pressensave

PRESS FOR ENERGY SAVERS

Newsletter issue 01

A European Union project for the mainstream dissemination of Renewable Energy European projects

PRESSENSAVE
Press for Energy Savers
assists sustainable energy EU funded projects in communicating their research results to the media. With a user-friendly innovative platform, it serves as a Virtual Press Office for project coordinators to promote their research results, relevant news or any noteworthy topic to be covered by the media. PRESSENSAVE is a project funded by the European Commission under FP6 of research and development on Sustainable energy systems. It was launched to support other project consortia, by integrating a powerful tool that creates positive synergies with pre-existing communication efforts. PRESSENSAVE covers all communication services, with experts in online press releases, experienced journalists and professionals in dissemination strategies in European projects, all supported by the technical contribution of the scientific partner. It aims to provide energy projects and their researchers with an innovative tool to help them reach out with a louder voice and potentially have an impact on EU energy policy development. PRESSENSAVE does not substitute the dissemination effort by each consortium; it simply integrates it with a wide communication instrument, increasing the potential of media exposure.

Our team offers Energy projects the possibility of getting visibility not only in their specific country of action but also in those European target countries where spreading information about results produced could be more beneficial to their exploitation purposes. PRESSENSAVE provides the information arena with a new channel for researchers to bring their opinions to a wider institutional level and have thus broader possibilities to influence the local, national as international policies in the sector. On the other hand, PRESSENSAVE offers the mainstream and specialized press a critical mass of news coming from results achieved by EU projects by introducing a new channel that is able to collect, sort and prepare this specific universe of information in a professional "ready to use" format.

Save precious time and resources for communicating your energy project research results!

Let PRESSENSAVE address your immediate, medium and long-term communication needs!

The PRESSENSAVE team is ready to assist you and help enhance the visibility of your research results and news to the media.

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY GOES MAINSTREAM
Where EU energy projects meet the media
10th February 2009, Brussels
Residence Palace, Maelbeek Room
from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. followed by a cocktail reception

PRESSENSAVE participates in the EUSEW- European Sustainable Energy Week

"Sustainable Energy Goes Mainstream - Where EU energy projects meet the media" is the name of the workshop that the PRESSENSAVE project has organized to take place within the European Union Sustainable Energy Week activities. The event is held on the 10th of February in the Residence Palace building (Brussels), Maelbeek Room from 4 pm.

Europe has been producing some ground-breaking research in the sustainable energy fields. But do all the right stakeholders know about the end-results? PRESSENSAVE partners addresse this crucial issue in its workshop taking place at the Residence Palace building.

During this conference the PRESSENSAVE team, consisting of journalists, scientists and communication experts, present its free-of-charge services to all projects dealing with sustainable energy topics, funded under the FP6 or FP7 and other EU programmes, explaining them the benefits offered by PRESSENSAVE. In addition, four sustainable energy projects - HYVOLUTION, WAVE DRAGON, ENERGY UNION and RESTMAC - have been invited to present their results and objectives with the unique opportunity to speak directly to the media participating at the event.

All other projects attending the workshop have the advantage to meet with members of the press and discuss how to improve the visibility of EU sustainable energy research in the media. This interactive session among journalists and sustainable energy projects aims to facilitate the exchange of information and provide projects with greater visibility, bridging the gap between major research results and effective media coverage of sustainable energy research.

In this issue

p 1 PRESSENSAVE participates in the EUSEW
p 2 ENERGY UNION & HYVOLUTION
p 3 WAVE DRAGON & RESTMAC
p 4 Analysis of media coverage of RES in EU

4 Projects beneficiaries from Pressensave

Energy Union: unconventional train journey to promote intelligent energy

Intelligent Energy is the key to a positive vision of the future. To accentuate its importance a specially designed train wagon will tour 12 European countries stopping at 24 central locations. During a journey which will last almost 2 years starting in Munich (Germany) in July 2009 and ending in Brussels (Belgium) in February 2011 the vital importance of Intelligent Energy will be demonstrated again and again in an approachable way.

Energy Union is a project designed above all to mobilize European youth and the policy makers into action to support the development of Intelligent Energy. The train wagon delivers at each of the 24 stops initiatives, events and activities aimed at awakening the interest of all, but targeting especially young people. The locomotive is a historic symbol of progress. It was the development of railways that spearheaded the expansion of the industrial age. Now it is a train wagon that will deliver new perspectives on energy sources and energy consumption. It is highly appropriate that this programme is launched in 2009 which has been designated as the Year of Innovation by the European Union.

