



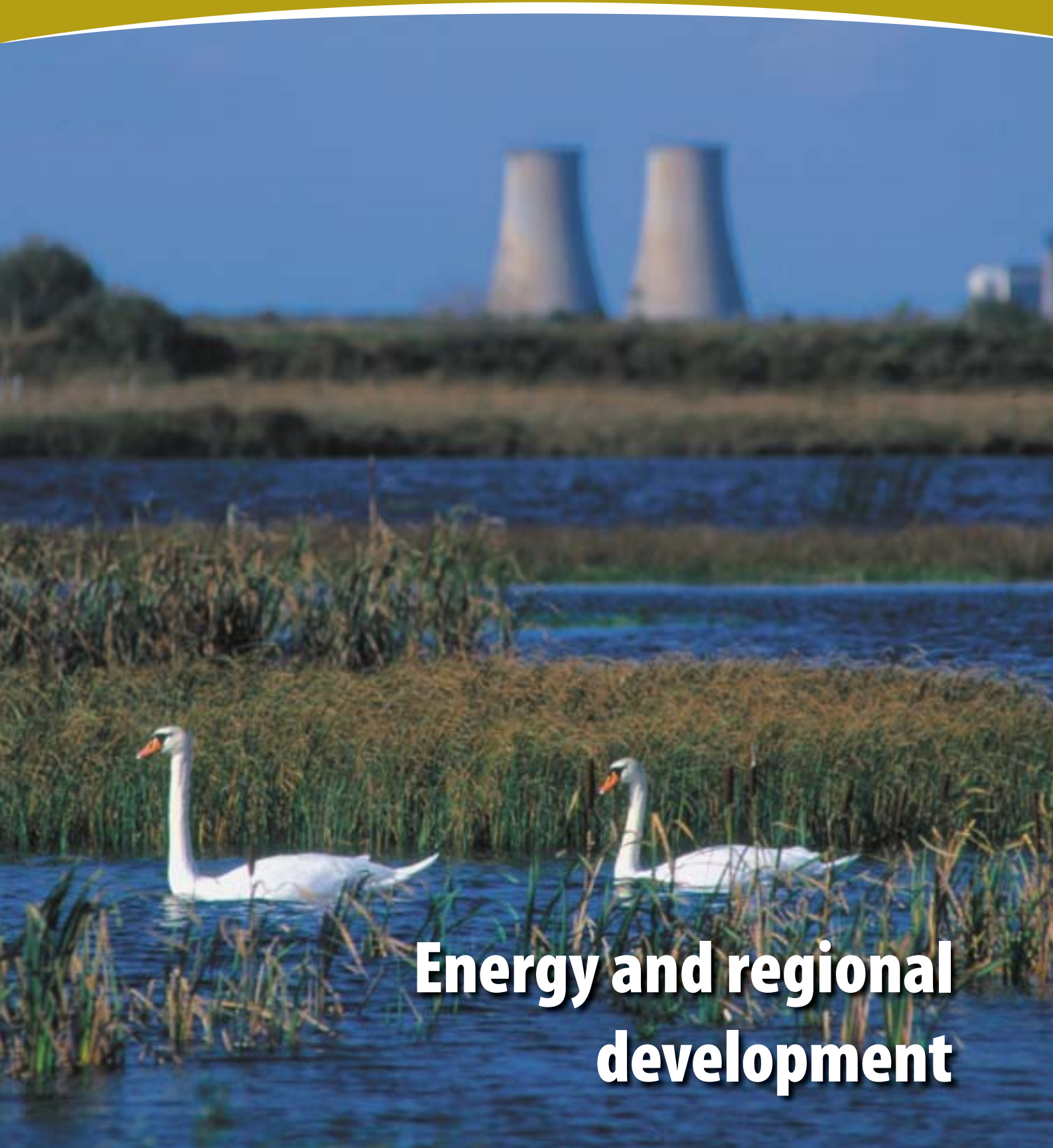
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European Union
Regional policy

inforegio

| No 20 | September 2006 | **panorama**



**Energy and regional
development**

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Cover: close to a thermal power plant in County Offaly, Ireland.

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This magazine is printed in English, French and German on recycled paper.

The thematic dossier is available in 19 languages of the European Union at:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm

The text of this publication is not legally binding.

Starting with this issue, the printed version of *Inforegio Panorama* is now also available in German

Energy and the regions: a live connection

Climate change, dependency on fossil fuels, increasing global demand, price volatility... within a few decades our planet's energy situation will have reached a critical point. The scale and complexity of the issues demands a redoubling of efforts and a more coordinated approach at all levels: international, European, national, regional and local. In a recent Green Paper, the European Commission proposed three principal objectives for the European Union: security of energy supply, competitiveness of energy production and a more sustainable approach to energy consumption.

Achieving these goals will, in the first instance, require a Community approach — to coordinate policy and ensure a concerted effort to meet the energy challenges facing the EU as a whole. However, the regions also have a key role to play and, given their close proximity to both energy actors and consumers, are well placed to translate into practice policy decisions to encourage the use of renewable energy sources and high performance energy technologies — examples of which are found elsewhere in this publication.

Regardless of whether its source is the wind, the sun, water, biomass or even combined heat and power plants, renewable energy has many applications. It can be used to supply households, businesses, urban districts, or even the construction and transport sectors. It serves to mobilise citizens, elected representatives, operators and administrations in a process that brings three key elements into play: political will, information and dialogue. Renewable energy can help to create many new jobs, to achieve significant efficiencies, and to give a new impetus to economic and social development.

As successful energy projects are very often regional and local projects, this experience can in turn influence European energy policy. In so doing, it can also contribute to the Lisbon strategy for growth, jobs and sustainable development, of which the energy issue is a crucial component. The new cohesion policy programmes, which begin in January 2007, present an important opportunity to strengthen this process. As does the seventh framework programme for research and the new framework programme for competitiveness and innovation, both of which also begin in January 2007, focusing respectively on R & D for energy and support for SMEs operating in the energy sector.

This issue of *Inforegio Panorama* aims to help Europe's regions in going 'live' in the interests of a sustainable energy policy.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DHübner'.

Danuta Hübner

Member of the European Commission, responsible for regional policy

Fourth progress report on cohesion

Regional disparities and convergence: towards a broad-based growth

Presented in June 2006 by Danuta Hübner, EU Commissioner for regional policy, the fourth progress report on cohesion⁽¹⁾ provides an overview of developments in the 268 regions that make up the EU-25, plus Bulgaria and Romania (EU-27). Just a few months before the new programmes commence, it also looks at preparations for the new cohesion policy for the 2007–13 period.



The Warsaw (Poland) by-pass on the Sochaczew-Grojec route.

‘Europe needs growth from the ground, and all regions must contribute if we are to succeed in boosting competitiveness and employment in the EU as a whole,’ stressed Commissioner Hübner. Although the report indicates that development disparities in the EU are narrowing due to the rapid and sustained growth in the least prosperous Member States, it also highlights the persistence of significant disparities at regional level. In particular it reveals ‘worrying disparities in terms of modern infrastructure, research and education, which limits our capacity for excellence and innovation. Regional policy will continue to play a vital role over the next decade in closing these gaps and helping the European economy to realise its full potential.’

In this respect, 2005 was a record year in terms of resources invested, with a total of EUR 38.3 billion committed under the ERDF, the European social fund, the cohesion fund and the Instrument for Structural Pre-Accession Assistance (ISPA). Following the May 2004 enlargement, implementation of the cohesion programmes in the new Member States increased in 2005 — with a financial execution rate similar to that of the old Member States during the 2000–06 period.

The Union maintained moderate economic growth in 2005. Between 2000 and 2004, average growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in the EU-25 was slightly above 1.5 % per annum, but with major differences between countries. The best results were recorded in the least prosperous Member States, particularly the Baltic States and Slovakia, but high growth rates were also seen in Greece and Ireland,

as well as in the accession countries, Romania and Bulgaria. The lowest growth rates — less than 1 % a year — were recorded in the more prosperous Member States such as Germany, Denmark, Italy and the Netherlands, as well as Malta and Portugal.

Faster growth in the least prosperous countries, but convergence remains a long-term prospect

In the period 1995–2005, growth was relatively rapid in the 13 countries — Greece, Portugal, Spain and the 10 new Member States — currently classed as the least prosperous in the EU-25 (and, therefore, eligible for support under the cohesion fund: see *InfoREGIO Panorama* No 14). For these countries the growth rate was 3.6 % per annum, compared with an EU-15 average of 2.2 %. This would suggest that income convergence is now a reality. Yet, the size of the income gap is so great that it will be many years before this block of countries achieve any substantial narrowing of the gap. However, some of the new

Call centre in Budapest (Hungary).



Member States have already reached the level of the least wealthy EU-15 countries and per capita income levels in Spain continue to draw closer to those in Italy and Germany.

24 million new jobs needed to reach 70 % target

In 2004, the average overall employment rate in the EU-25 increased by 0.4 % to 63.3 % (64.7 % in the EU-15 and 56 % in the EU-10). The EU, therefore, still falls short of the 70 % target set in Lisbon for 2010, despite the relatively strong growth in employment rates. Almost 10 million new jobs were created in the EU-10 between 1998 and 2004, with over half created between 1998 and 2000. Over recent years there has also been a progressive fall in job losses in Poland, Germany and Romania, three countries that since 2000 have made a positive contribution to reducing the overall unemployment rate in the EU-27. Between 2000 and 2004 they recorded a drop of almost 1.5 million in the numbers unemployed.

To reach the 70 % employment target in the EU-27, 24 million additional jobs are needed, an increase of almost 12 % on the present level. For the 10 new Member States plus Romania and Bulgaria the overall increase required is almost 25 %.

New cohesion objectives: meeting persistent needs throughout the EU

- The new **convergence** objective for the 2007–13 period applies to 100 regions (35 % of the EU population) where per capita GDP was less than 75 % of the EU-25 average for the years 2000–02. Of these regions, 16 are considered to be in a process of ‘phasing-out’ of this objective. These are regions where the per capita GDP would have been less than 75 % of the EU-15 average without enlargement (the so-called ‘statistical effect’ regions).

