

It is my honour and pleasure to serve as EREF's president. I would like to thank our annual general assembly for the unanimous support. I will do my best to stabilize and rapidly enhance the role of renewable energy to provide sustainable energy security.

With the Renewable Energies Directive in force, the European Union has a strong instrument to accelerate the transition towards a sustainable energy system based on renewable energy. The necessity for this transition is more obvious today than ever.

With fossil fuel prices being volatile and bound to increase due to decreasing availability of fossil and nuclear resources, with the necessity to decrease greenhouse gas immissions from industrialized countries by 80 to 95% until 2050, and with renewables representing the only proven and reliable way out of the economic and financial crisis, we must strive more than ever to rapidly increase the share of renewables in all sectors: in electricity consumption as well as in heating and cooling and in road transport.

We should not hesitate to reiterate again and again:

- The 20% minimum target for 2020 can clearly be exceeded, if member states are prepared to launch and improve effective policies for renewable energies and energy efficiency.
- An agreement about more ambitious targets for 2030 should be reached soon in order to avoid investment attentiveness and unnecessary and expensive delays.
- We are striving for 100% renewable energies – in 2050 the latest. This is necessary and feasible. However, policy decisions allowing for this development and accelerating market penetration of the wide range of renewable energy technologies have to be taken in the next few years – the earlier the better.

Despite the Renewables Directive being in place and despite some progress made in limiting market failure and market abuse by incumbent utilities, there is still a long way ahead of us. And there are barriers to be removed in order to facilitate sound growth of renewable energies:

- Market dominance of the incumbent oligopolies is still a barrier against a level playing field for renewable energies.
- Huge amounts of public money – in the EU and in member states – are wasted on economically and environmentally harmful subsidies for fossil and nuclear energy.
- The existing grid infrastructure was predominantly designed for big centralized power plants. It has to be adapted to the needs of an energy system based on high and eventually dominating shares of all forms of renewable energies.

It is obvious that these barriers are favouring the existing centralized energy system based on fossil and nuclear. Therefore, the removal of these barriers and proposals for putting in place supportive policies to shift the paradigm towards an intelligent and decentralized energy system based on different technologies and sources of renewable energies will meet further resistance – be it blunt opposition, be it studies about a so called “energy gap” or be it friendly sounding studies about renewables not yet being mature and strong enough...

EREF, the voice of independent producers of energy from renewable sources, is the natural advocate for the creation of a level playing field for renewables, for securing and further developing successful

support mechanisms for paving the way for renewable energy as long as markets are disturbed and favouring fossil and nuclear energy sources.

Together with our member associations and in close cooperation within EREC and with its other member associations, EREF is striving for a level playing field for renewable energies – as a milestone towards a sustainable energy future relying completely on renewable energy. Independent producers have to be a key player in this endeavour to shift the paradigm of energy supply.

I do hope that I can help EREF to successfully tackle these challenges.

Sincerely,

Rainer Hinrichs-Rahlwes
(EREF President)