

E-news update July 9 2007

In this issue:

CLIMATE

- 1.1. Stars rock around the world for climate change
- 1.2. Brit's Eye View: New prime minister steps up to the plate

ENERGY

- 2.1. Renewable Energy Future Could Save the World Billions of Dollars a Year
- 2.2. Merkel confronts German energy industry with radical policy overhaul
- 2.3. Member states late on plans to cut energy waste
- 2.4. WWF urges EU to drop duties on China light-bulbs

CONFERENCES

- 3.1. Scientific framework of environmental and forest governance
- 3.2. European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference and Exhibition
- 3.3. International Congress on Plant Oil Fuels
- 3.4. General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities
- 3.5. RENEXPO 2007 - International Trade Fair and Conference for Renewable Energies
- 3.6. European Sustainable Energy Seminar and Tour
- 3.7. European Meeting Point: Energy for Development 2007
- 3.8. UN Millennium Development Goals - discussing practical examples on a local level
- 3.9. COP 13, COP/MOP3

PUBLICATIONS

- 4.1. Hotspot June 2007
- 4.2. Agrofuels – towards a reality check in nine key areas
- 4.3. Too Hot to Handle? The Future of Civil Nuclear Power

ANNOUNCEMENT

- 5.1. Vacancy announcement - EU Policy Campaigner with focus on transport policy

CLIMATE

- 1.1. Stars rock around the world for climate change

7 July 2007, Reuters

Some of the world's biggest pop stars from the Red Hot Chili Peppers to Madonna performed at Live Earth concerts around the globe on Saturday to urge fans and governments to fight global warming.

Tens of thousands partied at concerts in Sydney, Tokyo, Shanghai, Hamburg, Johannesburg, London, Washington, New Jersey and Rio de Janeiro to hear The Police, Bon Jovi, James Blunt, Linkin Park and Shakira and many other performers.

The mega-gig, spearheaded by former U.S. vice president and environmentalist Al Gore, takes in nine cities and ends at Rio's Copacabana beach and a New Jersey football stadium.

"You are Live Earth," Gore told the crowd at New Jersey's Giants Stadium, wearing blue jeans and a black T-shirt in the sweltering summer heat.

A blond Madonna closed the show at London's Wembley stadium with a set including "Hey You," written for Live Earth. Joined by a children's choir, screens behind the pop idol displayed images of environmental disasters as she sang.

Following the model of 1985's Live Aid and Live 8 in 2005, Live Earth hopes to reach up to 2 billion people through radio, television and the Internet. Organizers said the event had already notched up a record 9 million Internet streams -- people watching the shows live over the Internet.

There has been widespread cynicism among music fans, campaigners and fellow rockers about the role of pop music, renowned for Learjets and limousines, to promote green living.

"As a touring musician you have to fly. I suppose I could put myself in a box and ship myself," KT Tunstall joked backstage after her New Jersey performance.

Asked if she lives a "green" life, the singer said the first year sales of her debut CD generated 650 million tons of carbon emissions but she has tried to partially offset that huge carbon footprint through the planting of 6,000 trees.

In New Jersey, actor Leonardo DiCaprio introduced Gore with a reference to the former politician's Oscar-winning documentary on global warming, "An Inconvenient Truth."

"Global warming is no longer a theory but a reality," the actor said. "What once seemed like science fiction is now an inconvenient and undeniable truth."

Seven-point pledge:

In London, Corinne Bailey Rae sang "Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)," Marvin Gaye's 1971 environment classic, while mock rockers Spinal Tap reunited to perform "Warmer Than Earth," in which the Devil complains about high temperatures in Britain.

Earlier, Gore addressed a small event in Washington and outlined the seven-point pledge he wants people to take, binding them to cut carbon emissions and lobby governments and employers to do more to save the planet.

Gore wants Live Earth viewers to pressure leaders to sign a new treaty by 2009 to cut global warming pollution by 90 percent in rich nations and more than half worldwide by 2050.

His documentary and now the Live Earth campaign have only added to chatter that the man who lost the 2000 election to President George W. Bush might mount a fresh White House bid, despite his statements that he has no plans to do so.

In New Jersey, reporters asked performers if Gore should run. Singer Dave Matthews replied, "He seems like a nice guy."

Not everybody has supported the concerts.

"The last thing the planet needs is a rock concert," The Who's Roger Daltrey said earlier this year. Bob Geldof, the man behind Live Aid and Live 8, argues the world is already aware of global warming and the event lacked a "final goal."

