

EREF

European Renewable Energies Federation

As a federation of national renewable energy associations from EU Member States, EREF represents all renewable energy sectors such as wind, solar, small hydro, bio-energy, tidal, wave, and geothermal sources, at EU institutions. Its objective is to promote the interests of independent power, fuel and heat production from renewable sources and to establish non-discriminatory access to the European energy market. EREF strives to create, maintain and further develop stable and reliable framework conditions for renewable energy sources.

Internal summary on Driving up Regional Cooperation for Renewables in the European Union Brussels, Representation of the State of Lower Saxony to the European Union, 25 April 2016

1. Meeting subject and speakers

Renewable energy sources will have to play an important role in the European Union's future. There will have to be a transition from a centralized fossil fuels dominated industry to a decentralized renewable energy lead approach. To help to accomplish this shift member states must work together. The regional cooperation can foster more progress towards the 27% goal set by the EU. This conference discusses different the regional cooperation's approach and the difficulties they had working in in a non-harmonized European Union.

The conference was split in to 2 parts.

The first part consisted of several different examples of regional cooperation all across Europe. Its panel was composed of Lars Kaiser (Consultant at [Furgy Clean Innovation](#)), Melinda Loonstra-Buzogány (Municipality Emmen), Siegbert van der Velde (Consultant for the SEREH project), Paula Peiró (Project-Manager, [IrRadiere, 1000Smart](#)) and Fredrik Grund (Project Leader [Biogas2020](#), [Innovatum](#)).

The second part discussed various measures the European Union implement to foster more regional cooperation. The debate panel was composed of [Evelyne Huytebroeck](#) (Member of the Brussels Parliament), Tjisse Stelpstra (Regional Minister of the Drenthe Province), Jens Zvirgzdgrauds (ENVE Commission, Committee of the Regions), and Alexandra Lafont (Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière).

2. Main statements and opinions on regional cooperation

Mr. Freericks introduced and described the importance of regional cooperation. He mentioned various renewable projects Lower Saxony had made, such as wind turbines and biogas acquired from local farmers. He commented that it is politically desirable to attain regional support and cooperation, since it motivate many investors into the renewable energy market.

The first panel then started with Lars Kaiser from Furgy Clean (Future Renewable Energy Clean). His organisation specializes on creating a network of SME and connecting them with energy corporations, especially in the fields of system integration and smart systems. Mr. Kaiser commented that there is a big project regions in Denmark-North Germany if EU Law starts to foster for regional cooperation.

Mrs. Loostra-Burgoiny and Mr. Van der Velde spoke about the SERAH (Smart Energy Region Emmen Harem) project, an initiative between a city in Germany and a city in the Netherlands. They commented on the importance on self-consumption and how it encourages local growth. Another facts they stressed it that current legislation is based on a top-down approach whereas we need a bottom-up approach to come to our goal of a united energy union. The presentation ended with a list of several challenges this region had to face such as national legislation not allowing for regional cooperation or the lack of the infrastructure to accommodate the cooperation. Mrs. Loostra-Burgoiny and Mr. Van der Velde hope to see that the EU starts to promote more cross border experimentation zones in order to set an example for future investors.

The next speaker was Mrs. Peiró, a project manager from IrRadiere. She explained the 1000Smart project, a project where 1000 cities from all around the world share the same vision of becoming a smart city. Each city would support each other in becoming more energy efficient and less reliable on fossil fuels. The project also promoted the cities to become more open for the public to decide and participate in local ventures.

The last participant of the first panel was Mr. Grund form Biogas2020, a Scandinavian based scheme, which focuses primarily on reusing waste to create biogas. This biogas is mainly used for the transport sector and as a result the industry is working of mainly biogas. He reported that there are difficulties with dealing with the different national legislations.

After a coffee break the second panel started.

Mrs. Huytebroeck proposed that regions should promote local businesses. She mentioned the idea that such a support should be mandatory in regional policy planning. It is also important that regions devise examples that other regions can use for future projects.

Mr. Stelpstra stressed that the EU has to make a commitment to promote innovation and progress. He spoke of 5 important details:

1. Ambitious regional targets need to be set.
2. Planning needs to be done regionally with the support of citizens
3. National legislation must allow for regional cooperation
4. Present funding scheme is problematic
5. Involve motivated region/sub regions

Mr. Zvirgzdgrauds urged that the EU needs to recognize the ignored regional authorities. Instead of leading with a top-down approach the EU has to stimulate the regions with a bottom-up method. He pointed out that cities are heavily in favour of green and cheap energy, they are just lacking the methods to acquire it.

Mrs. Lafont, the last presenter, introduced a new legislation proposed by the presidency of Luxembourg, where regions can create local law, which would be a mixture of the national laws, in order to promote regional cooperation.

3. General Impressions and action points for EREF

The conference had a serious, determined tone. All parties involved mentioned that regional cooperation is starting to take place, but more needs to be done to promote and foster them. Perhaps EREF could contribute to such programmes with its existing network in RES. A spectator at the conference came away with the impression that national legislation needs to be adjusted to motivate regional cooperation and that the EU needs to adjust its funding scheme to motivate more regions.

In a talk after the panel with Mr. Zvirgdsgrauds, he mentioned that several adjustments need to be made to EU policy to achieve the goals.

- Funding for renewables should come from the banking sector, like Juncker proposed.
- To cheapen the access for funding, competitive bidding should be used.
- Existing networks need to be more supported and to have a clear agenda of what they offer

Mathias Wittmann