The ‘convergence’ regions are characterised by low rates of employment coupled with high levels of unemployment. Their total share of the GDP of the EU-27 was just 12.5 % in 2002, despite representing 35 % of the population. Although their average growth is now above the Community average, their growth rates generally remain insufficient to attain the EU GDP average in the near future.

- The new **regional competitiveness and employment** (RCE) objective is applicable, in principle, to the rest of the Union. As well as being directly applicable to 155 regions representing 61 % of the EU-27 population, it also applies to 13 other regions — representing nearly 4 % of the population — which are in the ‘phasing-in’ stage for aid under the RCE objective. These are regions that currently have objective 1 status but whose per capita GDP would be higher than 75 % of the EU average even without enlargement.

Considered collectively, the RCE regions have relatively high levels of GDP. However, many are suffering from sluggish growth rates and most have employment rates that fall well short of the 70 % target. Unemployment rates are relatively low but are, nevertheless, close to 7 % for the group as a whole. Although growth is stronger in the phasing-in regions, their GDP and employment rates still lag behind those in the other RCE regions, while their unemployment rates are also higher.



Renovation works at Pano Platres (Cyprus).

These averages suggest that real needs persist throughout the EU requiring continued investment in order to stimulate growth potential, in line with the Lisbon objectives.

Wide regional differences

Significant regional variations in growth rates exist in the EU, even within the same objective. In the convergence regions, for example, the average growth rate was 2.6 % per annum between 1995 and 2002, while in 16 of these regions it was below 1 % and in 15 others above 5 %.

The same is true of GDP levels. Several convergence regions had a per capita GDP, measured in terms of the purchasing power standard (PPS)⁽²⁾, of below 25 % of the EU average in 2002, all of them situated in Romania or Bulgaria. These two countries currently include the 12 least prosperous regions in the EU. At the same time, nine regions with a per capita GDP above 80 % of the EU-25 average are in the phasing-out stage of this objective. If the phasing-in regions were included in the convergence objective, eight regions would then have a per capita GDP of below 85 % of the EU-25 average, while seven other regions would have a per capita GDP of above 150 % of the EU average.

The employment rate in regions covered by the RCE objective is 10 % higher than in the convergence regions. Again, however, the variations can be very considerable. In the convergence regions, more than 25 million people live in regions with high rates of employment, while 27 million live in regions with low employment rates, with the gap between the two exceeding 10 %. Overall, just two of the convergence regions meet the 70 % employment rate target: Cornwall in the United Kingdom and the Centro region in Portugal. In the RCE regions, the average employment rate is higher (66.7 %), but rates vary by 10 % or more between the regions with the highest and lowest employment rates. The 70 % employment rate is met in 49 RCE regions.

Two ends of the prosperity scale

Data compiled for the EU-27 shows that in 2002 the 10 % of the EU-27 population living in the most prosperous regions

Per capita GDP in the EU-25: wide variations

Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, has published the regional GDP ranking for the EU-25 for 2003. Per capita GDP varied from 33 % of the EU average in the Polish region of Lubelskie to 278 % of the EU average in Inner London.

This ranking makes it possible to establish the development disparities between the EU-25's 254 regions, and in particular between those in the old and new Member States.

One region in seven had a per capita GDP above 125 % of the EU-25 average...

The three leading regions were Inner London in the United Kingdom (278 % of the EU average), Bruxelles-Capitale in Belgium (238 %) and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (234 %). In the new Member States, the highest ranking region was Prague in the Czech Republic (138 %).

...and one in four below 75 %

The six least prosperous regions were all in Poland: Lubelskie and Podkarpackie (33 % each), Podlaskie (36 %),

Świętokrzyskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Opolskie (37 % each). For the EU-15, the lowest ranking region was Norte in Portugal (57 %).

To find out more: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/06/63&format=HTML&aged=0&language=FR&guiLanguage=en>

Eurostat: regional per capita GDP in the EU-25 in 2003 (in purchasing power standard, EU-25 = 100)

The ten highest		The ten lowest	
1 Inner London (UK)	278	1 Lubelskie (PL)	33
2 Bruxelles-Capitale (B)	238	2 Podkarpackie (PL)	33
3 Luxembourg (L)	234	3 Podlaskie (PL)	36
4 Hamburg (D)	184	4 Świętokrzyskie (PL)	37
5 Île de France (F)	173	5 Warmińsko-Mazurskie (PL)	37
6 Wien (A)	171	6 Opolskie (PL)	37
7 Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire (UK)	165	7 Észak-Magyarország (H)	38
8 Provincia Autonoma Bolzano (I)	160	8 Východné Slovensko (SK)	39
9 Oberbayern (D)	158	9 Eszág-Alföld (H)	39
10 Stockholm (S)	158	10 Dél-Alföld (H)	40

represented more than 19 % of the total GDP, compared with 1.5 % for the 10 % living in the least prosperous regions. If GDP in terms of PPS⁽²⁾ is considered, the wealthiest 10 % of the EU population account for just over 15 % of the GDP, while the least wealthy account for just over 3 %. When adjusted for PPS, the ratio between the GDP for the two groups is 5:1, compared with 12.5:1 without adjustment for relative prices.

R & D, ICT: dividing lines

Research and development (R & D) is a key factor in determining a region's innovation capacity. While not all regions can have high R & D expenditure, the concentration of this expenditure in a very limited number of EU regions is, nevertheless, a cause for concern.

Estimates per region indicate that 35 regions have R & D expenditure above the target level of 3 % of EU GDP, a target set by the EU as part of the Lisbon strategy to be achieved by 2010. These 35 regions account for 46 % of R & D expenditure in the EU-27, which is twice their share in terms of GDP. At the higher end of the scale, R & D expenditure represents 7 % of GDP in Brunswick (Germany) and over 4 % in 12 other regions. This concentration of R & D activity inevitably means, however, that in many regions there is virtually no R & D expenditure. In 47 regions, for example, R & D expenditure represents just 0.5 % of total R & D expenditure for the EU-27.

Another key element in regional development is access to information and communication technology (ICT). Across the EU as a whole, almost half of all households had Internet access in 2005. However, the differences between Member States are again very marked, with penetration

rates of over 70 % in the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, compared with around 20 % in Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Greece. Internet access is generally much lower in the new Member States, with the exception of Slovenia (48 %) and Latvia (42 %).

In the current Objective 1 regions, only around one third of households have Internet access. For these regions, levels of Internet access are lower than for other regions in the same Member State. The gap is particularly marked in Spain, Belgium and Italy. However, the differences are even more marked between Member States than inside Member States. For example, in Objective 1 regions in Sweden, the United Kingdom and Germany, Internet access is greater than for EU households as a whole, and largely above access (?) in non-Objective 1 regions in Italy. The territorial divide in terms of broadband access also applies to Internet usage in general, with 90 % of urban households having broadband access compared with 60 % of rural households.

The fourth progress report on cohesion also traces recent trends in cohesion policy. The new regulations agreed in July 2006 cleared the way for the adoption of the Community strategic guidelines for 2007–13, the establishment of the amounts allocated to the regions and the completion of preparations for the new programmes. Regional development actors are now invited to address their questions and contributions to the Directorate-General for Regional Policy: http://ec.europa.eu/comm/regional_policy/debate/forum_en.htm

⁽¹⁾ The full text is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/pdf/interim4/4inter_en.pdf

⁽²⁾ The purchasing power standard (PPS) is an artificial currency that takes into account the differences between national price levels.

Sustainable energy: the regional connection

By Gerhard Dell, Christiane Egger and Christine Öhlinger⁽¹⁾

Europe's regions, given their closeness to the various stakeholders, are making a major contribution to realising European and international energy objectives. In return, these ambitious European and international objectives are benefiting regional development and giving a much needed boost to local economies.



| 'Solar park' at Marstal (Denmark).

Living in the 21st century brings new and interesting challenges, including in the energy sector. Our energy consumption and the environmental effects that result have reached their limit. National and international agreements have set new consumption and emissions targets while global developments are causing significant price increases and fluctuations. The time has come, therefore, to find solutions that enable us to maintain or improve our standard of living while at the same time reduce our consumption of energy and meet our remaining energy needs by using, where possible, sources that reduce the burden on the environment.

To achieve this we must redouble our efforts at all levels and particularly at regional level. It is only when there is a joint effort at regional, national and European level that the market will move towards the sustainable use of energy.

The energy landscape in the 21st century

The world has entered a new energy age and urgent action is needed to meet the expected energy demand. In Europe alone, around EUR 1 000 billion will have to be invested over the next 20 years to replace an ageing energy infrastructure.

Urgent action is also required to address our high dependency on imports of fossil fuels and nuclear fuel. Unless we succeed in improving the competitiveness of endogenous energy production, within the next 20 or 30 years 70 % of the EU's energy will be imported (as opposed to 50 % today), largely from regions of the world threatened by instability.

Furthermore, reserves of fossil fuels are concentrated in just a few countries, with almost half of all gas consumed

⁽¹⁾ Respectively, president, vice president and head of international affairs at the OÖ Energiesparverband, the Upper Austria Energy Agency, and members of the Fedarene (European Federation of Regional Energy and Environment Agencies) (<http://www.fedarene.org>).

in the EU coming from just three countries: Russia, Norway and Algeria. If present trends continue, our dependency on imported gas could increase to 80 % over the next 25 years.

Another major challenge to add to security of supply is the growing global demand for energy and the resultant increase in CO₂ emissions. Global energy demand and CO₂ emissions are expected to increase by nearly 20 % by 2030. Global consumption of petrol alone has increased by 20 % since 1994 and is expected to continue to rise at the rate of 1.6 % per annum.

At the same time, petrol and gas prices in the EU have almost doubled in the past two years, also resulting in higher electricity prices. Given the growing world demand for fossil fuels, the pressure on supply chains and the growing dependency on imports, it is very likely that petrol and gas prices will remain high.

The environmental effects of the increased use of fossil fuel is already being felt, with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicting that greenhouse gas emissions have already caused world temperatures to rise by 0.6 °C. If nothing is done, that increase will be between 1.4 and 5.8 °C by the end of this century, affecting the economies as well as the ecosystems of all the world's regions, the EU included.