But many concert goers defended the gigs.

"We could do a lot more for the environment, but I suppose we're lazy," teenager Robyn Raymond said in Johannesburg. "We need more things like this to make people aware."

The Shanghai concert was seen as key to Live Earth's success, after the International Energy Agency said China could become the top emitter of the main greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, as early as this year, a claim disputed by officials.

In Japan, visitors were asked how they came to the concert, whether by public transport or by car, part of an effort by organizers to limit the "carbon footprint" of Live Earth.

There was also footage from Antarctica of the previously unknown band Nunatak playing a short set. The "gig" in front of 17 fellow researchers allows Gore to keep his promise to hold concerts on seven continents on the date 7/7/7.

1.2. Brit's Eye View: New prime minister steps up to the plate

3 July 2007

Britain has a new prime minister. After leading the country for 10 years, Tony Blair has stepped down. Gordon Brown, Blair's number two for the past decade, takes up the reins.

Brown is viewed as solid and dependable, if a little dour. He is slightly to the left of Blair on most issues, though he has also pushed through a lot of business-friendly policies.

Gordon Brown is notoriously difficult to read; he gives very little of himself away. So what can we expect on the environment from a Brown premiership?

I, along with some other environmentalists, spent an afternoon with the prime-minister-in-waiting last week examining what he should do on climate change. From this and discussions with his advisers, I am beginning to get a sense of where he will put his energy.

Like Blair, Brown will spend a lot of time on international climate change diplomacy. He knows that this is a global problem needing a widely supported international framework. He realizes that the prospect of a much more engaged and positive approach in the U.S. could help to deliver a much more ambitious and meaningful global deal. And he believes that the U.K. is well placed to be a bridge between Europe and the U.S. By putting David Miliband, the youthful former environment minister, in charge of foreign affairs, he will have a knowledgeable and energetic negotiator on climate change at his side.

Brown has long been passionate about international development issues. He has worked tirelessly on providing debt relief for Africa and increasing aid flows. It seems like he will start to focus much more

seriously on the impacts that climate change will have on developing countries. Oxfam, the aid agency, estimates that adaptation will cost developing countries at least \$50 billion each year. Brown will work to mobilize the international political will and the funds to help poorer countries adapt.

Climate change will also dominate Brown's domestic environmental priorities. He is likely to focus a lot on technology. Like Blair, he has a strong belief in the ability of technology and ingenuity to solve problems. We can expect him to work with and encourage business leaders who want to invest in solutions. And he is likely to provide tax breaks and other support for green R&D.

It is on housing and buildings that he will really direct his efforts. More than half of our CO2 emissions come from buildings. Britain is suffering a housing shortage, and we are about to build a whole lot more houses. We will have to squeeze millions of new homes into an already crowded island over the coming years.

Brown has made an ambitious pledge that "within ten years all new homes would have to be zero carbon." This is a huge challenge for the house-building sector and should lead to a lot of innovation.

He also announced a clutch of five new "eco-towns," with a combined total of 100,000 zero-carbon homes. It is not just the houses that will meet zero-carbon standards and run only on renewable power. The towns will also have zero-carbon schools and health centers, as well as lots of cycle lanes and public transport.

In the U.K., our existing housing stock is not very energy efficient, and this is where the big gains are to be made. Brown recently recognized this: "[N]ew homes are only a small percentage of the total. So today I want to extend our ambition to all homes. Over the next decade my aim is that every home for which it is practically possible will become low carbon."

What about the other big environmental issues? Here the signs are less positive. Brown has shown little attention to wildlife and biodiversity issues. It is not clear how he will tackle wider resource-use issues. And he has already made it clear that on land-use planning issues he wants to put the needs of business productivity first.

Under the new prime minister, I suspect that the dominant theme will be continuity in environmental policy. Brown will stick to most of the priorities of his predecessor. However, he will also want to put his own stamp on things. Environmentalists in the U.K. are waiting to see what he has up his sleeve.

ENERGY

2.1. Renewable Energy Future Could Save the World Billions of Dollars a Year

6 July 2007, ENS

Investing in renewable electricity worldwide instead of burning fossil fuels could save US\$180 billion annually and cut emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide in half by 2030, according to a joint report by Greenpeace and the European Renewable Energy Council, released today.

In the first global analysis of its kind, the report argues for a shift in global investments towards renewable energy - solar, wind, hydro, geothermal and bioenergy - within the next 23 years, and away from "dangerous" coal and nuclear power.

