



Non-bylined EWEA article for UK Power and Process.

GET READY FOR EUROPE'S PREMIER WIND POWER EVENT

France's oldest city to host the European Wind Energy Conference in early 2009

More than 6,000 people are expected to descend upon Marseille in March to learn about the latest advances in the wind power industry while discussing the challenges and rewards of harnessing this increasingly popular sustainable energy supply.

High-profile speakers at the European Wind Energy Conference (EWEC), which is the only annual event combining an extensive exhibition of leading players with sessions covering key aspects of the industry, will include politicians, policy makers, company executives, scientists, engineers, environmentalists and financial experts.

There will also be people visiting the accompanying Job Fair in hopes of landing a well-paying position in the rapidly expanding wind power sector.

That EWEC is to be held in France's oldest city with its famously azure Mediterranean skies should make the 2009 conference all that more memorable.

European Union Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs is one of the confirmed speakers who will be addressing delegates. Piebalgs was asked what key messages he hopes will emerge from the Marseille conference.

"Once again I expect the annual EWEC to be an opportunity to display the best European renewable technologies, and a forum within which the best European minds can address critical energy-related questions. I have no doubt that it will be a success," Piebalgs said.

"I trust that by March next year, the EU will have adopted its ambitious climate-energy legislative package, and have thereby given a new lease of life to the development of renewable energy - including wind energy - across Europe."

Chairing the conference will be Roland Sunden, the Chief Executive of blade manufacturer LM Glasfiber. Mechtild Rothe, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, State Secretary, French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development and Planning, and Nobuo Tanaka, Executive Director, International Energy Agency, are also confirmed speakers.

Helping to drive the increasing interest in EWEC events is the fact that the EU wants 20% of Europe's energy supply to come from wind power and other renewable sources by 2020. To reach this target, more than one-third of the European electrical demand would have to come from renewables, with non-polluting wind power expected to deliver 12-14%. In 2007, there were 56 GW of installed wind power capacity in the EU-27. The European Wind Energy Association (EWEA) predicts there will be at least 180 GW of installed capacity in the EU-27 by 2020.

Sure to be a riveting addition to EWEC will be the first Global Leaders' Forum which will examine the complex and crucially important relationship between energy supply and climate change.

Discussions, debate and dialogue about harnessing energy, delivering electricity, engaging the electorate, healing the planet, and financing the brave new world of wind-power will occur on the first day of the conference.

The forum will offer representatives from a wind turbine manufacturer, a utility company, the political realm, the environmental movement and the financial sector an opportunity to speak their minds about the benefits of wind power, which as an industry celebrated reaching its first 100 GW of installed global capacity in early 2008.

Forum participants will also acknowledge that while our growing population continues to demand more energy, wind power has proven it is better at creating CO₂-free electricity than any other technology.

"The Leaders' Forum promises to be an exciting and valuable contribution to the Marseille conference because it will explore the related trajectories of the two most pressing issues of this century," said Bruce Douglas, EWEA Chief Operating Officer.

"Since developing dependable green energy sources like wind power for an increasingly populated world while also trying to reverse the atmospheric damages caused by carbon dioxide is at the heart of society's major dilemma today, it is especially appropriate that forum delegates address this complex crisis."

In all, there will be over 40 sessions, workshops and side events organised during the four-day conference which begins on 16 March.

As one indicator of the growing event's popularity, over 200 exhibitors had already booked stands by mid-October. There will also be more than 500 oral and poster presentations.

The Marseille event will be the largest ever EWEC exhibition, with over 9,000m² of exhibition space spread over three halls.

It is fitting that the 2009 event is being held in Marseille since France is aiming for 20,000 MW of installed wind power capacity onshore and 5,000 MW offshore by 2020, up from 3,000 MW onshore today, requiring investments of over €30 billion in the next 12 years.

And after a busy day at the conference, the beauty of the city and its nearby beaches will surely beckon.

Initially developed as a trading post by Romans, in the 15th and 16th centuries Marseille grew into the leading port of the Mediterranean, not least because of its famous soap industry.

A portal to both Africa and Europe, as well as a hub for the many ships crossing the Mediterranean, Marseille's cultural diversity once prompted the French novelist Alexandre Dumas to describe the city as "the meeting place of the entire world."

Today, Marseille and its greater metropolitan area is home to about two million people.

Its unique blend of nationalities and ethnicities makes Marseille one of Europe's most vibrant and cosmopolitan cities with fabulous restaurants, a variety of theatres, exciting nightclubs and more than 20 museums.

Such a lively and modern location provides the perfect backdrop to EWEC 2009, with its focus on progressive technology and industry development. Not for the first time, Marseille will be the gathering point for people from across Europe and beyond, as people come from all over the world to participate in the continent's premier wind energy event.

For more information about the Marseille conference: www.ewec2009.info. To take advantage of the early registration fee, payment has to be received before 10 December.

EWEA is the voice of the wind industry, actively promoting the utilisation of wind power in Europe and worldwide. It now has over 500 members from over 50 countries including manufacturers with a 90% share of the world wind power market, plus component suppliers, research institutes, national wind and renewables associations, developers, electricity providers, finance and insurance companies and consultants.