Travelling aboard the Energy Union train wagon will be no conventional trip. There will be pop singers, rappers, video music, light installations and an interactive dance floor. How can they be relevant? Well go and see for yourself! Intelligent Energy can also be entertaining. And in addition you can become part of a campaign aiming at raising awareness, changing attitudes and devising ways to avoid the risks of irreversible damage to planet earth.

Traditional approaches to communicating the dangers of climate change have been slow in altering attitudes. New models of communication, particularly communication on the same wavelength as young people are necessary to help them to think of themselves as global citizens not just in terms of music and culture but as Jeremy Rifkin, the guru of the "third industrial revolution" puts it, "to prepare them for the historic transition from the 20th century conventional geopolitics to the 21st century global biosphere politics". The train, long associated with movement, the distribution of innovative ideas and progress, can again perform this intellectual transportation into the 21st century.

Coordinator : WIP Renewable Energies (De)
Contact person : Dipl.-Ing.Martha Bissmann
Duration : 32 months
Start/end date : 01/08/2008 - 31/03/2011
E-mail : martha.bissman@wip-munich.de
Website : http://www.energyunion.eu/

"HYVOLUTION" or the hydrogen revolution from potato peels ! "Bangers and Mash"

How can you run your car whether new or an old banger on a steamed potato? Or, even better, on steamed potato peel? No, this is no joke about bad cooking. It is the reality on which HYVOLUTION is based. Its aim is to produce hydrogen from biomass to satisfy an increased demand for hydrogen and provide in a highly efficient way greater security of energy supply at the local and regional level.

The aim of the project – with 13 countries participating including Russia and Turkey – is to develop a blueprint for the construction of prototype modules of the plant required to produce high quality hydrogen in a process fed by multiple biomass feedstock. Biomass is the basis for the whole chain: from biomass to pure hydrogen. HYVOLUTION is a dream come true: the creation of small scale sustainable hydrogen production from locally produced biomass. Started three years ago, the project will run until 2010 and promises to become a real revolution both for rural and urban areas.

At a recent general assembly meeting in December 2008 of all the partners of HYVOLUTION it was decided to focus further work on hydrogen production from four promising feedstocks: sugar beet, wheat bran, barley straw and, obviously, the ever present potato peel. Specific agricultural conditions of different EU regions are taken into account. The case study illustrated in Wageningen for the "rural south" referred to a piece of research being conducted in Thessaly (Greece) while the "urban north" focused on the development of a prototype in Rotterdam using urban biomass. The difference is the kind of biomass used to feed the plant – based on a combination of thermal fermentation (also called "dark fermentation") with a light-based fermentation. In the first kind of fermentation heat-loving bacteria are used to start the bioprocess with the advantage of obtaining a higher hydrogen yield than in fermentations at ambient temperatures.

The final aim of the project is to develop an economically viable, fully sustainable decentralised process for hydrogen production in an integrated system since the participants in the project are biomass suppliers, end-users or stakeholders interested in developing specialist enterprises. The advantages in terms of reviving of local economies are an obvious and highly welcomed consequence even if the technologies developed by HYVOLUTION as a result of the research will be commercialised only after 2015. This will be in time, however, to facilitate the transition to mass hydrogen markets. The European Commission has set an objective of 20% substitution by bio fuels in the road transport section by 2020. The car running on potato peels could be a reality in less than a decade. And this is nothing to laugh about.

Coordinator : Agrotechnology & Food Innovations B.V. (Nl)
Contact person : Dr P.A.M. Claassen
Duration : 60 months
Start/end date : 01/01/2006 - 31/12/2010
E-mail : pieternel.claassen@wur.nl
Website : http://www.biohydrogen.nl/hyvolution

Wave Dragon: a monster of energy

Some have started to call it "Nessie", from the name of the monster that many swear to have seen moving around in the dark waters of Loch Ness in Scotland. For others it is simply the reincarnation of the dragon that appears in the Welsh flag and folklore. But this "monster" is of a different kind: it is not hiding in the depths of a lake to appear from time to time just to revive a tourist legend. Nor it is just a beast symbolizing the revived nationalism of a country. It is a dragon that floats in the ocean eating waves to create energy, a "Wave Dragon". And it is will be tested off the South-West coast of Wales by an international consortium coordinated by Denmark.

