

NEWS RELEASE

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Beijing Renewables Conference sends strong signal but declaration still weak, says RES Council EREC

Beijing, 8 November 2005 --- At the high-level BIREC 2005 Conference attended by industry leaders and key decision-makers from over 100 countries, including more than 30 ministers (1), a strong signal was set for a stronger commitment towards rapid deployment of renewable energies. Nevertheless the industry had hoped for a stronger declaration for renewables coming out of the Beijing conference.

“Whilst the overall development is very promising, we are missing even stronger signals and more concrete commitments not only from some governments”, said Oliver Schäfer, Policy Advisor of EREC, the European Renewable Energy Council (2). *“At a time when the renewables industry is moving forwards, political signals should be strong and mandatory. In this respect, the declaration is rather weak, but still the conference was a success and cannot only be measured by the declaration.”*

The process initiated with these ministerial conferences on renewable energies shows that there is a strong commitment from decision makers all over the globe in renewables.

“By hosting the conference and committing to new, ambitious renewable energy targets, China sent out a strong signal that economic development and renewable energy are on the same side of the medal”, added Schäfer.

“Oil prices have more than doubled in the last two years and it is becoming increasingly risky to rely primarily on imported energy. Renewable energies can help countries to develop local, clean energy sources and thus diversify their energy portfolios to hedge these price risks and create a sustainable development”.

“[...] The European Parliament recently called for an integrated approach to energy policies that will give renewables a 25% share by 2020. Considering climate change, issues of security of supply, and energy price volatility, I think the European Union should indeed seriously consider adopting this ambitious target [...]”, said EU Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas yesterday in his keynote address at the Beijing International renewable energy conference. This was only one of many strong signals that renewable energy will play a much more important role in the future energy mix all over the world.

At a business forum, one of the main discussion fora at the conference, organised by EREC, VDMA and GWEC, the NDRC Vice Chairman Zhang Guobao, the German Environment Minister Jürgen Trittin, the British Secretary of State for the environment Margaret Beckett and other decisions makers together with 30 CEOs from the world's leading renewable energy manufacturers and developers debated the necessary political framework conditions, support schemes and cost developments.

“This was the first time that so many leading CEOs and politicians came together and discussed concrete issues and challenges for further deployment of renewable energies. The exchange between policy makers and the industry is of highest importance and we are glad that it happened”, said EREC Secretary General, Christine Lins.

Notes to Editors:

(1) Hosted by the Government of China, and supported by the Government of Germany and relevant agencies of the United Nations and the European Commission, the Beijing International Renewable Energy Conference 2005 (BIREC 2005) was held at the Great Hall of the People in China on 7-8 November. BIREC 2005 follows the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002 in Johannesburg and the Renewables 2004 Conference in Bonn.

30 Ministers and around 1200 participants from 100 countries attended this event. Participants in BIREC shared experiences for renewable energy development and exchanged information on policies, finance mechanisms, and technology accomplishments.

(2) EREC, www.erec-renewables.org

The European Renewable Energy Council (EREC) is the umbrella organisation of the major European renewable energy industry, trade and research associations active in the field of photovoltaic, small hydropower, solar thermal, biomass, geothermal and wind energy.