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European Renewable Energy Council

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RE-thinking 2050: Making the EU 100% renewables-based

Brussels, 15th April 2010. The European Renewable Energy Council (EREC), outlines in its new report *RE-thinking 2050* a pathway how the European Union can switch to a 100% renewable energy supply for electricity, heating and cooling as well as transport, examining the effects on Europe's energy supply system and on CO₂ emissions.

RE-thinking 2050, launched today in the European Parliament under the patronage of MEP Maria Da Graça Carvalho, outlines a pathway towards a 100% renewable energy system for the EU as the only sustainable option in economic, environmental and social terms.

It assesses how the different renewable energy technologies can contribute to a fully sustainable energy supply by 2050 provided there is strong political, public and economic support for all renewable energy technologies. "The potential benefits of a future based on renewable energy are multiple: mitigating climate change, ensuring energy security and creating sustainable future-oriented jobs," points out Arthouros Zervos, President of EREC.

According to the report, renewable energy deployment by 2020 will reduce annual energy related CO₂ emissions by about 1,200 Mt against 1990 emissions. By 2050 the EU would be able to reduce its energy related CO₂ emissions by more than 90%. This reduction would result in an additional total CO₂ benefit in 2050 of €3,800 billion. Zervos emphasises that: "Higher upfront investment for renewable energy do pay off in the long-run, as the capital investment cost will be outweighed by the avoided fossil fuel and CO₂ costs."

In addition, making the EU 100% renewables-based will result in major social benefits not least related to job creation: "Considering that the pathway set out in *RE-thinking 2050* is followed, the renewable energy sector will employ a total of more than 2.7 million people in 2020 and about 4.4

million in 2030 in the EU. By 2050, employment in our sector will bring 6.1 million people into work”, underlines Zervos.

“Clearly, the overarching precondition for this to happen is that the commitment towards a 100 % renewable energy system for the European Union needs to be established as the guiding principle for all European policies in the fields of energy, climate, R&D, industry, regional development and international cooperation”, Zervos adds.

MEP Maria da Graça Carvalho underlines: “Studies of this kind are of utmost importance for policy-makers. The study *RE-thinking 2050* gives an outlook of our society by 2050 if fully sustainable energy supply is adopted. The distributed nature of renewable forms of energy represents an opportunity to reshape our economic and social system towards a wealthier and more equitable model.”

As the *RE-thinking 2050* report clearly outlines, achieving a 100% renewable energy fuelled economy is not a matter of availability of technologies, rather it is a matter of political will and of setting the course today for a sustainable energy future for the European Union. “A 100% renewable energy society is one where the benefits greatly outweigh the costs, be it in economic terms or in social terms, and the renewable industry is ready to prove it”, concludes the President of EREC, Arthouros Zervos.

The full publication of *RE-thinking 2050* will be available as of Tuesday, 20th April 2010:

www.rethinking2050.eu

EREC, the European Renewable Energy Council, is the umbrella organisation of the major European renewable energy industry, trade and research associations active in the field of photovoltaics, small hydropower, solar thermal, bioenergy, ocean & marine, geothermal, wind energy and solar thermal electricity. It represents an industry with an annual turnover of more than €70 billion and more than 550,000 employees.