

# Summary of the Solar Lakes Conference

## Promoting Renewable Energy Technology in European Lake Regions



*Project number: EIE/SSE/05/104/SI2.418530*

*Project duration: 1 January 2006 – 30 March 2007*

### **Abstract**

The use of “Renewable Energy Technology in Harmony with Nature” was the topic of the first Solar Lakes Conference organised by the Global Nature Fund (GNF) which took place from 24 to 27 September 2006 in Friedrichshafen, Germany, on the shores of Lake Constance. The conference was geared towards tourism managers and energy experts, representatives of communities and the business sector as well as experts from the environmental and nature protection sector. In sensitive lake regions in Germany and other European countries a balance between climate protection, renewable energies and nature protection is of highest importance.

During the conference, GNF presented a position paper on renewable energies and nature protection in European lake regions. This paper outlines the goals for a sustainable development in lake regions in Europe under consideration of the application of renewable energy systems.

Partners of the conference were the German Environmental Aid (Deutsche Umwelthilfe), the Lake Constance Foundation (Bodensee-Stiftung), the City of Friedrichshafen and the company Kärcher GmbH and Co KG.

### **Background and Objectives of the Event**

The importance of topics like climate change and energy supply has increased greatly over the last months. The increase of extreme weather conditions, the security of energy supply and the ambition for independent energy imports are ever-present in the media. It is deemed that our energy resources are going to run short in the next decades and so energy imports will increase. Fossil resources have a 95 % contribution to our primary energy supply. The problem of availability is accompanied by environmental impacts. The combustion of fossil resources has an influence on our climate caused by the emissions. Renewable energies will help to reduce the dependence of energy imports and contribute to climate protection efforts. Therefore, the European Union strives for the promotion of renewable energy use and an improvement of existing technologies.

The development of alternative energies will also result in conflicts with nature protection and biodiversity. To achieve the development targets nature protection requirements, with regard to energy generation, and energy use must be respected by each energy source. In view of the urgently necessary expansion of renewable energy sources worldwide, nature conservation aspects have to be taken into consideration from the very beginning. Climate change will have an increasing influence on lake regions all over the world. It is predicted that particularly lakes will be heavily affected by changes in water levels and water quality. Changes in global temperatures will have impacts on the rich biodiversity of lakes and wetlands and hence on fisheries. The Solar Lakes Conference intended to start a constructive dialogue and to contribute to the creation of a helpful balance of nature protection, renewable energies and climate protection in lake regions.

The conference is aimed at presenting best practice examples of renewable energy technology that are transferable from one lake region to another, to bring together

different groups of interest to discuss opportunities and obstacles for the wide use of renewable energy technology especially in lake regions, to raise awareness among the target groups for alternative energy technologies and to promote a valuable know-how transfer and information exchange about renewable energy.

## Conference Topics

The conference was divided in three main topics:

- 1) “Towards the Sun: Renewable Energy in Lake Regions”
- 2) “Sustainable Tourism and Solar Mobility at European Lakes”
- 3) “Instruments for Financing and Increasing the Acceptance of Renewable Energy Technologies”.

Each topic was subdivided in sessions with a specific focus. The presentation of outstanding examples for the promotion and adoption of renewable energies completed the programme.

Under Topic 1 the potential of the renewable energy market and the consideration of nature protection in the debate on development of renewable energies were discussed and the importance of communal climate protection efforts highlighted as well as possibilities for adoption of renewable energy technologies in companies presented. Projects presented were e.g.: energy efficiency technologies and renewable energy source utilizations in the Lake Balaton region in Hungary; renewable energy and environmental impacts at Lake Constance in Germany; strategy for energy saving and efficiency in Spain; effective use of solar and biogas energy technologies in companies; energy saving, energy efficiency and alternative energy concepts in companies; the role of alternative energy sources in the local government of Umbria in Italy.

Topic 2 contained presentations on the advantages of renewable energy in tourism and traffic and environmentally oriented management methods for the recreation sector e.g.: renewable energy in the tourism sector – for example at campgrounds; potentials for sustainable energy systems in Estonia; policy and practice on renewable energy initiatives in protected areas in the Netherlands; Solar Ship Network – A model for Europe and Marketing Aspects of Solar Technologies.

Topic 3 presented possibilities for financing renewable energy projects e.g.: Political framework for the promotion of investments in the renewable energy technology sector; tools for financing energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in the EU; financing solar energy on community level. Under this topic also the feasibility of innovative ideas in the renewable energy sector through the presentation of selected best practice examples was pointed out: Successful practical examples of the biogas and solar energy sector; Solarbundesliga (Solar League) and SolarLokal – competition and campaign for communities; use of sustainable energy sources in national parks and protected areas in the UK; Swimming Classroom – environmental education aboard a solar powered boat

The conference reader “Renewable Energy Technology in European Lake Regions in Harmony with Nature Conservation“ contains the strategy paper on renewable energies and nature protection in European lake regions as well as all presentations that were held during the event. The reader is available under [www.globalnature.org/SLC](http://www.globalnature.org/SLC) for free download.

## Results and Outlook

Fossil resources are limited and influence our climate by emissions. Therefore the share of renewable energy sources has to be expanded and the use of energy has to be more efficient. Both objectives must be combined and will contribute to climate protection, the reduction of dependency on energy imports and steady energy prices. Renewable energies are also an important economic sector and are becoming more important in the near future. The renewable energy sector is also a job motor and will contribute to reduce the dependency on energy imports.

The best practice examples presented at the conference demonstrate applications in communities and companies resulting in financial savings, contribute to climate protection and emphasise a role model status. In the tourism sector there are also a lot of possibilities for the adoption of alternative energy systems, e.g. at campgrounds, in the mobility sector and in protected areas. To avoid conflicts between the fields of nature protection and development of renewable energy sides have to start an open dialogue at an early stage. Best practice examples have to be transferred to regions with similar problems and conditions. The examples are adopted for the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and to achieve an improved environmental situation in the respective countries.

The conference brought together experts with different background from various European countries, e.g. representatives of communities, business sector, experts from the environmental and nature protection sector as well as individuals. Climate environmental protection combines interdisciplinary issues and therefore an intensive communication between different groups of stakeholders is necessary. Nature Protection aspects have to be respected for the development of new technologies. The participation of all affected groups of interest at an early stage in project planning is necessary to avoid conflicts e.g. because of different requirements.

The demonstration of best practice examples support the argument that renewable energies may contribute to the reduction of harmful emissions, result in cost savings and positive contribution of the owners. The conference outcomes will lead to raising awareness of decision makers in European countries towards sustainable development in lake regions. Events like the Solar Lakes Conference are first steps for the launch of renewable energy technologies in tourism, energy and traffic sector in European countries.

### For further questions please contact:

Global Nature Fund (GNF)  
International Foundation for Environment and Nature  
Fritz - Reichle - Ring 4  
78315 Radolfzell, Germany  
Phone: + 49 - 77 32 - 99 95 - 85  
Fax: + 49 - 77 32 - 99 95 - 88  
E-mail: [info@globalnature.org](mailto:info@globalnature.org)  
Internet: <http://www.globalnature.org>