

Conclusions of the 4th Annual ManagEnergy Conference

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It's now time to conclude this 4th ManagEnergy conference after two days of fruitful presentation and debate.

I should also say timely presentations and debates. With the price of oil above 50\$ a barrel and a Kyoto protocol soon to be ratified, the importance of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources is growing by the day.

As Mr Lamoureux emphasised yesterday, strengthening our efforts in favour of renewable energies and energy efficiency is one of the most promising ways to include energy in the Lisbon strategy.

It is time for action! And I hope that during these two days you will have gathered enough interesting information to strengthen your activities and develop new ideas.

There are a number of points which myself I would like to recall.

First of all there is general recognition that **the legislative framework established in the past years at the European level is an important driver fostering the development of renewable energy sources and the rational use of energy in Europe.**

From the discussions we've had during these two days, I have the feeling that this legislative framework at EU level, and more generally the directions set by the European institutions, are important at local level as they strengthen local actors and provide further legitimacy, arguments, and guidance for your work.

For this reason, and because of course you know better than anyone else the local and regional barriers, it is important that you are associated to the development of these Directives from an early stage. **You have a say in European Union policymaking** providing feedback to the European institutions as regards upcoming initiatives. You are the "laboratories" for new EU policies.

From the European Parliament's side Ms. Rothe encouraged local actors, for the energy services Directive for instance, to provide feedback but also to support and create demand for energy services and to put forward their local and regional points of view on this legislation.

The same applies to all new energy policies, including Ms. Rothe's suggestion of a Directive on renewable heating and cooling for which I am sure you will have many comments to share with the European institutions.

You must also play a key role also in the implementation "on the ground" of the adopted European legislation

It is true for the Directives targeted at the supply side. It has been suggested for example that the local energy agencies help ensure that renewable electricity gets non-discriminatory access to the local grid.

It is also true of course on the demand side. As you remember, in its Green Paper on the security of energy supply, the Commission emphasised the need to rebalance the supply policy by clear action in favour of a demand management policy.

In this field, I am thinking in particular about the **Directive on the energy performance of buildings** which has been mentioned on several occasions during this conference, in particular in one of the parallel sessions this morning.

The buildings sector accounts for 40% of the EU's energy requirements. It offers the largest single potential for energy efficiency. Several presentations at this conference have shown that major savings can be achieved, especially in the new Member States where the energy performance of buildings is often lower than in EU-15.

Households can be very sensitive to this issue if it is presented adequately. We heard from the mayor of Dunkerque, Mr. Delebarre, for instance, that householders have become interested in the performance of their insulation once they have seen an infra-red picture of their energy leakages.

Energy certification is another way to make owners and tenants conscious of the energy performance of their building. It is, as you know, one of the means foreseen in the buildings Directive. Certification is well developed in a few countries but remains to be implemented in many others.

We believe local energy agencies can, and should, play a very important role in paving the way for a smooth and successful implementation of energy certification of buildings in their regions as well as other aspects of the Buildings Directive, for instance the regular inspection of boilers and of air-conditioning systems.

I would like to make a concrete proposal to you: **to start already in 2005 with the certification of your own building and the public buildings in your community and place their energy certificates in prominent places clearly visible to the public, providing leadership by example.**

The European Commission will provide you with information resources in the form of a European Platform for the buildings directive containing a website, newsletters, as well as a helpdesk and a database of all relevant activities. We are also producing a short video to raise awareness of the environmental performance of buildings. You will get a copy of this video when it's ready.

Along the same line, I would like you to encourage your local authorities **to "green" their purchasing procedures** as far as possible and make use of co-ordinated public procurement.

As you may have seen on the table outside this room, the Commission recently issued guidelines on environmental public procurement. We will be glad to provide you with copies if you did not get one.

These guidelines cover virtually all energy-using equipment, including – and I insist on that - transport vehicles.

On this latter topic, you heard yesterday our Director General mention a proposal that is ready to be taken forward by the new Commission to impose on local authorities the obligation to buy a certain quota of clean vehicles.

We believe that much remains to be done in the field of transport.

The transport sector uses 30% of EU energy consumption. Transport demand has grown continuously over recent decades and is predicted to continue to increase, even more significantly, as the new Member States become more closely aligned with those of the EU.

You heard from Mr Lamoureux yesterday that the Commission is well aware of this situation and of the problems this increase is causing for the urban environment and for the fulfilment of the Kyoto target. He referred to two legal initiatives for the period 2005-2010: the tariffication of infrastructure based on their real costs and, along the same lines, the taxation of kerosene.

There is a close relationship between energy, transport and environment. Commission's initiatives such as CIVITAS are designed to support a move towards sustainable development, in particular in the urban environment.

Agencies can play a key role in triggering local change towards sustainable transport, supporting the implementation of relevant policies and activities to save energy and sharing best practice.