"As Live Earth mobilizes billions of people to take urgent action against the climate threat, our report shows not only that the world's electricity needs can be met by renewable energy, but that by doing so, we will literally save trillions of dollars; a massive US\$180 billion a year, forever," said Sven Teske of Greenpeace International.

The report gives the financial rationale for Greenpeace's "Energy Revolution," a blueprint for how to cut global carbon dioxide, CO2, emissions by 50 percent by 2050, while maintaining global economic growth.

The Energy Revolution scenario is an alternative to the International Energy Agency's world energy outlook.

"In sharp contrast," Teske said, a "business as usual approach casts a dark cloud over our future."

"Its 10,000 new fossil fuel power plants, would increase global CO2 emissions by over 50 percent, and more than double fuel costs; there is no way of putting a price on the disastrous results this will have for environment and humanity," he said.

The Energy Revolution needs an extra global annual investment of \$22 billion in clean and renewable power plants on top of current expenditure, Greenpeace says.

The fuel cost savings of up to \$202 billion per year, means this will pay for itself 10 times over," said Teske.

The report says that converting the subsidies of \$250 billion a year that now are given to the coal and gas industries to clean, safe renewable energy will cover the costs of the energy revolution and much more, he said.

The European Renewable Energy Council says the global market for wind turbines was worth some €18 billion in 2006, and the total renewable industry was worth about \$50 billion.

The Council is the umbrella organization of European renewable energy industry, trade and research associations working in the photovoltaic, wind energy, small hydropower, biomass, geothermal energy and solar thermal sectors.

Under an energy revolution scenario, renewable energy would be worth an annual market volume of \$288 billion by 2030, the Council projects.

"The renewable industry is willing and able to deliver the power plants the world needs, we simply need the right climate and energy policy," said Oliver Schäfer, EREC policy director.

"Decisions made in the next few years, will continue to have an impact in 2050. Only if a renewable energy path is taken, can we avoid the worst excesses of climate change," he warned.

The report stresses the urgent need for decisive action now. In the next decade, many existing power plants will need replacing, and emerging economies such as China, India and Brazil are rapidly building new energy infrastructure.

"Future Investment - A sustainable Investment Plan for the power sector to save the Climate," is online at: www.energyblueprint.info, www.greenpeace.org, and www.erec.org.

2.2. Merkel confronts German energy industry with radical policy overhaul

4 July 2007, IHT

The German chancellor, Angela Merkel, Tuesday announced an ambitious plan to reduce greenhouse emissions by up to 40 percent by 2020, an initiative welcomed by environmentalists but harshly criticized by the energy industry, a powerful lobby.

Merkel also ruled out any change to the government's nuclear policy before the next election, scheduled for 2009, that calls for the industry to be phased out in the next 14 years. As part of the emissions-cutting plan, Merkel said she intended to require energy producers to increase efficiency by 3 percent each year and improve conservation.

"This is about putting in place a long-term energy policy until 2020 for the environment that includes energy efficiency and energy security," Merkel said after an energy summit meeting attended by the biggest electricity, natural gas and coal companies in Germany.

Merkel has made the reduction of greenhouse gases one of the hallmarks of her domestic and foreign policy, and conservation is a central theme in her party's program, which was published Monday. The policy is part of Merkel's efforts to shed the image of the Christian Democratic Union party as uninterested in green issues and to project a modern and centrist image more palatable to an environmentally conscious younger generation normally aligned with the Greens.

Sigmar Gabriel, the environment minister and a Social Democrat, said the current strong economic growth in Germany should allow the companies to invest in more energy efficiency equipment that could save consumers as much as €50 billion, or \$68 billion, a year. Consumers in Germany pay among the highest energy costs in the European Union, according to the Federation of German Consumer Organizations.

Annette Schavan, the technology minister and a conservative, said the state would provide at least €1.5 billion for research and development projects to expand renewable energy.

The renewable energy sector praised Merkel for confronting the energy companies, which have been reluctant to introduce efficiency measures.

"We welcome the decisions made today," said Ulf Gerder, a spokesman for Germany's renewable energy association. Renewable energy, which includes solar and wind power and is state subsidized, accounts for 9 percent of the country's energy needs.

Over the years, the German energy industry has developed vertical structures that stretch from production and distribution to transportation and retailing, making it difficult for small producers to enter the market.