Wave Dragon is the largest wave energy converter known today. Its technology is based on the principle of an offshore wave energy converter of the overtopping type; that is it absorbs the energy contained in the waves that lash against it. In other words, the "dragon" is essentially a floating hydroelectric dam. The "dragon" principle is fairly self-evident: the water mounts over two long sloping structures (the "wings" of the dragon) and proceeds up a beach like ramp to a large flat reservoir (the "body") to be drained back down to sea through several gaps where propeller turbines are installed. In doing so electrical energy is generated.

Wave Dragon is by far the largest wave energy converter anywhere and, thanks to its size, it can also act as a floating base for wind turbines, thus adding the energy production from both renewable sources, waves and wind. The aim of the whole project is to take the maximum advantage from its scale. Other devices developed so far using the overtopping principle for energy absorption were much smaller and relied mainly on moving elements such as buoys, hinged bodies and oscillating water columns. The Dragon concept has a greater competitive advantage over these devices thanks to its scale and reduced capital cost. To create a 100 MW power station only nine units (i.e. nine dragons) are needed whereas with most other wave technologies between 100 and 1000 units would have been needed. But there are challenges. First of all, the machinery to be developed must operate and survive in a very rough environment. Secondly it has to be competitive with other renewable energy technologies. The research carried out so far has demonstrated that wave power can be cheaper than other sources of renewable energy (photovoltaics) and that it could also become a serious competitor to offshore wind power.

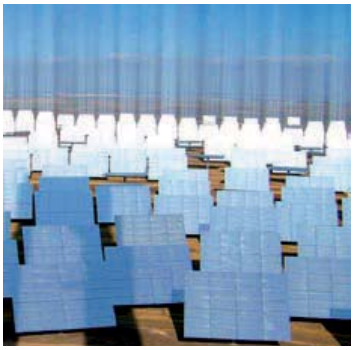
The location chosen for sitting the 7MW demonstrator is known as one of the harshest along Europe's Atlantic coast. Winds and waves give no respite to passing ships. With Wave Dragon waves aroused by the fierce west winds over the Atlantic will become productive assets rather than a threat to mariners. The waves will become a source of wealth given their ability to generate low cost electricity. The image of the dragon breathing fire will from now on have a completely different and wholly positive connotation.

Coordinator : Wave Dragon APS (Dk)
Contact person : Mr Erik Frijs - Maden
Duration : 36 months
Start/end date : 01/04/2006- 31/03/2009
E-mail : info@wavedragon.net
Website : http://www.wavedragon.net

Restmac: Spreading the message for renewable energy technologies

RESTMAC, the consortium created to establish a marketing campaign for the dissemination of technologies linked to renewable energy sources, is coordinated by EREC, the European Renewable Energy Council headquartered are in the Renewable Energy House in Brussels. The RESTMAC project was launched on June 1st 2006 with the aim of developing and implementing a concise, well-targeted thematic approach to vigorously promote the adoption on a commercial basis of selected Renewable Energy Sources (RES).

From photovoltaic to small hydropower, from wind to biomass, from geothermal to solar thermal, the project has identified all the effective ways to publicize the best RES technologies and inform every interested party, from big cities to the most remote islands, of the benefits of switching to renewable energy. The project ended on 30th November 2008 and it was co-financed by the 6th Framework Programme for Research and Development of the European Union.



The major outcome of the RESTMAC project is a Technology Roadmap which shows how Europe will be able to reach the binding 20 % renewable energy target until 2020 that was agreed by the EU's Heads of State in March 2007 and laid down in the newly adopted Renewable Energy Directive. In the many meetings and conferences organised by Restmac all potential actors were involved. Even in the distant Pacific island of La Reunion a meeting was organised in March 2007 by Ademe within the framework of research on how best to market technological advances and applications in the use of renewable energy sources even on small islands.

An international conference on the use of renewable energy on islands with a view to opening up new future markets was held in Tenerife (Spain) in May 2008, a few months before the conclusion of the project. Now the time has come to analyze the results. This will take place during the European Union Sustainable Energy Week in Brussels where experts from all the sectors of RES will gather to compare notes and discuss future strategies.

