



NEWS RELEASE

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European Parliament Prioritises Research for Renewable Energy

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Today, at its plenary session in Strasbourg, the European Parliament voted to dedicate two thirds of the non-nuclear energy research budget to renewable energy and energy efficiency, under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7).

"The European Parliament's vote reverses decades of unbalanced focus on fossil fuel energy research," said Christian Kjaer, Chief Executive of the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA). "After today's vote, Europe is moving closer to a European energy future based on known and predictable cost of energy, derived from clean and indigenous energy sources free of all the security, political, economic and environmental disadvantages associated with the current energy supply structure."

If the decision is agreed by the Member States at the next Competitiveness Council, non-nuclear energy research will total €2.4 billion over the seven years of the programme (2007 - 2013). Two thirds of this for renewables and energy efficiency would equal about €226 million per annum. The European Parliament has no legislative powers in the area of nuclear energy research, which is expected to receive €580 million per annum over the next five years under a separate Euratom research budget.

In an era of energy uncertainty and a climate disaster waiting to happen, the European Parliament has made a bold statement - that renewables are a vital part of Europe's future energy mix. For the wind industry, the decision will contribute to further progress of the technology and reduced cost, while maintaining Europe's leading position in the global market.

The vote was by no means a sure thing. A hastily formed coalition of supporting MEPs side-stepped an oral amendment tabled at the last moment, which, had it not been overthrown, could have seriously weakened the impact of the report.

The IEA (1) has established that research has led to about 40% of wind energy cost reductions over the last twenty years, so the Parliament has taken a big step towards

enabling wind energy to reach cost parity with - and even to undercut - the cheapest alternatives.

Under the Sixth Framework Programme, wind energy received only limited funding for research.

Stakeholders from across the wind energy sector have already established their priorities for wind energy research, and identified five key priorities for wind energy research including: wind energy systems; integration of wind power into the European Power System; testing, standards and certification; external conditions, resource assessment, and forecasting; and socio-economic and environmental issues.

Notes for editors:

(1) Long Term Research and Development Needs for Wind Energy for the Time Frame 2000 to 2020, Ad Hoc group Report to the Executive Committee of the International Energy Agency Implementing Agreement for Cooperation in the Research and Development of Wind Turbine Systems, October 2001

EWEA is the single voice of the wind industry, established for 25 years. It is the world's largest renewable energy association. EWEA members include manufacturers representing 90% of the world market, component suppliers, research centres, national associations, developers, owners, utilities and financiers.