Given the global dimension of the problem, all regions of the world are now interdependent in terms of guaranteeing energy supplies, creating stable economic conditions and effectively combating climate change. All the players at local, regional, national and European level — have a vital

The energy challenge in the strategic guidelines for cohesion

The new Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion (2007–13), proposed by the European Commission, which must be adopted before the end of 2006, repeatedly stress the importance of addressing the energy challenge to meeting the Lisbon objectives. Calling for priority to be given to investments that contribute to achieving the EU's Kyoto commitments, the guidelines recommend 'addressing Europe's intensive use of traditional energy sources,' by taking the following three actions:

- > Improving energy efficiency and the dissemination of low energy intensity development models.
- > Supporting the development of renewable energy, which can also contribute to economic development in the EU and thereby improve its competitiveness, while also helping to meet the objective of producing 21 % of electricity from renewable sources by 2010.
- > Concentrating investments in traditional energy sources — especially in the 'convergence' regions — in projects designed to develop networks and to compensate for market failings.

For more information, see the full text of the communication at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2007/osc/com_2006_0386_en.pdf

role to play in managing this change. All levels will have to embrace a new perspective and commit themselves to a sustainable energy policy.

Biodiesel, an alternative to fossil fuels.



The basis of a sustainable energy policy

Energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and innovative energy technologies are the cornerstones of a sustainable energy policy and greater security of supply, as well as being an important factor for job creation. If European decisions and international agreements on reducing CO₂ emissions are to translate into results then the important initiatives already taken at European level must be given new impetus.

However, much can also be done at regional level. The renewable energy sources available at this level can make a major contribution to regional economic development. It is also at regional and local level that most of the gains in energy efficiency can be made. And these activities, such as the renovation of buildings, for example, can often give a major boost to local industries. While regional energy strategies are implemented in the context of European integration, the role of regions as economic players is also becoming increasingly important and therefore, regions must work to create an overall framework which is conducive to action.

Proximity of the different players, as well as the opportunity for enhanced coordination of actions and respect for local needs and specificities are all elements that lend importance to regional energy activities. To achieve European and international objectives, top-down measures (Kyoto objective, European directives) must be coupled with a bottom-up approach to provide qualitative and quantitative support for the objectives pursued.

Improvements in energy efficiency and in the use of eco-energies hold out much promise for regional economies and regional development: in addition to greater security of supply and ecological benefits they can also be the source of new investments, products and jobs. In the longer term, it will, and must be possible to break the link between economic growth and energy consumption, with increases in GDP no longer accompanied by a corresponding increase in energy consumption.

A majority of EU citizens want decisions taken at EU level that respond to the new challenges of security of supply, increased consumption and climate change⁽²⁾. This

⁽²⁾ Eurobarometer survey, carried out in 2005 in the 25 EU Member States and candidate countries.

presents considerable economic and ecological opportunities, particularly in the new Member States, with their largely unexploited potential for improved energy efficiency and use of renewable energy. It is only through ambitious action at regional level that these opportunities can be realised.

European energy policy and its regional impact

Energy plays a key role in meeting European objectives for growth, jobs and sustainable development. It is for this reason that in the spring of 2006, the European Commission presented a Green Paper on energy (see box), with a view to achieving the objectives of a secure, competitive and sustainable energy supply.

The regions are the link between the various players: close to the citizens, they relay important information on European energy policy while at the same time being essential for its successful implementation.

A Green Paper for a new European energy landscape

'A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy'()*: presented on 8 March 2006, the Green Paper from the European Commission is the subject of a public consultation until 24 September 2006. Depending on the results of the consultation, and the conclusions of the European Council and Parliament, the Commission will subsequently propose a series of concrete measures for a coherent energy policy.

The strategy proposed has three main aims — security of supply, a competitive energy market, and environmental sustainability — and revolves around six priority axes:

1. **A better functioning internal market for gas and electricity**, in particular by introducing a European grid code, the creation of a European regulator and a European Centre for Energy Networks, the improvement of interconnections, a clearer distinction between transport and energy distribution in the interests of fair competition, and the stimulation of investment and competitiveness.
2. **Greater solidarity between Member States in the field of security of supply**, through a re-examination of EU legislation on oil and gas stocks, the creation of a European Observatory for Energy Supply, responsible for improving transparency and monitoring of the energy sector, as well as increased cooperation in the field of infrastructure and grid security.

3. **A more sustainable, efficient and diverse European energy mix**, through a broad debate on the advantages and disadvantages of various energy sources (including nuclear), and their availability, costs and environmental impacts, and on how to address the EU's energy challenges as a whole, while respecting Member States' rights to choose

4. **An integrated approach to tackling climate change**, through concrete measures (information campaigns, financial mechanisms, etc.) aimed at achieving a 20 % reduction in the EU's energy consumption by 2020 and by establishing a long-term roadmap for increased use of renewable energy sources: wind, solar, biomass, bio-fuels, hydroelectricity, geothermal, etc.

5. **A strategic plan for innovative energy technologies** (storage of energy, use of hydrogen, carbon capture, etc.) aimed at improving energy yields, supported by European technology platforms and by making joint decisions to create more progressive markets in this area.

6. **A common external energy policy** in the face of the challenges of dependency on imports, rising and volatile energy prices, increased global demand and global warming: definition of priorities for supply infrastructure, partnerships with external suppliers, introduction of a pan-European energy community based on the Energy Community established in Athens on 25 October 2005, etc.

(*) COM(2006) 105 final. The Green Paper and the questionnaire are available at the following website: http://ec.europa.eu/comm/energy/green-paper-energy/index_en.htm



Warehouse of wood shavings for heating.

Biomass, an opportunity for the regions

The Biomass Action Plan, presented by the European Commission at the end of 2005 (COM (2005) 628 final), is

an important tool for achieving the aforementioned objectives and preparing concrete measures. At present, about half of the EU's renewable energy comes from biomass sources. The action plan suggests ways to further promote its use through economic incentives and by removing market obstacles.

Energy efficiency: more for less

Energy efficiency encourages economic activity and creates new jobs. The Green Paper suggests that the EU could reduce its present energy consumption by at least 20 %, resulting in a saving of EUR 60 billion a year, which is equivalent to the present energy consumption of Germany and Finland combined.

To make these energy savings, it will, of course, be necessary to invest heavily in certain sectors. But such investment also presents an exceptional opportunity for jobs and growth in Europe: experts estimate that exploiting this energy efficiency potential could contribute, directly or

Energy from the woods

The European Economic and Social Committee sees the use of wood for energy as an important way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while at the same time helping — as does the use of other renewable energy sources — to reduce the EU's energy dependency. The sustainable use of forests requires efficient management to ensure good growth and long-term stocks. Forests also play an essential role in supporting biodiversity and facilitating recreational activities.

This is, however, a long-term project. A level playing field must be created for the sector and the fuel market must be opened up to the industry's by-products, to timber harvested for energy production and to wood processed for fuel. This is dependent on the creation of appropriate instruments.

For an increased use of wood for energy, operators require a properly functioning market. In countries where this market is underdeveloped, temporary aid should be forthcoming. It is vital to support forest-owners' organisations and local entrepreneurs and to help the EU's many small forest holdings to cooperate.

Almost 30 % of EU forests are still unexploited and the forest stock has been expanding for the past 50 years. There is a lack of awareness of this potential that must be corrected by information campaigns, exchanges of good practice and technology transfers. There is a need to take better stock of available forestry resources and to provide more information on its possible uses at all levels: by households, businesses and municipalities. Many modern

power stations, for example, are capable of using wood in addition to other combustible solid fuels. A directive to promote the use of biomass in heat production should also be prepared.

Research also has an important role to play. The EU forestry sector has established a platform within the 7th Research Framework Programme (2007–14) that provides for major investment in research and development in this field.

By-products of the forestry industry (bark, sawdust, black liquor, (*) etc.) and recovered wood also offer great potential and are already used in many countries, especially in the context of an integrated forestry industry. The paper industry and sawmills can generally produce more energy than they consume. By-products that are not needed for their own energy production can be sold on the biomass fuel market.

The industrial exploitation of the forest resource is just over 50 %. However, greater efforts also need to be made to exploit by-products from logging. For example, by helping forest owners to meet the logging costs linked to projects that do not compete with the supply of raw materials to industry. Finally, the ESC believes that taxing CO₂ would be a good way of making wood more competitive on the energy market.

To find out more: http://www.eesc.europa.eu/sections/ten/index_en.asp?id=1001tenen

(*) Substance recovered after cooking the paper pulp and containing lignin.

indirectly, to the creation of a million new jobs and that the average European household would save between EUR 200 and 1 000 per year.

The active encouragement of the market in new products and services linked to the efficient use of energy can also enable Europe to further consolidate its leadership position in this sector.

The building sector: a reservoir for energy efficiency

Buildings are responsible for 40 % of Europe's energy consumption. The construction sector can, therefore, play a key role in achieving EU energy efficiency targets and because of this, the 'Buildings' Directive (Directive on the energy performance of buildings, 2002/91/EC) seeks to guarantee that European standards place the emphasis on reducing energy consumption.



Ireland has published a 'National Wind Atlas' to help promote the wind energy sector.

The contribution of cogeneration to regional development

Cogeneration is the simultaneous production of electricity and thermal energy. It can be applied to any technology that uses fuel to produce electricity. The determining factors are the size and location of the plant. Placing a cogeneration plant close to industry, an urban centre or other occupied buildings allows for good efficiency gains. Cogeneration generally permits energy savings of between 10 and 30 % compared with non-cogeneration and similar results in terms of reduced carbon emissions

Cogeneration currently meets about 12 % of Europe's electricity and heat needs and has significant growth potential, the exploitation of which would benefit the environment, the security of energy systems and economic competitiveness. As a highly efficient means of heating, cooling and producing electricity ('trigeneration'), it is an effective means of substantially reducing the emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants and thus improving the sustainability of Europe's energy sector.



The Green Paper on Energy Efficiency presents cogeneration as the most important energy saving technology currently available, while the European Climate Change Programme cites it as the best single measure the EU can introduce to meet the climate objectives laid down in the Kyoto Protocol. In a report drawn up for the Dutch EU Presidency, PriceWaterhouseCoopers concluded that it was the most profitable solution for meeting climate and energy security objectives.

