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Brussels in brief

EU news

European elections 2014 – a wind energy perspective

Much of the media coverage of the European elections has focussed on the rise of anti-EU parties on both the right and left of the political spectrum across Europe. The far right succeeded in countries including France, the UK and Denmark, whereas the far left triumphed in countries like Greece.

The results send a powerful message to Europe's governing parties and, as the Financial Times put it, "the European parliament is about to become noisier, more unruly, more confusing and more difficult to deal with as a result of the European elections."

However, from a wind energy perspective the results of the European elections have not sent shock waves of the same size. In general, rightist parties are not so environmentally progressive, but leftist ones often are – and here we have a rise of both. Moreover, Europe's biggest political party – the conservative and often not so climate action friendly EPP – has lost seats.

In short, for EWEA it will still be a case of negotiating with the relevant MEPs to get our point of view across and to find the MEPs with whom we can build alliances – from across the political spectrum.

EWEA will send each new MEP a booklet of facts about wind energy in a bid to show how wind energy not only delivers on climate objectives, but also energy security and employment. This constitutes the first small step in influencing decision-making, but as the new MEPs take their seats and begin to find their role over the coming months, the real work in meeting and convincing them on wind energy's many benefits will begin.

Contact Sarah Azau for more information Sarah.Azau@ewea.org

Energy Security

European Commission downplays renewables in energy security report

The European Energy Security Strategy, published at the end of May, shows that policymakers have opted to swap dependency on Russia for unstable regions in the Middle East and North Africa, while largely neglecting increased production of renewables as a key option for energy independence.

The Commission has, in effect, ignored its own 2030 Climate and Energy Impact Assessment published in January. The assessment cites that a 30% renewables target for 2030, together with higher energy efficiency, would cut Europe's reliance on gas imports by almost three times as much as the current proposal for 27%.

Justin Wilkes, deputy chief executive officer of the European Wind Energy Association, said: "The report from the Commission does not outline how Europe can reduce its energy dependence on external sources; instead it focuses on severing the reliance on Russia by shifting the dependence elsewhere."

Wilkes added: "In the first half of 2014, we have seen Ukraine fall into disarray and an IPCC report warning that investment in renewables is needed to avoid a climate catastrophe. Circumstance has forced Europe's leaders into a rethink. Now they must act to ensure the region's energy security for years to come."

"It is imperative that we make the switch over to renewables, particularly wind, sooner rather than later. Heads of State can start down that road by setting an ambitious 2030 renewables target that strives towards true energy security and independence," he said.

A 30% renewables target would save Europe an extra €260 billion in fossil fuel imports. Europe's wind industry is calling for a target of at least 30%, to be enforceable at national level.

This would spur green growth, create more jobs and attract investment while maintaining Europe's position as a global leader in wind energy.

Key facts:

Today, the EU imports 53% of the energy it consumes with each European spending over €2 per day on fossil fuel imports.

Energy dependency in Europe relates to crude oil (almost 90%), natural gas (66%), solid fuels (42%) and nuclear fuel (40%), according to the European Commission.

Six Member States depend on Russia as the single external supplier for all their gas imports. Three of which use natural gas for more than a quarter of their total energy needs.

time in over 20 years of UN negotiations, a binding and universal agreement on climate, from all the nations of the world. EWEA attends all COP negotiations.

Research

Project aims to optimise offshore wind

Optimising wind turbines in the middle of large offshore wind farms is one of the most challenging tasks a wind farm developer can face. And now a new software tool – the Design Tool for Offshore Wind Farm Cluster (DTC) - set to be presented at a workshop in Amsterdam in September, aims to address this challenge.

In large offshore wind farms, like the German Bight and Dogger Bank, the regional wind climate is influenced by the large number of turbines - wake effects in big arrays are much more pronounced than those in onshore installations.

DTC, produced by an EU funded R&D project led by the European Energy Research Alliance (EERA), brings together meteorological, wind farm effect and economic models from researchers and experienced industry partners. DTC allows wind farm developers to comprehensively model the large scale effects of large wind farms in order to optimise the wind farm's layout.

DTC can also help strategic planners in defining areas for new offshore clusters, optimise onshore grid connections, and help simulate ancillary services like power balancing and voltage support from offshore wind farms.

EWEA is coordinating the communication and publishing of results on this project. If you would like to attend the September "Second Joint Cluster Design/EERA-DTC workshop" in Amsterdam please contact Diletta Zeni on Diletta.Zeni@ewea.org.

Find out more: <http://www.eera-dtcc.eu>

Wind and solar PV can replace conventional technology in providing grid support

REserviceS (Economic grid support from variable renewables), coordinated by EWEA, is the first study to investigate wind and solar based grid support services at EU level. It provides technical and economic guidelines and recommendations for the design of a European market for ancillary services, as well as for future network codes within the EU's Third Liberalisation Package.

The final results and recommendations of REserviceS will be presented on 30 September 2014 in Brussels. If you would like to attend please contact Sharon Wokke on Sharon.Wokke@ewea.org

More information and intermediary results: www.reservices-project.eu.

Fostering social acceptance for wind power

WISE Power, a new project launched in May and coordinated by EWEA, is about social acceptance of wind energy. It wants to increase local awareness and participation in the planning and implementation of wind power projects with the aim of reducing social resistance that often results in obstacles - such as significant slowdowns - to the deployment of the wind projects.

The project has a strong focus on alternative measures of funding - such as community and cooperative funding of wind farms - that may have an impact on empowering the local communities and enhancing social engagement.

The project, funded by the EU's Intelligent Energy Europe programme, runs until October 2016.

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EWEA news

Meet EWEA

Meet EWEA – introducing Angeliki Koulouri

This month Angeliki Koulouri, Environment and Planning Analyst, outlines her role at EWEA and the favourite parts of her job...

"I have been in EWEA for over three years and my main role is to lead research on areas such as employment and training needs in wind energy, planning issues including social acceptance, community projects, noise legislation and health impacts.

I work closely with EWEA members informing them on planning guidelines, monitoring measures and best practice related to wind farm deployment including Natura 2000 rules and no-go areas, setback distances, among others.

"One recent project in which member feedback was crucial was the so-called 'eco-design dossier'. In this case the European Commission was studying possible eco-design legislation for minimum efficiency standards for power generating equipment.

Our members helped us form the position that industry-led standards would be preferable to EU legislation. Regulation would not be the right policy instrument to increase energy savings by 2030 as it could create extra costs and not necessarily lead to greater efficiency of wind turbines.

EWEA put this point across to the Commission and then welcomed the Commission's finding that it does not seem appropriate to potentially include wind turbines into the scope of the Ecodesign Directive.

"Currently I am working on an EU project called WISE Power. The project is trying to address the divergence between Eurobarometer surveys which find Europeans to be very much in favour of wind power and public opinion at local level which can be a barrier to wind energy developments.

The objective is to enhance acceptance by means such as increasing local participation in the planning and implementation of wind projects and their associated grid infrastructure.

The project will examine social acceptance in wind energy markets across Europe from developed markets like Denmark to emerging markets like Croatia. We will be looking at the practices that already enhance social acceptance in some settings, and how we can spread good practice to other countries.

We are aiming to produce and promote concrete steps in ten different languages targeted at all stakeholders involved during planning phase on how to facilitate local involvement. The project