

Sustainable Energy: Challenges and Opportunities

X International Conference
on Science, Arts and Culture
**SUSTAINABLE ENERGY
CHALLENGES AND
OPPORTUNITIES**
23-27 August 2010
Veli Lošinj, Croatia



Contribution ID: 8

Type: **not specified**

Sustainable Energy: Challenges and Opportunities in the Adriatic Region

Monday 23 August 2010 16:00 (1 hour)

Nowadays, the European Union faces crucial decisions about its energy future.

Fossil fuels are still the principal energy source both for heating and electricity production. Sudden fossil fuel price hikes and the current global economic crisis have aroused governments to re-consider nuclear energy and to stimulate energy saving and renewable energy solutions over conventional ones. The goals established in the „20-20-20 by 2020“ plan will be, most probably, achieved in developed EU members, but are considered a stepping stone to the industrial progress in lagging-behind member states.

It is impossible to foresee when the renewables are going to prevail over conventional energy sources. Probably nothing changes until fossil fuels become more expensive and scarce than renewable energy sources. Nevertheless, the EU has recognized the renewable energy potentials and it is employing great human and material resources in their research. As a result the EU is the global leader when it comes to solar, wind and biomass energy, though USA, China and India are catching up. In the south-east European region, the accession of Croatia to the EU will be followed by other countries from the area and common energy plans in the future are expected. Apparently, sun, wind, hydro and biomass energy are going to make the future energy diet of the EU as well as of the whole world. Research breakthroughs are also possible in the utilization of hydrogen both for running our cars and houses and as fuel for fusion reactors. Financial incentives, new building and transport codes, appliance standards are necessary to speed up and facilitate the arrival of the sustainable energy future. Doing so, we would be truly able to meet our demands without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own energy needs.

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Session Classification: Energy Planning