The development of cogeneration is now supported by an EU Directive (2004/08/EC) requiring each Member State to assess the potential for cogeneration in their own country and to remove any obstacles to its exploitation, providing financial support if necessary. It is, therefore, an opportune time to consider the role of cogeneration. Cogeneration is also cited as a preferred option in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, in the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive and in all the supporting measures for biomass, both in the Renewable Energy Directive and the Biomass Action Plan.

With respect to regional development programmes, cogeneration can be a valuable tool in improving energy savings and the environmental performances of the Member States and candidate countries. Industry, district heating and buildings can all be equipped with cogeneration systems, fuelled by biofuels or conventional fuels. Indeed, many of the projects implemented in Romania, for example, are cogeneration plants. In Hungary, nearly all of the new electricity production units employ cogeneration, a substantial proportion of which are small community heating projects.

To find out more: COGEN Europe, European Association for the Promotion of Cogeneration, <http://www.cogen.org>

In many regions we are already seeing a clear trend towards building more energy efficient buildings and using renewable energies. But not all the potential for energy savings is being exploited and, in quantitative terms, fossil fuels remain a very important source of energy.

Appropriate standards can help to encourage energy efficiency in buildings and also present a major opportunity for the regional construction sector. In this context, the desire to improve energy efficiency is the point of departure for the use of renewable energies. Better thermal insulation of buildings and the use of innovative technologies not only bring benefits in terms of comfort but can also help create and protect jobs.

In the construction sector, in addition to the legal framework, corresponding information strategies also play a key role in mobilising the users of building as well as the many other sectoral interests. Given their proximity to the citizens and economic operators, the regions are also required to play their part in the creation of buildings that are efficient, sustainable and comfortable.



Geothermal energy in Europe

The Earth is a ball of fire covered by a thin layer of solid cold rock. The inner heat rises to the surface at points where the crust is particularly thin, such as along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (Iceland, the Azores) or in southern Italy, around the Tyrrhenian Sea. The planet is continuously emitting about 40 million MW of heat into space. Appropriate technology can make it possible to use this renewable geothermal energy, and not only in volcanic regions. In fact, Europe has a long tradition of using this energy, from the time of the Roman baths and villas to the first geothermal electricity plant, constructed in Italy in 1904.

Geothermal energy is now used throughout Europe. However, a distinction must be made between high temperature geothermal resources (found only under certain geological conditions), the warm or hot waters of deep aquifers (found mainly in hydrographic basins) and surface geothermal applications that can be exploited almost anywhere. As a result of R & D on 'Stimulated Geothermal Systems', the use of high temperatures outside of natural geothermal fields is now possible, as demonstrated by the European research project in Soultz-sous-Forêts, in Alsace.

In 2004, about 7 TWh (7 million MWh) of electricity were produced in Europe from geothermal energy, of which Italy accounted for about 75 %. The production of heat from geothermal energy was 21.4 TWh/year for the EU-25, with Sweden leading the field (about 45 %), fol-

lowed by Hungary and Italy (10 % each). Although Sweden has no volcanoes, geysers, or deep hot water aquifers, surface geothermal energy is widely exploited using heat pumps that can be installed almost anywhere. This is also the case in Germany, Austria and Switzerland and the market is currently growing in France and the Benelux countries.

Geothermal energy has various fields of application: electricity production, district heating networks or individual heating systems (geothermal heat pumps), greenhouse heating, fish farming and seaweed production (*spirulina*), drying in agriculture, the agri-food and timber industries, and even for seawater desalination on the Greek islands. French caviar from Mios (Aquitaine) or Greek asparagus harvested in January owe their existence to geothermal energy.

In basins that have deep aquifers, found in Hungary or France, and in areas with hot springs, geothermal technology can operate at different temperature levels. Geothermal energy can have very interesting applications in agriculture and in some regions it constitutes the very basis for its development. Geothermal pumps can also be used for air conditioners and generally prove much more efficient than conventional devices. This presents excellent prospects in southern Europe, where the market is not yet as developed as it is in the southern United States or China.

To find out more: European Geothermal Energy Council (EGEC), <http://www.egec.org>

Green electricity, contributing to sustainable regional development

In the directive to promote electricity production from renewable energy sources such as the wind, sun, biomass and water (2001/77/EC), the EU has set itself an ambitious goal: that 'green' energy will meet 22 % of the EU's electricity needs by 2010. Specific targets have also been set for each Member State, according to their potential, current achievements and other factors. Since 2001, the market has grown at a very different rate from one Member State to another, depending on the levels of ambition and also on the choices made, in particular with regard to the instru-

ments to promote its development and to remove administrative obstacles.

Here again, the regions have a key role to play in helping to achieve objectives. This is because most successful projects originate at local or regional level and it is only at this level that many obstacles to market development can be removed. Also, regions that achieve growth in the green electricity market stand to benefit from the new jobs that can result — especially for SMEs and independent energy producers — as well as from potential export opportunities. Regions that invest now in a sustainable and green infrastructure will be rewarded tomorrow with stable energy prices and strong energy companies.

The Intelligent Energy — Europe (IEE) programme: converting policy into practice

The current IEE programme⁽¹⁾ runs from 2003 to 2006, with a total budget of EUR 250 million, and supports up to 50 % of the costs of European actions promoting the supply and use of sustainable energy (renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy for transport). It does not finance 'hardware', however. The programme will continue in the period 2007–13 within the framework programme for competitiveness & innovation.



IEE projects aim to meet today's energy sector challenges through market analyses, knowledge sharing, awareness raising, training, etc. At the same time, they also aim to create the conditions for increased economic activity. The IEE programme already supports over 1 000 organisations involved in more than 200 international projects, the creation of some 35 new local or regional energy agencies and almost 40 European events. The number of actions supported will increase

by 50 % when the next batch of contracts is signed later this year.

Since 2005, the IEE programme has been managed by the **Intelligent Energy Executive Agency — IEEA**, the new agency established by the Commission to translate policies into action with greater efficiency and improved results, leaving the Commission to concentrate on its policy making and institutional tasks. The IEEA employs 43 staff in Brussels and works closely with the Directorate-General for Energy and Transport⁽¹⁾.

The **4th IEE call for proposals** was published on 29 May 2006, with a submission deadline of 31 October and a budget of around EUR 50 million. The call is being publicised with 'Info' days throughout the EU and via the IEE website. The majority of proposals must be submitted by at least three independent organisations based in at least three of the following countries: the EU Member States, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein. A partner search facility is available on the ManagEnergy website⁽²⁾.

The IEEA is assisted by independent experts in evaluating proposals. Qualified experts with at least five years of relevant professional experience can register their interest on the IEE website.

For the 2007–13 period the IEE programme will continue to operate within the **competitiveness & innovation programme (CIP)**⁽³⁾, which will support SMEs through a series of actions to promote growth, employment, eco-innovation and climate protection.

⁽¹⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/index_en.html

⁽²⁾ <http://www.managenergy.net/>

⁽³⁾ <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/716&format=HTML&aged=0&language=FR&guiLanguage=fr>



Hydroelectricity without borders: dam on the Nestos river, between Greece and Bulgaria.

Man at the centre

It is important to remember that energy strategy is implemented at various sites and organisational levels: municipalities, regions, states, economic fields, as well as public and private users, households, companies, transport, etc. This means that different measures are needed for different groups.

An ongoing communications effort is the only way, therefore, to achieve a high level of awareness of energy issues. Discussion may serve to develop green energy and energy efficiency sectors that are socially desirable, but they will not be enough in practice to change behaviour.

Experience shows that a high level of ambition with regard to expected impacts of green energy effects, coupled with a corresponding high level of information provision have more impact on energy savings than an overly modest objective. Awareness of the possibilities of success helps create an attitude that goes a long way towards realising this success.

A detailed description of energy-saving programmes and strategic plans is undoubtedly necessary to enable experts to take decisions but this does not arouse the interest of private users. Personal experiences have the greatest effect in terms of creating the necessary conditions for a change in behaviour. The level of engagement will be strengthened if prominent figures share this point of view. This social factor also impacts on the tendency to accept and follow legal provisions and expert advice.

Relevant information must be provided at the right place and the right time. Communication tools (information, advice, training, etc.) are more effective when combined with precise regulatory and financial instruments (taxation, financial incentives). An effective combination of the most diverse range of policy instruments can facilitate rapid market changes.

Regional strategies

In many European regions, exemplary concepts and strategies for sustainable development are already being implemented and ongoing efforts are being made to increase energy efficiency and to further promote the use of sustainable energy sources.

More than 50 innovative regions are already cooperating on such activities within the framework of Fedarene, the Europe-wide federation of regional energy agencies, one of the main aims of which is to promote information exchange between the regions and cooperation in the energy field.

Palermo (Italy): Generating electricity from natural gas.





Offshore windfarm near Copenhagen (Denmark).

Offshore wind energy: the new frontier

For some time to come, wind energy generation will continue to be land-based. However, it is undoubtedly in the exploitation of offshore wind energy that the future lies. At the end of 2005, offshore wind farms represented less than 2 % of total installed capacity in the EU, or 680 MW(*) out of 40 500. The European Wind Energy Association (EWEA) expects that share to reach one third by 2020, and 50 % by 2030. The EWEA expects offshore development in Europe to take off towards the end of this decade and to account for between 5 and 10 % of the EU's total wind-generated electricity by 2010.

Offshore wind farms have the dual advantage of benefiting from strong and predictable wind speeds whilst avoiding possible conflict with other land uses. The energy generating capacity is approximately 40 % higher offshore than onshore, which indicates that it would be cheaper to produce a kWh of wind electricity. However, developing an offshore wind farm currently involves higher costs, arising from the construction of the foundations, grid connection and more complex operating and maintenance conditions. In the medium term, however, the potential for cost reductions is greater in the case of offshore than onshore farms as the industry has not yet reaped the full benefits of economies of scale or the learning curve effect. These effects will be felt as soon as the market begins to develop.

Offshore energy production clearly presents an opportunity for the EU, not only to respond to current energy challenges such as security of supply, climate change

and high energy prices, but also to create new employment opportunities. This is pertinent for some maritime and coastal areas which are being badly hit by the decline of traditional activities, such as fishing or ship-building.

