



## **First European Regions Energy Summit**

***AER and GE Energy come together to foster Europe's future green energy plans on a regional level***

Cologne, PowerGen Europe, 26 May 2009

The Assembly of European Regions (AER) and GE Energy launched European Regions Energy Day, a joint initiative to examine the energy challenges facing European regions today and to promote their possible solutions.

The European Regions Energy Day is the first summit to bring together regional decision makers and European energy experts and will be held annually from the end of April 2010 onwards in Brussels, Belgium. The summit aims to provide regional responses to current energy challenges, and to prepare the future of regional energy for generations to come. Economic efficiency, security of supply and respect for the environment are the major challenges that face the regions. The European regions are a key player in the choice of the energy solutions to be implemented in their territory.

By joining forces with GE Energy – an established European and global player - the Assembly of European Regions gains a unique gateway between globally renowned energy experts and regional public decision makers. The aim is both to support the European Union's energy and environmental strategy and to facilitate the creation of a benchmark centre of expertise and solution provision in the energy field for all European regions.

Each year this summit will mark the conclusion of AER's activity on energy issues of the previous year and stakeholders will be informed of the policy solutions developed in peer reviews and seminars. In 2009, AER will carry out four peer reviews with the aim of evaluating energy issues in the host regions and developing recommendations how to improve. At the European Regions Energy Summit technical experts, including GE Energy experts, and decision makers will then examine the various specific responses developed during the peer reviews and make concrete proposals for technological energy solutions.

AER has worked for several years to boost the role of local and regional institutions on energy dependency issues and respecting the environment. 86 AER member regions signed the AER – FEDARENE (European Federation of Regional Energy and Environment Agencies) declaration, a strategic tool translating broad energy objectives into more specific ones and a commitment of regions on measurable targets. The European Regions Energy Summit will provide signatories with recommendations how to reach their goals.

AER has however not limited its action strictly to the European territory. As a partner in a project with the UNDP based on a decentralized cooperation approach AER members support developing and transition regions in their day-to-day fight against climate change and related energy issues. The European Regions Energy Summit will thus also be open for regions from the southern part of the world and bring them in contact with European regions.

An intermediary between European authorities and consumers, the regions today have key decision making powers, allowing them to tackle current geo-political and economic concerns.

*“GE Energy is a natural partner for the AER because they are a European player with a wealth of experience in the wide variety of energy issues that each region across Europe faces today. GE also offers the full portfolio of energy and infrastructure solutions allowing them make recommendations to the regions based on every technological energy solution available today – be it in the coal, oil, green energy sources, natural gas or nuclear energy sources. It is also a company renowned for its integrity, something vital in the context of collaborations with institutional bodies”, states Michèle Sabban, President of the AER.*

As proof of the investment of regional and local institutions in the energy field, the “Intelligent Energy – Europe 2009” program was adopted last March by the European Union. Envisaging the co-financing of projects aimed at energy efficiency, green energies and clean transport, this initiative has allotted more than 96 million Euro to municipalities and regions, 15 million of which is to be devoted to support local energy investment. A key objective of this program is to “remove barriers to markets, change behaviour and create a more favourable commercial environment in the energy efficiency and green energy market”.

*“This summit is a concrete step for the AER, which in 2006 signed up to a “declaration of the European regions on energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources”, aimed at establishing the first quantitative objectives in terms of energy efficiency and sustainable development”, concludes Michèle Sabban, President of the AER.*

The program for the European Energy Summit will be available very shortly on the AER site [www.aer.eu](http://www.aer.eu)

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*The **Assembly of European Regions (AER)** is the largest independent network of regions in wider Europe. Bringing together more than 270 regions from 33 countries and 16 interregional organisations, AER is the political voice of its members and a forum for interregional co-operation.*

