

No to coal - yes to renewable energy.

By Preben Maegaard, January 2008.

No to fossil fuels. Yes to renewable energy and energy efficiency!

Denmark should be happy that the EU commission is setting high requirements when it comes to the transition for renewable energy and energy efficiency. It gives us a unique opportunity to at the same time transform from coal and other fossil fuels to renewable energy.

The consume of coal, the most polluting of all fuels, has in the latest years been increasing and at the same time has the extension with renewable energy almost stopped. The very energy efficient local CHP units are even rewarded for standing still. Together this leads to increasing CO2 emissions.

Implementation of the requirements from the EU will lead to a much needed renewal of the Danish energy system with decentralized solutions. In the renewable energy society of the future are all forms of renewable energy, solar, wind, biomass and waves, large plants and small plants, public owned plants and private plants necessary.

The transition implies incredible challenges for research, business and the citizens at any level.

Besides securing the supply of clean energy at low prices, does a broad effort including all of the different forms of energy give Danish industry new possibilities. The global market for environmental friendly energy technology is going to grow explosive in the coming years as the climate requirements increase and the fossil fuels are getting scarce and more expensive.

Especially the production of solar cells and wind turbines has during the last ten years seen exponential growth rates. But within all forms of renewable energy equipment there be a high growth and large export possibilities, that far exceed the technology adventure. The existing 30.000 jobs can become many more.

Denmark is going to leave the principle of only using those forms of renewable energy that are the cheapest here and now, because no form of renewable energy can stand alone. The wind turbines are together with solar energy, waste and straw to be used in combined highly efficient systems for the supply of electricity, heat and transportation.

In the on going energy negotiations should we go for a broad effort, so the transition for renewable energy is going to become a national cause and not just interesting for investors. Local consumer owned companies with elected boards are the best to secure the population economical solutions and the necessary acceptance. At the same time there have to be arrangements that urge house holds, farmers and the business life in general to energy savings and self sufficiency with energy from solar, wind and biomass.

We have earlier seen that transformation can be done fast when the right political conditions are present. From 1990 – 95 was 25% of the electricity consume changed from coal electricity with a serious impact on the environment to energy efficient local CHPs and during the 1990ies did the wind turbines take over about 20% of the electricity supply.

Through a diverse and whole hearted effort we can easily live with out the fossil fuels. Denmark can be the pioneer that first said good bye to coal and the other fossil fuels. This will at the same time create new growth and prosperity. We should thank the EU for giving us a push in the right direction.

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