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EU wind sector calls for binding 2030 target

The EU must adopt a binding renewable energy target for 2030 to secure long-term investment in renewable energy.

At the opening in Brussels today of Europe's largest wind power conference and exhibition, Arthouros Zervos, President of the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA), warned "the wind industry expects to invest some EUR 400 billion in Europe between now and 2030. To do so it needs stable and certain EU energy policy."

In a new report launched today, "EU Energy Policy to 2050", EWEA argues that the renewable energy targets set so far have enabled Europe to become world leader in renewable energy technologies, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, the report argues, this successful policy should be repeated for the period after 2020, together with the support of an Emissions Performance Standard, and a tighter Emissions Trading System.

"We are facing a policy vacuum after 2020" said Zervos. "We must ensure that the renewable energy targets established in 2001 and 2009 are replicated for the period after 2020 with ambitious 2030 targets. We must ensure that the success story of renewable energy in Europe survives beyond 2020."

EWEA supports an overall EU renewable energy target as proposed by the European Renewable Energy Council (EREC). The EREC believes that not less than 45% of the EU's total energy consumption can come from renewable sources by 2030.

Wind energy alone could meet 28.5% of Europe's electricity demand by then, according to EWEA's scenarios. Already the Member States' National Renewable Energy Action Plans show wind energy providing over 14% of the EU's electricity by 2020.

EWEA President Arthouros Zervos demanded renewable energy targets for 2030 within the lifetime of the current European Commission and Parliament: "European Commission President Barroso and the other EU leaders need to consider their legacy. They need to provide the renewables sector with a stable framework in which to grow and provide renewable power, new jobs, manufacturing and construction in Europe by giving us targets for 2030, and within the next four years."

He warned: "For some 2020 is far away. For politicians it is at least two elections away - a political lifetime. But for the electricity industry it is the day after tomorrow."

In a message to EWEA 2011 Herman van Rompuy, President of the European Council said: "An important step will be to consider what happens after the current successful policies run out in 2020."

In a message to EWEA 2011 Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament said: "EU energy policy needs long term decisions, not just to achieve our 2020 commitments, but also to create certainty for industry on the road to a low carbon economy and to 80% cuts in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050."