

EREF

European Renewable Energies Federation

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“EREF’s Good Planning Guide for Renewable Energy Installations” published today

- A guideline for overcoming obstacles in administrative planning procedures in Europe -

After having gained significant official and public backing for its development on environmental and economic grounds, renewable energies must still overcome continuing obstacles in lengthy and complex local and regional planning and permission procedures that still brake the achievement of its full potential.

A workshop conducted recently by the European Renewable Energies Federation (EREF) and the FEDARENE (the European Federation of Regional Energy and Environment Agencies) in Brussels on “Public and Administrative Challenges for Green Electricity Projects“ examined the problems and has led to a document making recommendations on streamlining procedures.

The workshop attended by Renewable Energy producers or supporters and administrators from throughout the European Union and candidate countries cited to the problems stemming from a) complex administrative procedures of permissions, b) the insufficient clarity of responsible bodies and c) public opposition.

These procedures, which sometimes result in requirements for permits from local and regional authorities for land-use, building, operations and other parts of the activities have created bottlenecks in introducing these new job-creating technologies regarded as beneficial for the environment, energy diversification and independence and other reasons. They loom as a threat to the achievement of clear objectives and targets approved by all Member States of the European Union especially with the Directive 2001/77/EC on the promotion of electricity produced from renewable energy sources in the internal electricity market aiming at encouraging and extension the amount of energy provided from renewable sources.

Recommendations were made for both RES developers and authorities to try to overcome these persistent obstacles that can lead to years of delay and uncertainty and stifle completion and financing potential for wind, solar, biogas, small hydro-electrical or other such energy projects.

These recommendations could help the European Commission with its evaluation of Member States’ reports on their respective administrative procedures according to the above Directive and could also assist the Commission with its own reporting foreseen by this Directive.

The recommendations suggest that some consideration should be given to “one-stop” permission procedures or at least that closer concertation be adopted if more than one authority retains a right of decision over the project.

The clear advantages of renewable projects and the over national end European commitments to encourage their development should be integrated early into the regional and local planning and permission process in order to assure achievement of targets and overcoming administrative delays, the recommendations propose.

Public acceptance must also be gained by involving all stakeholders and communities early in the planning and permission process through transparent and persuasive information and participation. Sometime local groups or residents voice concern about the erroneous perception that a proposed wind park or other renewable energy facility may represent visual, noise or environmental nuisance, while they have generally accepted the worse damage represented by traditional energy plants and connections.

Two countries, Germany and Greece, were cited as examples of countries having adopted legislative or administrative measures that could result in “fast-track” acceptance for RES planning permission.

The full report is available as pdf. file on the EREF homepage (www.eref-europe.org)

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