

Local Renewables 2007
Freiburg, Germany, 13 - 15 June 2007



Press Release

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Community decision-makers from 34 countries call for renewable energy as the basis of a decentralised and secure energy supply

Against the background of climate change, rising fossil fuel prices and the lack of security of energy supply, communities from all over the world are reviewing urban planning, infrastructure, transport and energy strategy.

Freiburg, 18th June 2007 - Last Friday the conference “Local Renewables 2007” drew to a close in Freiburg. From the 13th to 15th June, at the invitation of Lord Mayor Dr. Dieter Salomon, local decision-makers and politicians, representatives from utilities, businesses and the research and development community from 34 countries discussed in detail ideas and solutions for future urban development and energy supply. Experts agreed that measures to curb the dramatic impact of climate change must be carried out immediately, and that the local government level plays a crucial role in this. Along with energy saving and improved energy efficiency, renewable energy sources such as solar and wind energy, geothermal energy, small hydropower, and biomass will play a central role.

The Lord Mayor opened the conference, jointly organised by the City of Freiburg and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. Founded in 1990, ICLEI is a growing association of more than 600 towns, cities, districts and local government associations worldwide. Its members strive for global improvements in environmental and climate protection, with sustainability as a basis for action.

Numerous examples - from over 60 initiatives in Europe and abroad - clearly show that renewable energy sources are an indispensable part of a secure and sustainable energy supply. At the same time

their use provides an incentive for local innovation and job creation, supporting local economic development.

In a comprehensive and far-reaching presentation, the State Secretary of the German Federal Environment Ministry, Michael Müller, gave an account of the current status of climate change. He particularly welcomed initiatives from ICLEI to tackle climate protection at a community level. Typically, two thirds of possible initiatives for climate protection lie within the competence of local governments: these include urban planning and development, infrastructure, transport, the provision of numerous services, and the local energy supply. The remaining third of potential action depends on supportive framework conditions which have to be defined on a national or European level.

The host city Freiburg, known for its environmentally friendly energy concept, has consistently addressed these aspects over the last thirty years. It has developed a unique portfolio of reference projects, which regularly attract lay persons and specialists from all over the world. Within the conference programme several excursions gave participants the opportunity to study a diverse range of practical examples on implementing innovative, sustainable energy concepts.

Throughout the conference, proven concepts, financing models, suitable conditions and concrete options for local governments were at the fore. According to State Secretary Müller, the driving force for climate protection comes from communities, and through decisive action and the creation of sustainable, local infrastructures, they can also secure economic advantages for the future. "No responsible local politician can afford not to use all the local energy resources," said ICLEI Europe's Director Gino Van Begin.

Local authorities that implement sustainable energy solutions early and actively not only make a fundamental contribution to climate protection, but also have a head start in securing their future energy supply. A large number of local authorities all over the world have already set course in this direction.

The Local Renewables conference also sent a message to national governments and to the European Union, urging the prompt establishment of the necessary framework conditions - such as laws, building regulations and financial mechanisms - needed by communities to provide the maximum possible contribution to climate protection and meeting EU and national targets.

In closing the conference, the Lord Mayor Dr. Dieter Salomon called for a programme of "100 solar communities by 2010". These 100 exemplary towns, cities and regions throughout Europe must lead the way, showing how effective solutions can lead to the reduction of CO₂ emissions to sustainable levels. A further 100,000 local

authorities throughout Europe should then follow suit. The Swedish city of Växjö shows that this is more than a vision: the town council had already formulated the goal to make the town completely CO2 emission free as early as 1993. They are confident that they will reach the goal of reducing CO2 emissions by 50% in 2010, in comparison to the levels in 1993, having achieved a 25% reduction in 2005.

The patron of Local Renewables 2007 was Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel, in his capacity as president of the EU Environmental Council. The conference was financially supported by the European Commission programme "Intelligent Energy Europe" and the state of Baden-Württemberg. Other sponsors included the L-Bank Baden-Württemberg, the Thüga energy group and Sparkasse Freiburg Northern Breisgau.