Given that Europe is the world leader in the market for wind turbines, with most of the production concentrated in Europe, and that this sector is more labour intensive than other fossil fuel alternatives, offshore wind technology represents an attractive option for many EU regions. However, if we want to reap the full benefits of developments in this sector, and maintain EU leadership, we must invest more in offshore research and, as a matter of urgency, develop a European offshore wind energy policy, as proposed by the Commission in 2004.

One of the major problems facing offshore production is infrastructure. The structural funds could play a key role in this respect. We need to develop grids for electricity generated offshore which are able to meet the needs of tomorrow's markets in which wind, wave and tidal energy will play an increasingly important role. In addition to making it possible to tap this significant European renewable energy potential, these grids would also, through improved interconnection, make a much needed contribution to the better functioning of the internal electricity market.

To find out more: <http://www.ewea.org>

(*) Megawatts (millions of watts): measure of electrical power. For example, 1 kW (1 000 watts) is equivalent to the power of a microwave oven.

All the regions that signed the *European Regions for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sources* declaration, initiated by the *Energiesparverband* of Upper Austria and Fedarene, have demonstrated their commitment to energy efficiency and renewable energy. More than 20 regions from throughout Europe are already participating in this initiative and have set concrete targets for the use of renewable energy.

Prospects

At the beginning of this new millennium, we are confronted by new and interesting challenges: our energy

consumption and the resultant environmental effects have reached a critical stage. These challenges require a more determined response. A key imperative, particularly in the context of an established European framework and international agreements, is to continue the drive for concerted energy strategies. The change of paradigm that we are already seeing, with a shift in emphasis to demand rather than supply will ensure that energy strategies are in future even more focused on the needs and well-being of consumers.

Biodiesel from animal fats

In March 2005, as part of a project to locate a European pilot plant in a less favoured zone, the first biodiesel was drawn from the distillation column at Argent Energy in Scotland (UK). The fuel was tested at the well-equipped on-site laboratory, as well as at other independent laboratories, to check that it met the criteria laid down in the EU standard for biodiesel, EN14214. The test results were positive, a just reward for all those involved in the project and who had expressed confidence in the technology.

Biodiesel has, of course, been around for decades. However, what made this project so interesting was that, firstly, the technology had not yet been proven on a commercial scale. And secondly, the raw material for this project was not the more common vegetable oil but animal fats from the rendering and meat industry as well as used cooking oils. Showing that these sources of energy could be converted into very high grade fuel, economically and on a large scale, was crucial to Europe's plans to introduce increasing quantities of biofuels onto the market.

A number of technologies are now being developed in this rapidly expanding industry. R & D is focused on the

search for second and third generation fuels. Major oil companies are also picking up the baton as they assume their responsibilities in searching for sustainable solutions. Governments too are taking steps to ensure that they achieve sustainable growth in the biofuels industry to achieve higher volume targets, while working with industry to achieve the best environmental benefits (using full life cycle analysis for example). In this respect, a determining factor in enabling this industry to develop is the regional funding schemes. The industry has long been demanding such support.

To find out more: <http://www.argentenergy.com/>



Estonia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic

'“Energy 4 Cohesion”: promoting renewable energy in less developed rural areas'

Christian Epp, Project Coordinator



The 'Energy 4 Cohesion' project is supported by the Intelligent Energy — Europe (IEE) Programme and is set to run from 1 January 2006 to 30 June 2008. The project consortium includes 13 companies and institutes from 11 different Member States, all with experience in the renewable energy or rural development sectors. These partner organisations are supported by seven subcontractors working in the target regions and by nine strategic partners that contribute to policy discussions and support the management of the project.

This team will work together to produce eight master plans for renewable energy projects in eight target regions, aimed at ensuring the best use of structural and cohesion funds in the 2007-13 period. These master plans will define 'best practices' with regard to the most suitable funding mechanisms and cooperation plans for such projects. In addition, the project partners will train and support local stakeholders and decision-makers.

The eight target regions include: Zlin (Czech Republic), Limbazi (Latvia), Velky Krtis (Slovakia), Kaunas Region (Lithuania), Powiat Nowa Sol (Poland), Evros (Greece), Saaremaa Island (Estonia) and Alta Locride (Italy).

As a first step, the project team will study the relevant EU funding programmes for regional development and rural development in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. The partners will look at the relevant European cohesion policies and assess their suitability for decentralised action in the energy field aimed at developing these regions.

The results will make it possible to establish a policy platform to share experiences and identify best practices. Action plans for promoting small-scale energy actions in rural areas will then be developed, with recommendations for measures to be taken at European, national and regional level in the framework of cohesion policy.

In the next stage, pilot projects will be launched in the eight regions, which are believed to possess major potential for developing renewable energy. These projects will be the subject of a master plan for each region, covering the design, planning and performance of the decentralised actions.

Experience in other regions shows that such decentralised energy projects can bring economic and environmental benefits to remote rural areas. However, a key barrier to the implementation of such actions is the lack of suitable funding sources, often owing to the small size of the projects. Local energy and development agencies will, therefore, be supported in designing tailor-made funding packages for use in the framework of cohesion policy. Private investment will also be encouraged and facilitated through an investment forum and an innovative funding scheme for cooperation will be developed to permit a bundling of energy projects, thereby creating a proposition of sufficient size. Other innovative funding tools will be developed to provide seed capital and a new funding quality standard, aimed at attracting third-party investments.

The Energy 4 Cohesion team will also organise 10 different seminars, which will serve to train regional actors and raise their awareness of the project and related issues. These seminars will specifically target project developers, representatives of municipalities, politicians and civil servants, energy stakeholders and energy service companies. The seminars will increase awareness of the development potential of decentralised renewable energy actions and provide information on the possibilities available under the new cohesion programmes for the 2007-13 period. The seminars will, therefore, act as an important tool for mobilising interest and participation in the project.

Finally, a dissemination campaign (project homepage, newsletters, presentations, publications, etc.) will promote the project results, particularly those relating to cohesion policy, pilot actions and innovative funding schemes.

To find out more: <http://www.e4c.org/>



AZORES (PORTUGAL)

Geothermal energy



Total cost: EUR 60 000 000

EU contribution: EUR 25 000 000

'Piloted by the Sociedade Geotérmica dos Açores (SOGEO), a 23 MW geothermal complex is being developed at the Ribeira Grande site on the island of São Miguel. The first phase of the project began in 1994 with the installation of two 2.5 MW units. In 1998, two further 4.0 MW units were built and a new 10 MW plant is currently being constructed close to Pico Vermelho. The latter is due to start production in September 2006, resulting in a significant increase in the energy autonomy of the Azores, thanks to the exploitation of this local renewable resource. By 2007, geothermal energy should contribute around 158 GWh, or about 36 % of the region's electricity supply. Another project is currently being studied on the island of Terceira and the potential of other islands is also being assessed in order to further exploit the archipelago's major geothermal resource.'

Carlos Bicudo da Ponte, Executive Member of the Board of Directors, SOGEO
sogeo@eda.pt

AUSTRIA

The Güssing cogenerator



Total cost: EUR 11 000 000

EU contribution: EUR 2 000 000

'In order to demonstrate the production of electricity from organic matter in small, decentralised power stations, a new biomass fuelled power plant has been developed in Güssing. The plant uses a gasification system, which compared to conventional incinerators, has the advantage of combining heat and electricity generation. At the Güssing plant, the burning of 1 760 kg of wood per hour provides 2000 kW of electricity and 4500 kW of district heat. Research activities are also carried out at this site, on the production of petrol, diesel and methane and also on fuel cell applications.'

Reinhard Koch, Marketing Manager, Biomassekraftwerk Güssing GmbH & Co KG
r.koch@eee-info.net
<http://www.eee-info.net>

GERMANY

The 'Solar Valley' in Saxony-Anhalt



Total cost: EUR 21 000 000

EU contribution: EUR 10 500 000

'A solar industry cluster has been developing close to Bitterfeld in Saxony-Anhalt since the year 2000. The region was badly hit by the rapid deindustrialisation that followed reunification, leading to rising unemployment and an exodus of young people to the West. However, the decision by the Q-Cells company to produce solar panels coupled with aid from the ERDF has helped the region in its recovery. Together with its associate companies EverQ and CSG Solar, Q-Cells has, to date, created over 1 200 jobs. With continuing growth in this sector, intensive R & D and the marketing of new photovoltaic technologies many more new jobs are expected.'

Stefan Dietrich, Public Relations Manager, Q-Cells AG
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<http://www.q-cells.com>

FINLAND

The BENET Bioenergy network



Total cost: EUR 670 000

EU contribution: EUR 450 000

'Through its network of partners and versatile team, BENET provides a wide range of services to the rapidly expanding bioenergy market. Founded in 1997, the BENET Bioenergy Network includes nine independent expert organisations in central Finland and offers expertise in agriculture and forestry, biomass processing, energy production systems, plant design, energy markets, business development and training. Funded principally by the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme, the projects implemented by BENET (5EUROS, Propellets and Biohausing) aim to promote the use of bioenergy for heat and electricity production, the export of technology and the spirit of enterprise within the sector. The network co-operates with international partners for the development of bioenergy markets. BENET has at its disposal some valuable assets, including one of the most important R & D laboratories in Europe and a training and development unit, the Bioenergy Centre.'

Dan Asplund, President of the Board of Directors
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The energy challenge, a regional development priority in Upper Austria

Leading the way on energy

Since 1991, the Upper Austria region has been pursuing an active energy policy, including providing incentives for energy efficiency and supporting the development of alternative energy sources, pilot projects and infrastructure. With the exception of transport, almost one third of the energy consumed in this Land is now generated from renewable sources. This also has positive implications for regional development. *Panorama* presents examples of projects and meets some of the individuals involved.



Production of solar panels at St-Ulrich.

It was 35 °C in the shade on this June day in Linz, the capital of the Land of Upper Austria. However, at our 3-star hotel, guests wishing to use the air conditioning in their room were required to pay a hefty supplement. Visitors to this part of Austria are quickly reminded that this is a region where energy is taken seriously.

‘Energy has been a priority in Upper Austria for 15 years now,’ explains Gerhard Dell. ‘It is a concern expressed at grassroots level, from the “bottom up” as they say. In any event, there was a consensus among all the political parties, which is not necessarily the case in all the Austrian Länder. Priorities can differ from one region to another. It depends on the inhabitants, the socio-economic players, and the elected representatives. Here, for example, one particular minister played an important role.’ ‘European funds also gave us a boost,’ adds Christiane Egger. ‘Our Objective 2 programme — which

covers 150 municipalities and targets energy as a regional development priority — greatly enhanced our ability to deliver.’

