

Plenary Session A:
Opening Ministerial Segment
Thursday, 3 June, 9.00 – 12.00 h
Venue: Plenary Hall IKBB

Internationale Konferenz
für Erneuerbare Energien, Bonn
International Conference
for Renewable Energies, Bonn



VOICES FROM THE REGIONS

Dermot Ahern

Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Ireland

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen. I am delighted in my capacity as President of the EU's Energy Council of Ministers to have the opportunity to address this important event. I would like to say at the outset that I am personally passionate about the issue of renewable energy and sustainable development and, in my position as Minister responsible for energy policy in Ireland, am doing my utmost to facilitate its development in our domestic energy policies. However, my specific focus and purpose this morning is to look at the EU efforts in this regard with particular attention to some of the outcomes of the regional preparatory conference in Berlin in January last.

To ensure that sustainable development objectives are achieved and in acknowledgement of its growing dependence on energy imports from outside its borders, the EU keeps its energy policies under constant review and development. Renewable Energy policies contribute to the global reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases, help to secure Europe's energy supply and will ultimately help maintain Europe's international competitiveness. At the same time sustainable energy policies have an important role to play in assisting in global poverty reduction.

In January last, the European region preparatory conference for Bonn, financed by the European Commission and held in Berlin concluded that:

Plenary Session A: Opening Ministerial Segment

Thursday, 3 June, 9.00 – 12.00 h

Venue: Plenary Hall IKBB

Internationale Konferenz
für Erneuerbare Energien, Bonn
International Conference
for Renewable Energies, Bonn



- Implementation of Community Directives in Member States should provide for long-term domestic support that guarantees stable investment conditions. Administrative barriers to the distribution of green electricity should be overcome and progress is needed in the field of intelligent grid management.
- Progress achieved in Europe concerning renewable energy consumption reveals that, while electricity production, mainly from wind, is increasing dramatically, biomass electricity and technologies for the production of heat and cooling are not progressing enough. In addition, Member States' efforts are very unbalanced.
- Distortion of the energy market, mainly due to the fact that energy prices do not reflect the full socio-economic costs, was highlighted as a barrier to create a level-playing field. The principle "polluter-pays" should be applied to energy.

Concerning renewable energy targets, there was a common understanding that the EU general renewable energy target of 12% share of renewable energy in gross inland consumption by 2010 has been a driving force in the legislative and policy process at domestic and European levels. This long-term approach needs to be carried forward. The conference noted that a range of technical studies suggest a target of at least 20% of gross inland consumption in 2020 for the enlarged EU25. The EU will be turning its attention to the question of establishing feasible new targets with the intention of having targets ready by 2007.

On research and development, the EU has committed a budget of more than €1.1bn in the period 2003 to 2006. The 6th RTD Framework Programme commits €890 to research into

Plenary Session A: Opening Ministerial Segment

Thursday, 3 June, 9.00 – 12.00 h

Venue: Plenary Hall IKBB

Internationale Konferenz
für Erneuerbare Energien, Bonn
International Conference
for Renewable Energies, Bonn



sustainable energy systems, cost-effective supply issues, renewable energy integration issues, energy efficiency in buildings and alternative fuels.

The Environment Technologies Action Plan (ETAP) is designed to assist these technologies move from research phase through demonstration and onto full market maturity.

The Intelligent Energy Europe Programme with a budget of €250m aims at improving energy efficiency, improving energy usage in transport and promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency in developing countries.

To that effect a series of new legal instruments to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency have already been adopted or are currently being considered. These include:

- The **Directive on the Promotion of Biofuels** which sets reference values for national indicative targets to be set by Member States for the minimum proportion of biofuels and other renewable fuels of 2% by the end of 2005, and 5.75% by the end of 2010.

- Delegates will also be aware of the **EU Emissions Trading Scheme**, the world's first multi-national emissions trading scheme. This scheme acknowledges that climate change is a global problem and it allows countries to share their contribution to solving this very serious problem in an economically efficient manner. This will operate from next year, initially on a pilot basis and shows clearly the EU's willingness and determination to seriously tackle the problems of climate change.

Plenary Session A:
Opening Ministerial Segment
Thursday, 3 June, 9.00 – 12.00 h
Venue: Plenary Hall IKBB

Internationale Konferenz
für Erneuerbare Energien, Bonn
International Conference
for Renewable Energies, Bonn



- Draft legislation currently under discussion in the Council includes the framework ***Directive on ecodesign for energy using products*** and proposals aimed at promoting ***energy efficiency and energy services***.

- Other sectors for the use of renewables such as ***heating and cooling*** are not yet covered by specific legislative instrument, although it appears that action is needed in these areas also if the EU is to reach a 12% share of renewable energy sources by 2010.

Internationally the EU supports the promotion of renewable energy across the globe as a means to combat climate change and promote sustainable development policies. It recognises the importance of access to clean and affordable energy for sustainable development, particularly for local economic development, and underlines its potential to contribute to poverty eradication and assist in reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

The instruments and the legislative framework I have just outlined provide clear evidence of the level of commitment of the EU and its Member States regarding the development of renewables and related policies. However, much more needs to be done.

It is vital that existing policies and measures be reinforced to promote renewable energy at national and European level. In terms of further measures, priority should be given to developing frameworks for encouraging an increased market share for electricity from

Plenary Session A:
Opening Ministerial Segment
Thursday, 3 June, 9.00 – 12.00 h
Venue: Plenary Hall IKBB

Internationale Konferenz
für Erneuerbare Energien, Bonn
International Conference
for Renewable Energies, Bonn



renewable sources, and for renewable energy heating and cooling using biomass, geothermal and solar energy resources. Due attention should be given to the integration of renewable electricity into the internal energy market, in particular when developing future transmission capacity.

Further efforts also should be made to bridge the gap between successful demonstration of innovative renewable energy technologies and their effective 'take-off' on the market. With this in mind the EU should reinforce and keep under review support schemes for renewable energy technologies.