

EREC launches "Re-thinking 2050"

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Hosted by MEP Maria Da Graça Carvalho (EPP), the European Renewable Energy Council (EREC) launched its new report on renewable energies entitled "RE-thinking 2050" on 15 April 2010 in the European Parliament.

After a welcome by MEP Maria da Graça Carvalho (EPP), Prof. Arthouros Zervos, President of EREC, gave an overview of the report, followed by Patrick Lambert, Director of the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI), who acknowledged the importance of the document. He explicitly stated the fact that the report indeed constituted an important input for the Commissions thinking and that it shows a plausible renewable energy scenario for the future.

In the vision paper, EREC shows the pathway of how the European Union can switch to a 100 % renewable energy system by 2050 for electricity, heating and cooling as well as the transport sector and how the different technologies can contribute to the energy supply. According to the report, this scenario is profitable from an economic perspective while at the same time providing significant social and economic benefits.

EREC assumes that by 2020 annual energy related CO₂ emissions will be reduced by 1,200 Mt. This development trajectory would lead to a reduction of CO₂ emissions of more than 90 % by 2050 compared to 1990 emission values. The needed investment costs would pay off in the long term and be outweighed by avoided fuel and CO₂ costs. The social benefits of a 100 % renewable energy community include an increase of the employment rate: more than 2.7 million people will be employed in the renewable sector in 2020, about 4.4 million people by 2030 and up to 6.1 million Europeans will be working in the sector by 2050.

During the following discussion, MEP Anni Podimata (S&D) asked in which of the different technologies the most new jobs could be expected. EREC's President Prof. Zervos stated that highest growth in employment would most likely be seen in the biomass sector (by the very fact that it is used for the production of fuels – sagte er selbst). MEP Maria da Graça Carvalho, raised the lack of information on the quality of air and on health as results of the presented scenario. This point was confirmed by Prof. Zervos who explained that further investigation could be helpful and is very important for future studies/publications.

The EHPA welcomes the report as another important steps towards informing policy makers, industry and the public on the existing options to reach a 100% RES based society. As the report does not include the contribution from aerothermal energy, to be made useful by heat pumps, the presented figures will most likely be even higher in the future. Consequently it is most likely, that the presented target could be reached even earlier than 2050.

The executive summary of the report as well as the full version found on the website www.rethinking2050.eu.