Merkel said she wanted to "unbundle," or break these arrangements to allow more competition. The European Commission has been pursuing the same policy for several years but has repeatedly met resistance from the German companies. The liberalization of EU energy markets, which began on Monday, has had little effect in Germany.

"This shows a clear commitment by the government to energy efficiency," Gerder added. "The nuclear energy plants do not have to be prolonged. Renewable energy, also in the form of combined heat and power plants, can compensate for the nuclear power plants."

Merkel dashed the hopes of the energy lobby - led by E.ON, Vattenfall Europe, RWE and Energie Baden-Württemberg - to prolong nuclear power.

Under an agreement made in 2000 by the former Social Democrat and Green coalition led by Gerhard Schröder, Germany's 17 nuclear energy plants would be gradually decommissioned by 2021.

After Merkel, a conservative, was appointed chancellor in November 2005, the lobby went on an ultimately unsuccessful offensive to reverse the decision. But Merkel on Tuesday stuck to her coalition's policy of phasing out the plants.

The energy industry, however, criticized Merkel's plan as unworkable and likely to lead to higher rates for consumers.

In a bid to win over the government and public opinion, RWE, one of Germany's largest energy groups, published a four-page paid supplement in several newspapers Tuesday in which its chief executive, Harry Roels, appealed to the government to reconsider its nuclear energy policies. He said the decision to phase out nuclear power was made "when climate protection was not as high in the public imagination as it is today."

Foreign energy companies also criticized Merkel's environmental policies. Vattenfall of Sweden, which recently invested in Germany's lucrative energy sector, said "the government's energy policy is an anti-energy policy."

Over the next few weeks, government, industry and environmental groups will decide how to implement the policy, which could be finalized during a special policy meeting of the cabinet next month. This cabinet session will map out the remaining legislative period of the coalition government whose term, officially at least, expires in 2009. "We hope to have a decision on the road map next month," Merkel said.

2.3. Member states late on plans to cut energy waste

2 July 2007, Friends of the Earth Europe

Friends of the Earth Europe has raised concerns at the EU's poor commitment to cut its energy waste after 24 of the 27 EU member states missed the deadline for submitting their National Energy Efficiency Action Plans. Only Finland, Denmark and the UK have delivered their plans on time.

Esther Bollendorff, Climate and Energy Campaigner at Friends of the Earth Europe, said: "Cutting energy waste is the most cost-effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but most of the EU member states are falling at the first hurdle. If they aren't committed enough to even make their action plans on time, can we really be confident that they will actually implement measures to increase energy efficiency by 9 percent by 2016?"

Due on Saturday 30th June, the action plans should set out specific measures for each country to reduce their energy consumption by 9 percent by 2016, according to the Energy Services Directive. Member States will have to submit such a plan every three years focusing specifically on cutting energy waste in end use consumption (this could include for example insulating buildings, using efficient lighting or reducing vehicle fuel consumption).

Early analysis of Danish and Czech drafts indicates that these are generally based on existing programmes and fail to come up with new measures or to tighten the implementation of existing tools.

Friends of the Earth Europe supports the use of the National Energy Efficiency Action Plans to strengthen existing directives which have been very badly implemented on national level, like the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, but also to introduce strong financial incentives rewarding energy efficiency. The environmental group is shocked by the very weak mobilisation in member states and takes it as a clear indication that Energy Efficiency is being treated as a non topic in EU capitals.

Germany and France have simply decided not to respect the deadline and intend to release their action plans separately. European Commission officials say that they expect to have a clear overview after the summer break in September, two months after the official deadline.

Friends of the Earth Europe warns that even if the 9 percent increase in energy efficiency by 2016 target was successfully met, this would leave the EU with a tough task ahead to meet its objective to reduce energy consumption by 20 percent by 2020.

2.4. WWF urges EU to drop duties on China light-bulbs

28 June 2007, Reuters

The European Union should live up to its environmental image by scrapping anti-dumping duties on energy-saving light-bulbs made in China, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) said on Thursday.

An EU plan not to extend the duties of up to 66 percent for five more years has run into opposition from lighting equipment maker Osram, part of the Siemens group, which is based in the EU's biggest country Germany, trade diplomats have said.

The European Commission is expected to announce its next step in the case in July.

"There is a contradiction between the EU's messages on climate change and on trade," said Eivind Hoff, a trade specialist with WWF in Brussels.

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson has proposed zero import tariffs around the world for environmentally friendly goods, and he should seize the opportunity of the light-bulbs case to show the EU is open to "green" imports, Hoff said.