However, energy saving in transport has not been a priority field for agencies in the past. **Therefore the competences of staff working in the local agencies will need to be extended in the fields of transport** to assist local actors.

These activities will require specific staff training and empowerment activities. The STEER part of Intelligent Energy – Europe is designed to support this capacity building.

More generally, **the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme, and the 6th Research Framework Programme**, in particular the demonstration actions such as CIVITAS and CONCERTO, are instrumental to overcome the barriers to the penetration of renewable energies and the efficient use of energy.

The 2003 Call for proposals of the Intelligent Energy – Europe programme has raised much interest and excellent proposals from all over Europe. The participation of local energy agencies is on the rise, which I think is a very good sign. In a sense it shows that these young structures are gaining experience in joining and running projects.

You are all invited to join tomorrow morning's information day about details on the successes and failures of the Call 2003 as well as the local priorities of the Call 2004.

I took note of Mr. Delebarre's comment on the difficulties associated with the grant allocation process for local actors. This is a point we must consider. Capacity building to help local actors in submitting good proposals, especially those in the new Member States, must be investigated further.

Structural funds are another source of funding for sustainable energy activities. There is convergence between structural funds and the transport and energy priorities. For the period 2007-2013, structural funds are proposed to be 1/3 of the EU budget. This budget will be allocated according to specific priorities. They won't be implemented before January 2007, but **it is today**

that you need to talk to your authorities and make sure renewables and energy efficiency are on the agenda in your regions.

The budget is far larger than that of the energy programmes, but of course energy projects have to compete with a series of other priorities. As several speakers said, it is important therefore when submitting proposals to emphasise the other benefits of energy efficiency investments, on the environment and employment for instance.

We heard this morning the example of Belgium where 1000 jobs have been created since 1999 due the green certificates mechanism. Isabelle Durant said an extra 5000 jobs could be created if 10% of Brussels and Wallonie's energy needs were met by green energy.

This is a powerful argument that you should use when promoting sustainable energy activities, for instance when looking for structural funding. This is what a number of agencies have done already. Follow their example!

During the parallel sessions we've heard of success stories where energy agencies could trigger cohesion funding to promote renewables and energy efficiency in their own region. A large amount of other case studies is available on the ManagEnergy web site.

The promotion of these success stories and of the past projects is a priority for us.

Dissemination has been greatly improved in recent years but more can be done.

First of all there is the ManagEnergy initiative – our dialogue between the EU and the local level which is also promoting co-operation between local and regional energy actors in Europe through workshops, study tours and online events on energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable transport.

The ManagEnergy website allows you to find up-to-date information on events, case studies, funding, legislation and energy agencies across Europe.

The ManagEnergy web site receives between 50,000 to 60,000 visitors per month. Additionally, the ManagEnergy videos have been viewed by 42,000 visitors since the last conference in November 2003.

This initiative will continue for another 3 years and there again your opinion counts.

I would like to remind you that the ManagEnergy initiative is currently evaluated by an independent organisation and I strongly encourage all of you to provide us with your feedback in order to improve our services. For that you go to the ManagEnergy web site

We must make sure that all the available information is largely and quickly spread to further stakeholders and to the society as a whole.

The approach must be holistic integrating both renewables and energy efficiency. It should also promote the other social, economic and environmental benefits of a sustainable energy strategy.

I would like to highlight the following short to medium term priorities.

1. To address the general public we will launch a public awareness campaign which will start in 2005.
2. Our project database called “IntelleBase” where you can find information on most of the 700 SAVE and ALTENER projects is another source.
3. We have to strengthen co-operation facilities and common services for the network of energy agencies and other energy local actors. Thematic networks of agencies, exchange of good practice, use of web and streaming facilities could be elements for this improvement.
4. The increased role of local actors requires local capacity building. Reinforcing a training strategy for local actors will be important: dealing not only with the thematic priority subjects mentioned before, but also with subjects specific to the interest of agencies: management skills, networking strategies, relations with local authorities and other stakeholders, etc.
5. Lastly, we also see action dealing with energy education as one priority for the next year aiming at closer links with education authorities in order to ensure the introduction of conscious energy behaviour as part of the curricula. Energy and education will be a priority in the continuation of ManagEnergy where a “Kids Corner” will be launched.

I would like to conclude by thanking all the speakers at this 4th ManagEnergy conference, those that you have seen on stage but also those who have kindly taken part in the Internet during the chats and the round tables.

Thanks to the interpreters. Thanks also to those who did or will answer questions about the evaluation of the SAVE agencies and of the ManagEnergy initiative.

As I repeated several times, your feedback is very important to us.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and friends, we have made a good start together in heading in a greener, more sustainable direction.

We have a major challenge before us to complete this journey!

We can only do it together. I look forward to working closely with you in the months to come and to welcoming you next year for the 5th ManagEnergy conference!

Thank you.