Sustainable construction

Gerhard and Christiane are, respectively, Director and Assistant Director of the Oberösterreichischer Energiesparverband (ESV), or the ‘Upper Austrian Association for Energy Conservation’. This is an energy agency supported by the Land government. With a permanent staff of 19 and a panel of 50 specialised consultants to draw on, the ESV provides a wide range of services, including information, technical assistance and training (750 energy advisers trained since 1991), organising events, and international cooperation and knowledge transfer (such as the ‘World Sustainable Energy Days’).

Although active in many fields, the agency's main mission is to offer advice on energy efficiency to private consumers, companies and local authorities. 'We set up face-to-face meetings with the individuals concerned, which last for about an hour,' explains Christine Öhlinger, ESV information officer. 'We hold about 15 000 of these a year, about 300 of them with companies. We also carry out energy audits of buildings, as it is our agency that issues energy certificates as part of the Upper Austria sustainable construction programme. A project with sustainable energy certification can apply for low interest loans for the construction or renovation of housing.' The agency has dealt with 50 000 applications since 1993. In 2005 alone, 3 500 building projects and 3 700 renovation projects were evaluated. It is estimated that this programme has enabled 1 billion kWh of energy to be saved in Upper Austria since 1993. The 100 million litres of fuel oil that were not used also made it possible to avoid 200 000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions a year. In financial terms, this represents EUR 100 million that can be reinvested in the regional economy.

Cubes

To meet the energy challenge as far upstream as possible, and to involve all the stakeholders, the ESV regularly carries out local audits in the municipalities 'in close cooperation with the population,' explains Joachim Payr, a consultant who regularly facilitates this kind of exercise in which inhabitants and key players are invited to give their views on how to save energy. 'This produces excellent results. Here in Munderfing (pop. 2 700), this collective planning exercise revealed that we could produce up to twice as much energy as we consume.'

Joachim presented the achievement of which he says he is most proud: a small square box containing six cubes of wood like the cubic jigsaw puzzles children play with. When you fit the cubes together they reveal six pictures representing six aspects of the sustainable development process. However, rotating the cubes allows 36 different combinations, illustrating the complexity of the process but also the many possible options. 'It is our "Rubik's cube" in a way. You cannot imagine the debates that this clever little box has instigated!' It is these debates, combined with a collective approach, that have culminated in the drawing up of plans setting energy efficiency targets for the next 5, 10 and 30 years. Seventy-four municipal strategic plans have already been developed.

Contracting

'Energy is one of our municipality's four priorities, together with culture, social services and tourism,' stresses Erich Rippl, mayor of Lengau (pop. 4 600). Since the start of the 2005 autumn term, a nursery school in Schneegattern, a village within the Lengau municipality, has been offering state-of-the-art facilities for children as well as a modern architecture and the latest energy technology. This is known as a 'passive' building, with very low energy con-



Bioclimatic, the new play school at Schneegattern uses less energy.

sumption and using wood pellets as heating fuel. The ESV assisted the municipality with the technical aspects of the project. 'The investment of EUR 715 000 cost around 8 % more than a conventional building,' estimates Erich Rippl, 'but this is quickly recouped with the substantial energy savings that can be achieved in a building like this.'

Lengau will shortly be joining the 100 other municipalities and companies that have opted for the formula of the 'Energy Contracting Programme', an innovation, if not a revolution in the financing of energy infrastructure. 'We are the first region in Europe to implement such a system,' declares Gerhard Dell. 'The formula was invented some time ago, but it remained an intellectual exercise. We are now showing that it works.'

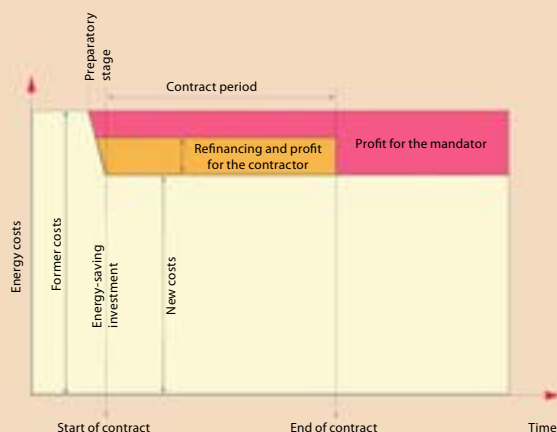
How does it work? Take the example of a municipality that wants to modernise its lighting or heating, or provide total thermal insulation of a public building. It issues a call for tender and selects a specialist company that not only installs the equipment, but also takes on the task of managing the entire project, including the overall financing and the ongoing maintenance. By the terms of a contract the entrepreneur will then guarantee the municipality a certain level of energy savings. This guaranteed saving enables the municipality to reimburse the investment or even, after a certain time, to finance new projects.

'We are in a sense contracting out the energy budget,' explains Erwin Moser, director of the Munderfing municipal administration. He shows a piece of paper on which he has calculated the cost price and economies made when installing new municipal lighting: 'We signed a contract for 120 months to install 318 street lamps. Total cost: EUR 165 000. Previously we consumed up to 46 614 kWh a year. We are now consuming 35 900 kWh. That represents a saving of 10 714 kWh a year, or 23 %, and that is guaranteed by the contractor.'

Contracts of this kind, for which the Upper Austria energy agency provides advice, support and subsidies (on average equivalent to 14 % of the costs and even 24 % in the Objective 2 area) can also be used by companies.

A win-win device

The Upper Austria 'energy contracting' programme is based on a 'magic formula' that can be represented as follows:



Whether for lighting, heating, the supply of hot water or renovation of a public building, the contract is beneficial to both parties:

- The mandator (local authority or company) does not have to spend money on new equipment.
- The energy savings guaranteed from the start by the contractor make it possible to finance the investment.
- The mandator benefits from the know-how of the contractor and the latest energy management technology.
- This embracing of cutting edge technology enhances its public image.
- Its staff are free to concentrate on the company's core business, the contractor being responsible for maintenance.
- The contractor is assured a relatively long-term contract with a solvent client.
- The contractor remains at the forefront of the technology and enjoys market visibility.

Based in Losenstein, the Weber-Hydraulik (170 employees) company builds cranes, telescopic arms and cutters used by fire fighters. When extending its premises it decided to take the opportunity to change its heating system by using the energy contracting programme. 'It is a win-win formula,' says Kurt Sperrer, head of production. 'Although we now have a greater area to heat, we have replaced 4 600 m³ of fuel oil costing EUR 85 000 with 7 200 m³ of biomass costing EUR 60 000. We have a 15-year contract with a heating company that guarantees us a 25 % energy saving. In practice the saving is 40 %. To fuel the boilers, we signed a contract with a farmer who supplies wood chips.'



Klaus Hofer, Director of the Bio-Wärme Weyer Cooperative.

Biomass

Wood chips are also the raw material used by the Bio-Wärme Weyer cooperative, located close to the charming village of Weyer Markt, in the Enns Valley. At the end of a dirt track you come upon what at first appears to be an ordinary warehouse. But you soon discover that it is in fact an ultramodern infrastructure, equipped with the most sophisticated computers and machinery. Three quarters of the elongated building acts as a vast storehouse for the hundreds of cubic metres of chips that are conveyed to the boiler by means of a kind of giant spiral mechanism. Bio-Wärme Weyer is in fact a biomass power plant, generating

Renewable energy sources in Upper Austria

The Land of Upper Austria (pop. 1.4 million) obtains almost a third of its energy from renewable sources, compared with an average of just 6 % for the EU as a whole. For heating, the proportion rises to 41 % (EU: 11 %). Biomass and hydroelectricity each represent 14 % of total energy consumption, with a small percentage being met by solar, wind and geothermal energy.

Renewable energies sources in Upper Austria include:

- more than 1 000 photovoltaic plants, or 770 000 m² of solar panels,
- 34 000 heating systems and 250 biomass-fuelled district heating networks,
- more than 30 000 heat pumps,
- 23 wind generators,
- 7 biofuel production plants,
- more than 500 small hydroelectric plants, over 200 of which have been recently modernised.

It is estimated that the use of renewable energy permits a saving of EUR 1.5 billion a year in fossil fuel imports while generating EUR 100 million in investment in the region.

5 MW of power that provides hot water for 121 customers through a network covering 11 km. 'The water leaves here at 100 °C and arrives at the consumer at no less than 85 °C. All the local schools, some companies and many local households have switched to us,' explains plant manager Klaus Hofer. Established in 2001 by four forestry companies and 16 farms, the cooperative received EUR 5 million in European aid for rural development. 'In a region of 80 % forests, we would be stupid not to exploit the only true wealth we have, namely biomass. Our operation replaces 1.5 million litres of fuel oil and avoids 3.6 thousand tonnes of CO₂ emissions a year', explains Klaus.

EcoEnergy

The cooperative is also a participant in another initiative developed and managed by the energy agency of Upper Austria. The 'Ökoenergie-Cluster' (<http://www.oec.at>) is a network of regional companies active in the areas of renewable energy, ecological materials and environment-friendly technologies. The network has 142 members, including 20 in the neighbouring Czech Republic. The Austrian partners generate an annual turnover of EUR 390 million and provide 2 700 jobs. The network makes a range of resources available to its members, including information, training, and subsidies for technological innovation, marketing and exporting. It also encourages transnational cooperation.

In St-Ulrich, close to Steyr, the Kalkgruber Solar- und Umwelttechnik GmbH company markets solar panels and boilers that can run on both logs and wood pellets. Founded in 1993 and with 115 employees, most of them young, the company is emblematic of the energy technology sector in Upper Austria: innovative, competitive and with an emphasis on exports. '70 % of our production is exported', says Director and founder Johann Kalkgruber. 'Especially to Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Hungary and increasingly France. The market is growing rapidly but you have to fight because we have about 30 competitors.' The company must be continuously innovating and it is helped in this by



Production of wood burners.



