

EU – Mediterranean – Gulf Renewable Energy Conference

9th October 2009, Brussels, Charlemagne building

Information note

Context.

- Renewable energy is a key element in the current policies in the European Union as well as in the Mediterranean and Gulf region aiming to enhance energy security at national and regional level. Renewable energy is also an important element in the ongoing efforts to tackle the climate change challenge, also in view to the planned Copenhagen Conference. The Mediterranean and the Gulf region can greatly benefit from the abundance of the local renewable energy opportunities, in particular with respect to solar and wind energy. The EU holds an extensive policy, research and industrial experience in the renewable energy sector which can be shared with partners worldwide.
- The Ministerial conference on EU-Mediterranean-Gulf renewable energy cooperation builds on the ongoing contacts and collaboration between the EU and partners in the Mediterranean countries. This includes, inter alia, the Euro-Mediterranean Energy Market Integration project (Med-Emip), the support to the integration of electricity markets in the Maghreb, the project on energy efficiency cooperation (MedEnec), the support to the cooperation of the Euro-Mediterranean energy regulators (MedReg), the Action Plan for high priority renewable energy initiatives in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Area project (REMAP), and support to the Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in Cairo. The Commission also financed a study identifying the most effective strategy for developing and implementing a "Mediterranean Solar Plan" and in general supporting renewable energy production and use among the Mediterranean partner countries. Main outcomes of this study could be presented during the conference.
- The promotion of renewable energy sources is one of the top priorities of the Euro-Mediterranean energy relations, which is aiming in the long term at the creation of an integrated and interconnected Euro-Mediterranean energy market. This involves also the development of a "green energy market" in the region to promote an increased use of renewable energy source, in particular solar and wind which have the greatest regional potential. This was confirmed by the latest Euro-Mediterranean Energy Ministerial in December 2007 which endorsed a 2008-2013 Priority Action Plan now under implementation with the support of the European Commission, the Member States, the international financial institutions, and the MENA countries.
- The countries from the Gulf region are developing a number of ambitious initiatives in the field of renewable energy. The Ministerial conference will provide an opportunity to explore the scope for future cooperation, building on the successful 19th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial meeting held on 29th April 2009 in Muscat and the commitment to launch an EU-GCC clean energy network to facilitate cooperation in this area.
- In terms of internal EU measures, these efforts are underpinned by the entry into force of the Directive on renewable energy that provides a new framework for imports of electricity from renewable energy sources from third countries to the EU under certain conditions.

Objectives.

- To discuss and support enhancing cooperation in the area of renewable energy between the EU, Mediterranean and the Gulf countries, including the following areas:
 - *Renewable energy: developing a green energy market (Session I):* Development of a harmonised legislative and regulatory framework aiming to facilitate creation of a “green energy market” and to enable the development and massive deployment of solar energy and other renewable energy in the region.
 - *Renewable energy: research and technology (Session II):* Cooperation on research and development in the area of renewable energy, including the adequate policies, programmes and joint projects such as networks of the relevant, industrial and public-private partnerships, technology transfer and capacity building.
 - *Moving forward the solar energy development (Session III):* The case of the Mediterranean Solar Plan will be discussed as a practical example of cooperation between the EU, the Mediterranean and the Gulf.
- This event should represent a contribution to the 2010 Euromed Energy Ministerial, as well as to the other ongoing initiatives, such as the development of the Medring, the IRENA activities, and other relevant initiatives.

Expected output.

- Chairs’ conclusions on future cooperation on renewable energy issues, in particular from the policy framework aspect, and on possibilities for practical collaboration on appropriate energy projects of mutual interest.

Location and timing.

- Brussels, 9th October 2009.

Participants.

- Host: Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner in cooperation with Commissioner for Energy Andris Piebalgs and Commissioner for Science and Research Janez Potočnik.
- Representatives of EU Presidency, Ministers and representatives from EU Member states; Mediterranean Partner countries and the partner countries in the Gulf.
- Representatives from the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League.
- Representatives of industry, research institutes, international financial institutions, and the IRENA.

Logistics and information.

- A webpage has been established for this conference that will be updated as the preparations move forward at this address:
http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/energy/events/renewable_energy_conference_2009