The 4 projects will be presented at:
SUSTAINABLE ENERGY GOES MAINSTREAM
Where EU energy projects meet the media
10th February 2009, Brussels
Residence Palace, Maelbeek Room
from 4pm to 6pm

Coordinator : European Renewable Energy Council (Be)
Contact person : Ms Christine Lins
Duration : 24 months
Start/end date : 01/06/2006- 30/11/2008
E-mail : Lins@erec.org
Website : www.erec.org/projects/ongoing-projects/restmac.html

Analysis of media coverage of Renewable Energy Sources in Europe

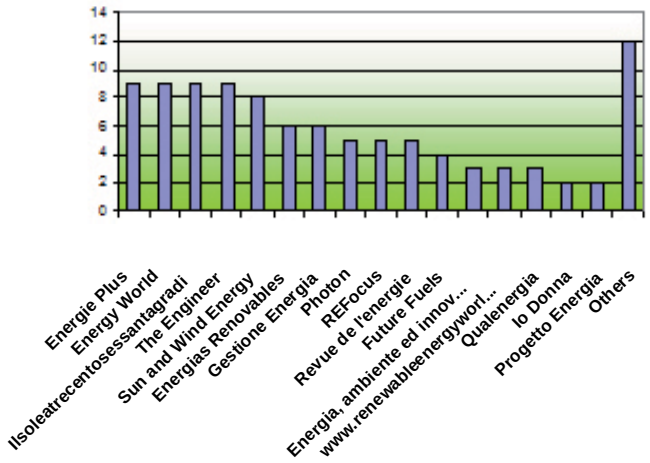
How are sustainable energy topics being covered in the media? What are the trends? What kinds of articles are being published more than others? PRESSENSAVE has attempted to address these questions by performing an in-depth analysis on this subject.

The PRESSENSAVE team has monitored, over the period November 2007 - March 2008, the media coverage of sustainable energy topics in a survey group of European newspapers and magazines in order to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the coverage. Twelve specialized magazines focusing on wind and solar energy, energy efficiency in buildings, and new fuels have been regularly monitored, and other articles from additional sixteen media publications have been included.

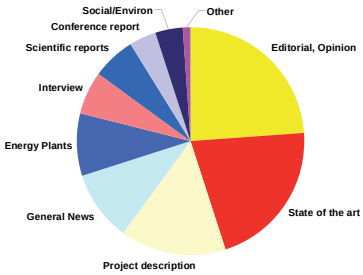
In total 100 articles were analysed, from 28 magazine/newspapers issued in France (2), Germany (2), Spain (1), Italy (10), USA (5), EU (1), UK (7).

For each article various in-depth data have been collected (see figures), among which: author's category, article typology, EU project, technology type and main topics, Strengths/Weaknesses, comments.

Numbers of articles for each magazine



Article typology



PRESSENSAVE has published a document explaining the results in detail. Here we have included a concise summary of the central findings concerning effective communication guidelines:

"What a machine does" vs. "how a machine works": It is not often necessary to the full comprehension of the message conveyed, and fits better with a journalist's typical style, to describe "what a machine does" rather than "how it works". To condense in a few lines "how a machine works" will often result in oversimplifying the issue. Dedicating separate "boxes" to more technical descriptions, or giving precise reference to available internet sites will be far more effective.

Ideological vs. pragmatic: A strong ideological approach, which may become a sort of environmental fundamentalism, is sometimes used when talking about RES. In the long term this approach may be misleading and even counterproductive. Each technology should be analysed without prejudice; advantages or drawbacks of its applications strongly depend on the context and should be clearly distinguished.

Sustainable energy vs. hidden ads: Be fair, don't use articles about RES and "sustainability" just to present and advertise a certain company's activities and achievements, and do not fall in the trap of politicians who just want to use you for gaining political consensus from electors.

Special correspondent vs. "from the desk": Almost always, "on the field" project descriptions or personal interviews of those partaking in the project lead to an interesting article, while an article written from the journalist news-desk may soon become boring and trivial. Go and see!

PARTNERS:

Cybion Srl — Minerva C&C — European Journalism Centre — Politecnico di Torino

CONTACT US: info@pressensave.eu

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