Construction of a biodiesel refinery at Enns.

the EcoEnergy Cluster, which encourages cooperation. It also participates in the European 'Socold' project (2004–06) together with German, Austrian, Spanish and French companies seeking to develop refrigeration and air conditioning systems operating on solar energy and serving individuals and small businesses. 'The future will be a mix of biomass, solar, wind and other renewable energies,' believes Johann Kalkgruber.

This is an opinion shared by Joachim Payr, the cube consultant who, as is often the case in this innovative and dynamic sector, also wears a second hat: Energiewerkstatt (Energy Workshop), the company he founded in 1995 with three associates, has become a European leader in providing technical assistance to the wind energy sector. To date, 46 wind farms — half of Austria's current wind power — have had recourse to his expertise. 'The renewable energy reserves are still very large,' he says. 'Take hydroelectricity for example: we could double the yield of hundreds of small plants by modernising them. To do so, we must make the private operators more aware of this untapped potential. But we are getting there, slowly but surely.'

'There is not going to be a "big bang" in the energy sector,' explains Gerhard Dell, Director of the ESV Agency. 'The solutions will be many, varied and long term. The one area where a genuine energy problem remains is transport. But here the ball is largely in the court of the motor manufacturers. Outside of this, there is a need to combine energy sources, build the right infrastructure, promote continued awareness among young people and generally see a greater commitment of political and financial support in all of Europe's regions. The regional level is the ideal level at which to achieve results because it is close to the producer and the consumer. Upper Austria has a very good energy record: 30 % of our consumption comes from renewable sources. But this also means that 70 % does not.'

To find out more: <http://www.esv.or.at/>

SPAIN

National Renewable Energy Centre



Total cost: EUR 15 600 000

EU contribution: EUR 2 800 000

'With all the latest equipment, such as laboratories for developing thermal collectors and photovoltaic panels, biomass testing and analysis or even wind turbine certification, the National Renewable Energy Centre (CENER), located near Pamplona in Navarre, has all that is required for a research and development centre. Its research is concentrated principally in five fields: wind energy, solar energy, biomass energy, bioclimatic architecture and the use of hydrogen for energy storage. Founded in 2002, CENER's ultimate aim is to make energy efficient technology accessible to all of society, based on the idea that the best energy is energy that is not consumed.'

Juan Ormazábal, Director General

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<http://www.cener.com>

HUNGARY

Improved energy efficiency at the Szeged hospital



Total cost: EUR 1 600 000

EU contribution: EUR 589 000

'With the help of European co-financing, the Szeged hospital has implemented an innovative energy-saving plan that involved replacing an old steam boiler system, including all the pipes and radiators, with a new computer-controlled system which gives substantial energy savings. The hospital roof has also been equipped with 800 m² of solar panels. The energy generated is used to produce hot water and to heat the hospital. This project is the first part of a wider energy efficiency programme covering all municipal buildings, beginning with the colleges and a medical centre. This is Szeged's way of responding to the problem of global warming and an excellent example of "thinking globally and acting locally."

Botka Laszlo, Mayor of Szeged

racz.peter@polghiv.szeged.hu

GUADELOUPE (FRANCE)

Support for wind energy and other renewable energy sources



Total cost: n.c.

EU contribution (including: wind, geothermal, solar energy): EUR 35 046 990

'With a population of around 450 000, Guadeloupe is unique in the Caribbean in that wind, solar, hydro and geothermal energy, as well as biogas and coal combustion have all helped to reduce its dependency on oil over the past 12 years — a period during which energy consumption has been growing at a rate of 5.5 % per year to reach the present 1 400 GWh. Wind energy is generated by 11 wind farms on the eastern flank of Guadeloupe and on the islands of Marie-Galante, Désirade and Terre de Bas. The 208 wind turbines have a capacity of around 21 MW and an annual production of 50 GW. The target set by the local elected representatives is for wind energy to meet 10 % of the island's electricity needs, equivalent to an installed capacity of 50 MW. By the end of 2006 almost 60 % of this target will have been met.'

Nadia Roseau, Guadeloupe Prefecture

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UNITED KINGDOM

Wood as an energy source for businesses



Total cost: EUR 17 500 000

EU contribution: EUR 5 900 000

'Through the "Wood Energy Business Scheme" (WEBS), Wales is seeking to create a market for wood as a sustainable fuel for heating and small scale electricity generation. SMEs in the Objective 1 and Objective 2 (Powys) areas in Wales can apply for grants to cover up to 48 % of the costs of a wood heating system, small-scale electricity generator (under 2 MW) or wood-fuel processing equipment. The four year scheme was launched in March 2004 and is managed by the Forestry Commission of Wales. To date, 50 % of the funds have been allocated to 53 projects, including two small scale electricity generating schemes, 10 processing projects and 38 heating systems. The Forestry Commission has also set aside 35 000 tonnes of timber for the biomass heat market in support of WEBS.'

Michael Pitcher, Project leader, Wood Energy Business Scheme

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<http://www.woodenergybusiness.co.uk>

Denmark

'The Samsø Energy Academy: a one-stop shop for renewable energy'

Søren Hermansen, Director

Tourists travelling to the Danish island of Samsø next year will discover a new attraction near Ballen harbour: the Samsø Energy Academy. The academy will bring together all the expertise that the island has acquired through its participation in energy projects, ranging from wind turbines and straw-based district heating schemes to rapeseed oil and solar thermal collectors. The Samsø academy will give Danish and foreign researchers the chance to study renewable energies without having to look far for inspiration.

At the same time, the academy will act as a conference centre where companies, researchers and politicians can discuss local development based on renewable energy, energy savings, new energy technologies and new organisational structures and ownership models. The Samsø Energy Office and Samsø Energy Agency also plan to relocate to the new site, where they will continue their activities as energy consultants, advising companies and households. They also plan to promote energy-linked tourism and to organise workshops and seminars. The energy academy will, therefore, become the new headquarters for Samsø's energy organisations.

Throughout the summer, the academy will open up its exhibition and experimentation areas to tourists, students and other energy enthusiasts. Already, each year over a thousand visitors discover this 'renewable energy island'. In the recently equipped experiment area, visitors can build a hydrogen car, a wind turbine or mini solar cell. Samsø also plans to invite school visits during summer camps and throughout the school year, in order to promote awareness of renewable energy.



Building of the future.



Ecology and tradition

The academy's architecture is influenced by that of the island's traditional buildings, such as the Viking houses. It is also designed to respect the following principles: minimal disturbance to the flora and fauna on the dry marshland on which it stands; the use of natural and recyclable building materials; a comfortable, toxin-free indoor environment; fresh air provided by a natural ventilation system in the open-plan offices and large open rooms; low water consumption thanks to water collection systems (rainwater used for the toilets and to irrigate the soil); minimal heat consumption through advanced insulation; and a solar heating system connected to the local straw-fired district heating plant, with highly insulated twin piping systems resulting in the lowest heat loss ever achieved in Denmark.

The solar panels that supply the energy academy with hot water will be used to demonstrate solar heating to visitors. Around 100 m² of photovoltaic solar panels fitted to the roof and local wind turbines also supply the building with electricity. Low energy electrical appliances and lighting are used throughout the building and the windows are designed to optimise lighting conditions.

The energy academy is a local project co-financed by the municipality of Samsø, Real Dania (private investment) and the EU Structural Funds. The total cost of the project, including the cost of the interior layout and fittings, is EUR 2 000 000. The ERDF provided EUR 25 000 for the feasibility study and EUR 400 000 for the construction. Representatives of the universities, the municipality, and local NGOs sit on the academy's steering committee. The success of the project to date is largely attributed to the fact that Samsø has shown that renewable energies are a profitable option for a small community. The profits arising from energy savings and the production of clean energy are reinvested in the academy.

Contact: Samsø Danmarks Vedvarende Energi Ø (Denmark's Renewable Energy Island), www.veo.dk

Interreg IIIA GERMANY/France/ BELGIUM/LUXEMBOURG

'RUBIN': regional strategies for biomass



Total cost: EUR 1 550 000
EU contribution: EUR 770 000

'RUBIN aims to determine the potential and the limitations of biomass in our cross-border area. With a sufficient availability of land and a high local energy demand, it is clear that biomass can contribute substantially to our local needs. It can also strengthen the regional economy by encouraging new activities in the agriculture, forestry, trade and service sectors. However, to realise this potential, concrete measures are needed, such as the creation of a centre of expertise, the carrying out of a study to define a regional biomass strategy, awareness-raising events and the planning and preparation of cross-border pilot projects.'

Ulrich Bemmann, IZES (*Institut für Zukunftssysteme/ Institute for Future Energy Systems*)
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<http://www.izes.de>

Interreg IIIB NORTH SEA

'POWER' for offshore wind energy



Total cost: EUR 3 493 682
EU contribution: EUR 1 746 841

'The growth of the wind energy sector is being impeded in many places because of the lack of land availability. One solution to this is to go offshore. The 37 organisations and 10 North Sea regions participating in the POWER project aim to develop offshore wind energy by strengthening cooperation and the technical, logistical and administrative capacities of the industry players. By adopting a global approach, which takes account of the entire value chain — from planning to implementation and specialist training — POWER will consolidate the position of the North Sea region as a frontrunner in this sector, if not the leader, by 2015.'

Mathias Grabs, Project leader
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<http://www.offshore-power.net> (www.interregnorthsea.org)

Interreg IIIB CADSES

'KinG' for energy efficient buildings



Total cost: EUR 2 423 622
EU contribution: EUR 1 183 050

'The CER² (Central European regions cluster for energy from renewables.NETwork) transnational network aims to boost regional and local economic development in Central Europe by promoting environment-friendly energy technologies and the rational use of energy. Specifically, this implies mobilising and networking companies, business clusters and other players in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sector. One of the projects supported by the CER² is the "KinG" (Kompetenznetzwerk Innovative Gebäudetechnik — Network of competences in innovative construction techniques). This project aims to facilitate the integration of innovative techniques and materials in the building sector, thereby substantially improving convenience and energy efficiency. KinG was launched in the Vienna region and will later extend to the CER² network as a whole through cross-border exchanges of know-how between the participating regions.'

