



**EUROPEAN  
OFFSHORE WIND 2009**  
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## Time to act – urgency and excitement at world’s largest offshore wind event

STOCKHOLM – Chords of ABBA rang out as delegates took their seats for the opening session of the European Offshore Wind 2009 Conference in Stockholm. Andreas Nauen, CEO of Siemens Wind Power and chair of the conference, spelt out to the participants, press and speakers filling the hall the huge possibilities ahead for offshore wind power.

“We are on the verge of a new age of electricity”, he announced. “We can make it the age of clean electricity”.

Indeed, a sense of the urgent need to implement a profound change in Europe’s power supply permeated the session. Many of the speakers stressed the importance of the upcoming UN climate change meeting in Copenhagen in December, and finding a far-sighted international agreement. Conference participants were confident that offshore wind can and will contribute significantly to meeting any carbon emission cutting target set.

“Offshore wind can deliver a critical contribution to a more climate-friendly power system”, stressed EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs. “The whole world must be ready to contribute to a successful outcome at Copenhagen”.

But the Commissioner and other speakers recognised that offshore offers more than just green credentials. The large-scale development of the sector was seen as crucial for many other reasons.

“Offshore wind can play a substantial role in tackling the key challenges of our time: climate change, security of energy supply and future economic growth”, said Maud Olofsson, Swedish Deputy Prime Minister.

According to Commissioner Piebalgs, each Megawatt of installed wind energy capacity creates 7.5 jobs on average, while David Kidney, UK Under-Secretary of State for Energy, said that in Britain, up to half a million jobs will be created in the renewables sector by 2020.

Getting more concrete, the session cut to a live video link with Lillgrund offshore wind farm, where a row of turbines spinning in the wind, blowing at 10 metres per second, showed the power and potential of Europe’s largest domestic energy resource.

One of the main challenges to accessing and harnessing this power is the lack of a pan-European offshore electricity grid.

“At the moment there is no common electricity market nor are there enough passages for transporting power across national borders”, stressed Eamon Ryan, Irish Energy Minister.

Arthouros Zervos, President of the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA), set out a solution when he launched EWEA’s offshore grid development plan. The plan would allow large amounts of offshore wind power to be transported across Europe.

Overall, the sense of the urgency of rapidly tackling barriers such as the grid was matched by a sense of excitement. Offshore wind is a quickly maturing sector and its role in tackling the climate, energy and economic crises is clear. Perhaps the Irish Minister put it most succinctly when he said, “We have a saying in Ireland... you shouldn’t waste a crisis”. It is the moment to show what offshore wind energy can do.

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