

International Renewable Energy Agency

Brown and Sarkozy must not sell out on EU hosting IRENA

EU energy ministers will meet in Luxembourg tomorrow, 12 June, where they will discuss the location and mandate of the recently established International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). (1) Amid reports that France and the UK have been persuaded to back Abu Dhabi's bid to host the agency (rather than Bonn), Luxembourg Green MEP **Claude Turmes** commented:

"European leaders should be uniting behind Bonn as the host city for IRENA. This would be a highly symbolic step, underlining Europe's commitment to remain at the cutting edge in renewables technology, with the clear benefits that implies in terms of European jobs and exports in the coming years.

Sarkozy and Brown must not break ranks and support Abu Dhabi's bid, whatever the selfish, short-term benefits to their own countries in making backroom deals. This course of action would only undermine Europe's place on the world stage as a leader in the field of renewables, as well as playing into the hands of the oil and nuclear lobbies, which would dearly like to see the agency sidelined as a force to promote renewables only in developing countries."

Notes to editors:

(1) Having established IRENA in Bonn on 26 January 2009, the signatory States will now determine the Interim Director-General and the interim headquarters. This decision will be taken on 29-30 June 2009 in Sharm El Sheik (Egypt) and will have tremendous importance for the future of this Agency, which aspires to become the main driving force for promoting a rapid transition towards the widespread and sustainable use of renewable energy on a global scale.

As of 10 June 2009, 93 States have signed the Statute of the Agency, amongst them 20 EU Member States (non signatories: Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and the UK).

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Claude Turmes

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