Susanne Geissler, Project leader
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<http://www.arsenal.ac.at>

Interreg IIIC WEST

'RUSE' or the energy of the structural funds



Total cost: EUR 1 573 000
EU contribution: EUR 968 000

'The RUSE (redirecting urban areas towards sustainable energy) project helps stakeholders in the new Member States and candidate countries to make better use of the structural funds to implement sustainable energy projects. Since the launch of the project in 2004, a wide range of actions have been set up in each partner country to encourage and support municipalities, energy agencies, businesses and other stakeholders to submit more projects under the structural funds. The RUSE website provides access to many tools: documentation on the structural funds; a database; newsletters on energy-related issues; national help desks with advice on how to design a project; presentations from seminars and study tours; useful links to other websites relating to the structural funds and energy in the Central and Eastern European countries.'

Christophe Frering, Project coordinator
cfrering@energie-cites.org
<http://www.ruse-europe.org>

First 'Regions for economic change' conference

Nurturing innovation in the regions

The first in a series of three conferences organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Policy on the general theme of 'Regions for economic change' took place in Brussels on 12 and 13 June. These conferences will assist the Commission in preparing for the fourth Cohesion Forum scheduled for June 2007. This first conference in the series facilitated discussion on the topic, 'Innovating through European regional policy,' drawing in particular on examples of best practice in knowledge transfer, innovation and clusters.



At the invitation of Danuta Hübner, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, representatives of national and regional administrations with responsibility for the structural funds and members of academic institutions, organisations, networks and companies involved in research, technological development and innovation from some 30 countries attended the conference. Participants were welcomed by the Commissioner, as well as by the European Commission President, José Manuel Barroso and Commissioners Günther Verheugen (industry and enterprise) and Vladimír Špidla (employment and social affairs).

'The Commission and the national and regional authorities are actively engaged in drawing up a cohesion policy for the 2007–13 period, and ensuring it delivers growth and jobs for our regions,' declared Danuta Hübner in her opening remarks. On the European responses to the challenge of globalisation, she added, 'research and innovation have a key role to play in this collective effort and we want to see them play a greater role in the investment strategies supported by the structural funds.'

How to create the right environment for innovation? How to strengthen cooperation between the public and private sectors? How to establish partnerships and optimise synergies? These were the three key questions addressed in the three sessions, which were further organised into nine discussion workshops on nine subjects: the role of the regional authorities in drawing up innovation strategies; the role of the public authorities in nurturing local and regional clusters; setting up innovation infrastructure and innovation support services; financial engineering; developing poles of excellence by research/enterprise partnerships; bringing the results of research to the market; the role of networks in knowledge transfer; trans-regional projects; the use of national and Community co-financing.

Each workshop included the presentation of two examples of 'best practice,' with a particular focus on

successful projects in the less prosperous regions. On the fringes of the conference there was also an exhibition of innovative projects as well as advisory booths where conference participants could consult experts for individual advice on how best to benefit from venture capital and clusters in a specific regional context.

The regional dimension: closer to the innovation needs of businesses

Summing up the key areas of agreement of the participants, the Director-General for Regional Policy, Graham Meadows, drew the following conclusions:

- > As the capacity of companies to innovate is essential for competitiveness, companies must innovate continuously if they want to succeed, and to innovate, they need investment;
- > The most competitive regions are those with the most innovative companies;
- > Human resources are Europe's principal asset in the face of international competition;
- > The notion of proximity is of the utmost importance and, in this respect, the regional dimension remains essential in a 'connected' world;
- > The regions must jointly assess their strengths and then develop a strategy to exploit their potential;
- > To really understand the needs of businesses it is important to appreciate the importance of time.

Mr. Meadows also announced that the Commission would be supporting the networking of 25 regional clusters through the provision of technical assistance. The next in this series of conferences will take place in Brussels on 25 and 26 January 2007 and will focus on the subject of: 'The demographic challenge'.

To find out more: http://ec.europa.eu/comm/regional_policy/conferences/innovating_june06/home_en.cfm

REGIO & Networks

OPEN DAYS 2006

Between 9 and 12 October 2006, some 5 000 experts are expected in Brussels for the biggest annual event on the European regional policy calendar: 'OPEN DAYS 2006 — European Week of Regions and Cities'. This year's theme is 'Investing in Europe's regions and cities: public and private partnerships to boost growth and jobs' and over the four days, 135 partner regions and cities will organise a total of 111 workshops and conferences. For the first time, the event will also include an 'Investors' café,' which will act as a meeting place for private investors and public decision-makers from the local and regional level. OPEN DAYS 2006, which also includes 70 local events held throughout Europe on 13 October, is organised jointly by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Policy and the Committee of the Regions, with the support of the Finnish EU Presidency and a number of leading companies and organisations from the banking world and civil society. http://ec.europa.eu/comm/regional_policy/conferences/od2006/index.cfm

EU-China cooperation on regional policy

On a visit to Beijing in May 2006, Regional Policy Commissioner Danuta Hübner signed a memorandum of understanding setting up an official forum where the European Commission and China will discuss regional policy issues. This provides a framework enabling the DG REGIO and the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission to promote bilateral cooperation and the exchange of information.

<http://ec.europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/06/299&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Management tools for Interreg

The Interact network has published a new management tool designed to make it easier for Interreg participants to implement projects and programmes. The 'Good Practice Interreg III Application Pack' includes a sample application form and a list of all the documents to be included with an application. Another management tool, the 'Good Practice Interreg III Project Evaluation and Selection Manual', is designed to improve the use of the ERDF in the field of territorial cooperation. This is also available online and includes a guide to evaluations. <http://www.interact-eu.net/>

Strasbourg: URBAN project rewarded

An URBAN project managed by the Strasbourg Urban Community was awarded first prize in the Enterprises and Territory category by 38 journalists on the occasion of the annual French economic press awards ceremony. The project involved the creation of a support fund for artisans and shopkeepers in a sensitive urban area as part of a scheme for the economic revitalisation of Strasbourg's southern suburbs (Meinau, Neuhof, Port du Rhin).

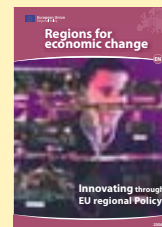
<http://www.urban-france.org/>

REGIO diary

Dates	Event	Place
04–08 September 2006	21st European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference http://www.photovoltic-conference.com/	Dresden (D)
14–15 September 2006	5th European Mountain Convention: Cohesion for growth — Mountains as essential elements for Europe's competitiveness http://www.euromontana.org	Chaves (P)
26–29 September 2006	Micronora — International microtechnology and high precision fair http://www.salons-online.com/data/event585.html	Besançon (F)
09–12 October 2006	OPEN DAYS 2006 European Week of the Regions and Cities http://www.cor.eu.int/fr/index.htm	Brussels (B)
19–21 October 2006	General Assembly and Annual Conference of the Association of European Border Regions http://www.aebr.net/	Pamplona (E)
23–25 October 2006	Interreg III B CADSES Annual Conference & Project Exhibition at the Euregia 2006 http://www.cadses.net/en/news/CADSES_Annual_Conference.html , http://www.euregia-leipzig.de	Leipzig (D)
25–27 October 2006	General Assembly — Conference of Peripheral & Maritime Regions (CPMR) http://www.crpm.org	Murcia (E)
15–17 November 2006	Seminar on good practices in innovation	Graz (A)
5 December 2006	SFIT	Brussels (B)
25–26 January 2007	'Regions for economic change — Regional policy responses to demographic challenges' http://ec.europa.eu/comm/regional_policy/conferences	Brussels (B)

Latest publications

Regions for economic change — innovating through EU regional policy



The challenge of research and innovation for 2007–13, illustrated through 15 ongoing projects. Available in 19 languages.

The growth and jobs strategy and reform of European cohesion policy



Fourth progress report on cohesion
Available in 20 languages

Cohesion policy and cities



The contribution of cities and urban areas to growth and jobs in the regions
Available in 20 languages

A reformed cohesion policy for a changing Europe. The contribution of regions, cities and border areas to growth and job creation — 10 questions and answers

Available in 20 languages

Regions and cities for growth and jobs: An overview of the Regulations for cohesion and regional policy for the period 2007–13

Available in 20 languages.

<http://www.fedarene.org/>

Established in 1990 at the initiative of six regions, the European Federation of Regional Energy and Environment Agencies (Fedarene) now has members from 15 European countries, including local and regional agencies, ministries, and energy and environment directorates and departments. Its website (including publications, events, examples of good practice, useful links, etc.) is designed to assist the network in its aim of facilitating the implementation of energy and environment policy.



<http://www.klimabuendnis.org/>

The Climate Alliance brings together almost 1 000 cities and municipalities working in partnership with the indigenous peoples of virgin forests. Many regional authorities and non-government organisations are also associate members. In its fight against greenhouse gases, deforestation and climate change, the alliance supports projects aimed at maintaining indigenous peoples in their environment while respecting their lifestyle, culture and values. The alliance website offers a wealth of examples of useful measures and projects, applicable in the north as well as the south.



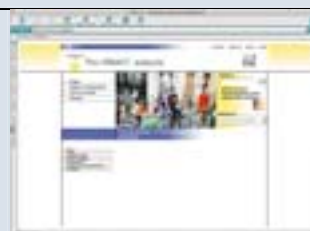
<http://www.urenio.org>

Affiliated to the University of Thessaloniki and a partner of many European research institutes and regions, Urenio (Urban and Regional Innovation Research Unit) is devoted to the study of territories that based their development on research and development, innovation, infrastructure networks and technology clusters. The Urenio website provides access to information and tools facilitating knowledge transfer in this field.



<http://www.urbact.org/youngpeople>

Between February 2004 and May 2006, the Urbact network — 'Young people — from exclusion to inclusion' implemented 30 different projects in eight EU towns on the socio-professional integration and participation of young people and their participation in sustainable urban development. The website presents the results of these projects and facilitates access to a research report that provides an analysis of the situation of young people in deprived neighbourhoods and possible solutions to address this problem.



2007–13: preparing the new generation of programmes with the Inforegio site

The Member States and the regions are currently preparing for the 2007–13 programming period. The Inforegio website contains information and documents of interest to all the actors involved in this process. The site aims to facilitate exchanges between these stakeholders and to inform the general public on the state of progress. Please do not hesitate to address your questions and contributions to DG Regional Policy.

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/regional_policy/debate/forum_en.htm

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Information on the European Union's regional aid
http://eu.europa.eu/int/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm

ISSN 1608-389X

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Printed in Belgium



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