in the EU, which is over half of the renewables contribution needed for the binding target. With the appropriate legislation, real benefits – economic and environmental - can be generated by wind energy for the whole of Europe.

The opening session was followed by a press conference at which the ministers discussed what needs to be done to ensure Europe reaches the 2020 target and carries on developing renewables and wind energy into the future.

EWEA Chief Executive **Christian Kjaer** concluded the press conference by saying, “We have seen that, provided the correct legislation is put in place soon, Europe can go a long way towards an energy supply that is superior to the business-as-usual scenario, offering greater energy independence, lower energy costs, reduced fuel price risk, improved competitiveness and more technology exports”.

Over 3000 people are attending EWEC, which runs over four days until 3 April. The conference sessions are accompanied by an [exhibition](#) at which over 200 companies are present. Other sessions cover national policies, grid integration, offshore wind and project finance. On 2-3 April a [wind energy finance forum](#) will be held for the first time ever, and another first is the [job fair](#) on 2 April, which will bring together potential employers and employees in the sector.

[For more information on EWEC, please click here.](#)