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Commission approves €5 million project to support deployment of renewable energy in the Mediterranean region

Project expected to pave the way to increased use of solar, wind and other renewable energy sources, also as a contribution to the Mediterranean Solar Plan

The European Commission has today decided to allocate €5 million to a new project, "Paving the Way for the Mediterranean Solar Plan". The project is expected to be launched in the first half of 2010, following an international restricted tender. It will last three years and cover the nine countries of the Southern Neighbourhood: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia. The objective of the project is to contribute to improve conditions conducive to greater use of renewable energy sources, including as a contribution to the development and implementation of a Mediterranean Solar Plan.

Paving the way to a low-carbon energy system in the Euro-Mediterranean region
There is growing concern over energy security for all countries in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, in the face of increased energy demand. The link between energy, development and climate change is recognised. Access of the poor to modern energy services remains a key objective. Renewable energy sources, together with energy efficiency and demand-side management, are key priorities in the current policy agenda.

One of the major concrete initiatives of the Union for the Mediterranean is to draw up a Mediterranean Solar Plan.

Twenty gigawatts of electricity generated by solar and other renewable energy sources around the Mediterranean Sea by 2020: this is the generally stated objective of the Mediterranean Solar Plan. However, adequate, enabling framework conditions need be established. Solid foundations are needed for this initiative to be successful: appropriate regulation and legislation, conditions conducive to business development, infrastructure, technology transfer, and industrial development in the Mediterranean basin are necessary to meet this target. The new project funded by the EU will aim at tackling these essential aspects.

With the launch of this new project, the Commission shall contribute to the establishment of favourable conditions (institutional, legislative, technological and investment climate) for the development and deployment of renewable energy, including to the implementation of the Solar Plan, in the Mediterranean partner countries.

Objectives of the forthcoming project

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to a significant increase in deployment of sustainable energy systems based on solar, wind and other renewable energy sources, combined with energy efficiency and energy saving, in the Southern Mediterranean partner countries. Key results that the project should achieve include, among others:

- Progress in the establishment of a harmonised legislative and regulatory framework conducive to large-scale adoption and use of renewable energy.
- Improvements in intra- and inter-regional transfer of knowledge, as well as capacity-building in the field of RE technologies. This should involve, e.g., training of engineers, and support the establishment of a technology platform with public and private partners, with industry, IFIs and with the R&D community.
- Support to increasing the number of bankable projects for investments by IFIs or other investors (both large-scale power generation and small-scale decentralised rural systems).

Background

Euro-Mediterranean Energy Ministers agreed in Limassol in December 2007 to focus particularly on market integration, sustainable energy systems and infrastructures. As far as sustainable energy is concerned, Ministers agreed inter alia to support this area the design, implementation and monitoring of long-term sustainable energy policies and action plans, including the establishment of quantifiable targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements, coupled with adequate institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks; Improve knowledge on financing tools amongst the main public and private players, and enhance utilisation of the different existing and new financing mechanisms; Support development of energy systems at the most appropriate scale, on a case-by-case basis, focusing whenever possible on small-scale, decentralised systems based on renewable energy sources; Maximise the use of the flexible mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol.

Furthermore, attention to renewable energy sources has been given at the highest political level. The Mediterranean Solar Plan (MSP) was endorsed by Head of States and Governments of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) at the Summit in Paris on 13-14 July 2008.

Further information on Regional co-operation for the southern region:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/regional-cooperation/enpi-south/sustainable/index_en.htm



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