About 80 percent of all lighting in homes in the EU uses incandescent bulbs, even though new fluorescent lamps consume just 20 percent of the energy, WWF said.

A switch to fluorescent lamps could save 23 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions in the EU each year, equivalent to about 0.5 percent of the bloc's greenhouse emissions, it said.

The EU's 27 governments agreed in March to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20 percent by 2020, an ambitious target that political leaders said put Europe at the vanguard of the fight against climate change. But WWF said the bulbs case showed how the EU's trade rules needed to give more weight to environmental factors.

Mandelson is reviewing whether to make the bloc's anti-dumping rules reflect the interests of European consumers more as well as those of manufacturers.

CONFERENCES

3.1. Scientific framework of environmental and forest governance -- The role of discourses and expertise

27 and 28 August 2007 in Goettingen, Germany

Further information at: <http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-6/60000/61200/61202/activities/> or <http://www.iufro.org/download/file/1648/3058/goettingen07-call-for-paper.doc>.

3.2. European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference and Exhibition

3 - 7 September 2007 in Milan, Italy

More info: <http://www.photovoltic-conference.com>.

3.3. International Congress on Plant Oil Fuels

6 - 7 September 2007 in Erfurt, Germany

More info: <http://www.pflanzenoel-kongress.de/index.php?lng=en>.

3.4. General Conference of the Union of the Baltic Cities

27 - 28 September 2007 in Pärnu, Estonia

More info: <http://www.reiser.ee/conference/ubc.htm>.

3.5. RENEXPO 2007 - International Trade Fair and Conference for Renewable Energies

27 - 30 September 2007 in Augsburg, Germany

More info: <http://www.renexpo.de/?lang=en>.

3.6. European Sustainable Energy Seminar and Tour

1 - 5 October 2007 in Samsø, Denmark

More info: http://www.inforse.org/europe/seminar07_samso.htm.

3.7. European Meeting Point: Energy for Development 2007

10 - 12 October 2007 in Beja/Alentejo, Portugal

More info: <http://www.energyanddevelopment-2007.net>.

3.8. UN Millennium Development Goals - discussing practical examples on a local level

18 - 20 October 2007 in Bonn, Germany

More at: <http://www.service-eine-welt.de/en>.

3.9. COP 13, COP/MOP3

Venue of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) and the third session of the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 3) Nusa Dua, Bali, 3 to 14 December 2007.

The Bureau of the UNFCCC met on Tuesday, 13 February 2007 and decided to accept with gratitude the offer by the Government of Indonesia to host COP 13 and COP/MOP 3 at the Bali International Conference Centre and the adjacent facilities and services in Nusa Dua.

The Bureau requested the secretariat to complete the corresponding host country agreement with Indonesia in time for the sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies in May 2007.

Further information on the Conference will appear on the UNFCCC website.

PUBLICATIONS

4.1. Hotspot June 2007

The most recent Hotspot is now available to download at:

<http://www.climnet.org/hotspot/hotspot47.pdf>.

You will find articles on The G8; Renewables legislation; Energy Efficiency Standardisation and Bali Road mapping in this issue.

4.2. Agrofuels – towards a reality check in nine key areas

Co-published by: EcoNexus, Biofuelwatch, Carbon Trade Watch (Transnational Institute), Corporate Europe Observatory, Ecologistas en Acción, Ecoropa, Grupo de Reflexión Rural, Munlochy Vigil, NOAH (Friends of the Earth Denmark), Rettet Den Regenwald, Watch Indonesia.

To view an executive summary or download the whole report, see:

http://www.tni.org/detail_pub.phtml?know_id=188.

4.3. Too Hot to Handle? The Future of Civil Nuclear Power

Frank Barnaby and James Kemp, with a foreword by David Howarth MP, July 2007.

Supporters of nuclear power claim that the security risks can be managed. However, this briefing paper clearly shows that a worldwide nuclear renaissance is beyond the capacity of the nuclear industry to deliver and would stretch to breaking point the capacity of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to monitor and safeguard civil nuclear power.

Download the paper at:

http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/publications/briefing_papers/toohottohandle.php.

ANNOUNCEMENT

5.1. Vacancy announcement - EU Policy Campaigner with focus on transport policy

Greenpeace is announcing a full-time position, based in Brussels. Initial employment is for one year and may be extended.

More information at: <http://www.greenpeace.org/eu-unit/about/vacancies#Transport>.