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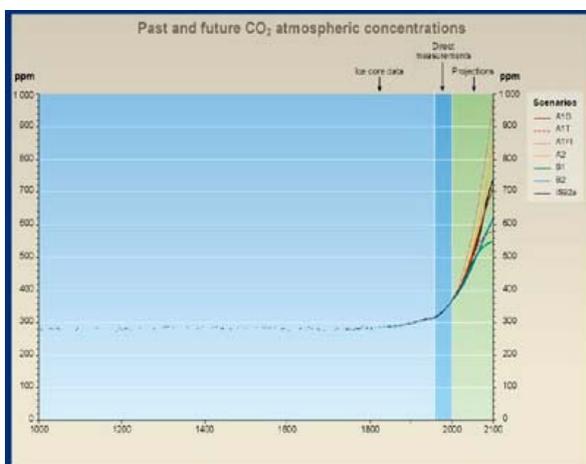
Appendix 1 of the press release Local Renewables 2007, dated 19th June 2007

Climate change – Facts and Figures

For the last thirty years, experts have been warning about the effects of CO₂ emissions on the climate. Through the synchronisation of data and expert knowledge from all over the world, the picture of the current developments has become even clearer in the last months.

Nowadays, the direct link between CO₂ levels in the atmosphere and average temperatures can hardly be questioned by scientists. The CO₂ levels in the atmosphere currently lie about 40% higher than at any other time in the last 650,000 years. The average temperature currently lies higher than at any other time in the last 20,000 years.

At the moment the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts an increase in the global average temperature of 3 degrees by the end of this century, with a likelihood of 90%. Effects of this will be the flooding of towns such as Amsterdam, Jakarta or New York, due to the world wide rise in sea levels. State secretary Müller made it clear to the 200 plus participants of the conference, that this development will also increase the migration pressure on Europe's borders. Many more than 200,000 deaths in the African crisis area of Dafour were caused by such climate migration. Climate change will also have an effect on drinking water supplies. One example is the drinking water supply in the city of Lima, which has around 7 million inhabitants and is completely dependent on glacier water. If the temperature increases by 3 degrees, there will be hardly any glaciers left in the world.



Caption:

CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere.
Scenarios for the future development.

Graphic: IPCC

Appendix 2 of the press release Local Renewables 2007, dated 19th June 2007.

Erneuerbare Energien („Renewables“) - Argumente für kommunale Entscheidungsträger

1. Renewable energy sources are available and ready for use, e.g. active and passive solar energy, wind – and hydro power, biomass, biogas, and geothermal energy.
2. Using local resources to produce energy locally establishes a foundation for a decentralised secure energy supply, making communities more resilient (less dependent on imported fossil fuels).
3. Money can be saved over the short to long-term by using energy more efficiently and replacing increasingly expensive fossil fuels and nuclear energy with sustainable energy solutions.
4. Implementing renewable energy creates jobs and stimulates the local economy.
5. Local Renewables give impulses to urban development and encourage technical and social innovation.
6. Moving away from fossil fuels will reduce CO₂ emissions and support climate protection.
7. Local action is critical in achieving targets - national and international - on sustainable energy and climate protection.
8. The local community is key to reaching and involving various stakeholders, including citizens, business, industry, local researchers, NGOs, etc.. – a driving force for innovation and change towards sustainable energy.

Pictures

We are happy to provide you with high resolution pictures and graphics.



Caption:

Dr. Dieter Salomon, Lord Mayor of Freiburg and member of the international association of local governments ICLEI

Picture: The City of Freiburg



Caption:

Local Renewables 2007 (Logo)

Graphic: ICLEI

About ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability is an international organisation of more than 500 cities, districts, municipalities, and their associations, with the common goal of tangible improvements in the areas of environment and sustainability on a global level. As an international association of local governments, ICLEI has Observer status in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change (UNFCCC). ICLEI was founded in 1990, with its headquarters based in Toronto, Canada. The European Secretariat of ICLEI is located in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany.

About ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) Campaign

The CCP Campaign was initiated in 1993 as an international campaign to bring together cities and towns active in climate protection - reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting their communities by adapting to a changing climate. Currently, over 1,000 local governments world-wide take part in this campaign, including more than 160 in Europe.

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