



Press release

1st European Regions Energy Day *Energy subsidiarity on its way in Brussels*

Brussels (B), 29 April 2010

The Assembly of European Regions (AER), the Ministry of environment, nature protection and transport of the Land Baden-Württemberg (D) as well as GE Energy launched today the European Regions Energy Day. This event crowns a year of close collaboration between public and private stakeholders in the energy field. It is a vivid symbol of the rise of interregional dynamics in the area of sustainable development and a witness of the boom of energy subsidiarity at European level.

Two days to give the European regions "The energy of tomorrow"

As the first edition of a yearly event, unique in its kind in Brussels, this meeting represents a key step in the renewal of regional energy policies. It illustrates the success of interregional action in the face of the compelling insufficiency of global climate negotiations.

For two days, 300 regional decision makers and European energy experts gathered to discuss the role of the regions in the implementation of environmental policies and to present regional best-practices. This event is in line with the pro-active approach that characterises AER and GE's action and constitutes an echo chamber of regional responses to current energy challenges.

The European Regions Energy Day aims to:

- Provide regional responses to key energy questions as well as clear recommendations regarding three main factors: energy efficiency, security of supply and carbon dioxide emissions reduction.
- Support the establishment of a regional participatory democracy to confront energy and environmental issues.

Tanja Gönner, Environment Minister of the Land Baden- Württemberg (D), **Michèle Sabban**, President of the Assembly of European Regions, **Johannes Hahn**, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, **Ricardo Cordoba**, President of GE Energy for Western Europe and Northern Africa, **Steve Howard**, CEO of the Climate Group and **Knud Andersen**, Vice-President of the Chamber of Regions, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, were present at this event.

Michèle Sabban said: "*This day represents an important stage for the AER in its engagement with the energy transition of our territories. Since 2006, a 'common declaration of European regions for energy efficiency and the development of sustainable energy sources' was made, creating the basis for our current actions. We are convinced that regions should find the way to take their future into their own hands in a responsible and autonomous way, especially concerning energy, which is an issue that affects the daily life of all citizens and their future, and is fundamental for the local development.*"

Ricardo Cordoba commented: *"We are proud to participate, together with AER in the recognition of the importance of regions in the development and establishment of efficient energy policies, so decisive for everyone's future."*

According to **Tanja Gönner**, *"Regions are strong motors for climate protection. It is of utmost importance, that regions and the European Union work together to reach the goal of limiting global warming"*.

Presentation of a 'White Paper' on AER forefront activities aimed at supporting regional initiatives in the fields of energy and climate change as well as a detailed study on regional energy policies in Europe

One of the highlights of this event was the presentation of a White Paper presenting AER activities on energy and climate change. This document proposes a dynamic overview of the different activities AER implemented in order to support European regions in the establishment of mitigation and adaptation measures.

In 2009 more than ever, AER took it at heart to propose an even wider range of tools to policy makers in order to ensure a more efficient tackling of regional challenges. Through peer reviews, European projects such as MORE4NRG et PRESERVE, thematic conferences and innovative partnerships with a considerable diversity of stakeholders AER juggles successfully between field experience, research and analysis thus demonstrating its pragmatic approach of members' needs. Above all, its role is eminently political, which is why the White Paper also sums up AER's recommendations for efficient climate policies.

The European Regions Energy Day provided an excellent opportunity to unveil the results of its exclusive survey, which evaluated the needs and expectations of 67 European regions in terms of sustainable energy policies. According to the findings of the survey, broader competences of local authorities accompanied with adapted financial incentives allow a better response to global energy challenges through better harnessing of local potentials. It is indeed thanks to the creative use of endogenous resources such as snow, straw, waves or black liquor (by-product of the kraft process) that regions contribute to the diversification of their energy portfolios as well as to the enhancement of security of energy supply.

This survey furthermore showed that **92% of the answering regions consider energy as one of the key priorities for the next years and that 77% of them already implemented an energy strategy**. This gives ground for a horizontal approach of energy policies with the integration of the parameter of sustainability in numerous sectors (land settlement and city planning, transports, tourism or agriculture...).

These findings should moreover be put into perspective with the results published in the IPCC fourth assessment report. This states that **50 to 70% of climate mitigation and adaptation measures will have to be implemented at regional level in the next years**.

§ **Complete report of the AER survey on regional energy policies:**

§ **'White paper' AER activities on energy and climate change:**

<http://www.aer.eu/en/main-issues/energy-policy.html>

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*The **Assembly of European Regions (AER – aer.eu)** 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.*

