



Press Release

GE's European Center of Research and Development open its doors to European Regions

Key regional decision makers met to discuss the role of industrial innovations in both sustainable growth strategies and the fight against climate change

Garching/Munich (D), 8 April 2010

AER and GE Energy today commenced a two-day event, "Innovation in Energy and Research Policy" at their European Research and Development Center, "GE Global Research Europe" in Garching near Munich, Germany.

The event will attract regional decision makers from all over Europe as well as key members of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) including AER President Michèle Sabban and General Secretary, Klaus Klipp. The aim of the event is to discuss the role of industry expertise in aiding the European Union's fight on climate change and to present the important role of enterprises such as GE Energy in the delivery of innovative energy solutions that are needed to do so.

During the two days, delegates will participate in a tour of the research center to observe current GE Energy research projects in relation to solar systems, solar simulation, biogas and carbon fibre manufacturing for energy infrastructure. There will also be discussions between Carlos Härtel, CEO GE Global Research Europe and representatives from the Bavaria region about GE's applied research strategy, cooperation with the region of Bavaria and links with Bavaria's innovation strategy.

GE Energy & AER collaboration: Talk global, act local

At this event, key policy decision makers will be invited to witness firsthand the unique and effective relationship between AER and GE Energy in working together to support the European Union's environmental strategy by implementing actual European solutions on regional and local levels.

*"Climate change strategies may be decided at EU level, but it is at the regional level that real action is taken" commented **Michèle Sabban**, President of AER. "While lengthy international negotiations take place, the regions are gearing up to get to work and act on many key energy related issues, as energy is a multifaceted domain. These include spatial planning, subsidising local energy investments, innovation and education policies, public procurement, transport, awareness-raising and implementing renewables strategies using local resources."*

Ricardo Cordoba, President of GE Energy for Western Europe and Northern Africa commented: *“We are proud to open the doors of GE’s European Research and Development Center to discuss recent research developments which demonstrate our commitment to the advancement of 21st century solutions. We feel our expertise plays a vital role in helping accomplish regional concrete objectives. Our relationship has opened a gateway between regional decision makers and GE Energy’s expertise, providing a forum for the exchange of knowledge, experience and benchmarks. The time to act is now and we feel this relationship is a huge step forward towards supporting our governments and tackling climate change head-on.”*

AER saw this high level event as an opportunity to gather its working group on climate change and energy. Members of the working group presented the current issues tackled by AER to 25 political representatives from all Europe. They also adopted a roadmap for the future work of the AER in the areas of climate change and energy, especially in view of the COP16 in Mexico in December 2010.

AER is the largest network of regions in wider Europe, with more than 270 members from 33 countries. AER and GE Energy began their partnership in May 2009 and have since then collaborated on several joint initiatives to raise awareness of the need for cooperation between governments, international institutions, civil society and industry. In November 2009, AER held its general assembly which included delegates from GE Energy, the Climate Group and representative from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). There, 270 regions signed the “Belfort Appeal” which called for more subsidiarity in energy policies.

The following month saw the participation of GE Energy and AER at the Copenhagen World Climate Change Summit. There, they gave their support to the R20 declaration, inspired by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and which echoed the Belfort Appeal’s urgent call for the recognition of the role of regions and federal states in the fight against climate change.

About GE Energy and the Assembly of European Regions

In may 2009, the Assembly of European Regions, the largest independent network of regions in wider Europe and GE Energy, European and global actor launched the “European Regions Energy Day”, a joint initiative that aims to analyze the role of regions in climate protection and energy policy and showcase regional solutions. This event will be the first to bring together regional decision makers and energy experts from all over Europe. It will take place every year in Brussels, from the end of April 2010 onwards

Indeed, the European regions play a key role in the choice of suitable energy solutions. That is why, Michèle Sabban, President of the AER and Ricardo Cordoba, President of GE Energy for Western Europe and Northern Africa have come together to fight the challenges faced by climate change at the European Regional level. This partnership creates a link between recognised energy experts and regional decision makers. The main purpose is to support the EU environmental and energy strategies and to allow the creation of an expertise centre in the energy field for all the European regions



The agenda for the European Summit Energy is available on the AER website www.aer.eu.

*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.*

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