

Conference: Energy Intelligence for Europe
September 23, 2005
Welcoming speech

Dear participants in the conference “Energy Intelligence for Europe”

I am honoured and pleased having been invited as a representative from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to participate in the opening of this conference.

First of all let me start by welcoming those of you who come from afar. I hope you will have an enjoyable stay in Copenhagen.

One could say that Copenhagen is a very well suited place for this conference. I am here thinking of the symbolic view from the shores of Copenhagen. You will – especially on clear days – have the excellent view of offshore wind power right in the middle of “Øresund”. You will also see “Svanemølleværket” - 50 years old but modernised for the use of natural gas. Looking a little bit further towards the shores of Sweden you would be able to get a view of the now closed down nuclear power plant “Barsebäck”. The view might be an inspiration for your discussions and analysis.

A look at state of world affairs shows us that discussing and analysing the options between different energy sources is now more relevant than

ever. High growth in China and India is coupled to an immensely increased energy demand. Giving us all a clear indicator of long-term challenges. Recent events such as the in all aspects disastrous hurricane Katrina and to be feared the new hurricane Rita and its consequences for energy supply is another example of the importance of discussing and analysing energy supply and energy options. The discussion should include all energy sources and very importantly also consumption patterns and energy efficiency. Elements I am sure will be included in the work of this conference.

Technological progress in all fields calls for continued reflection on how we address and choose between the energy options before us. This could be exemplified by some very different recent energy developments that show us the span of options. One is the movement toward affordable and efficient windmills caterings for single households and pointing towards a decentralised energy supply. Another is the breakthrough in the international negotiations with the agreement to start the construction of the experimental fusions plant ITER in Cadarache. A third could be Danish researcher's successful development of the hydrogen pill opening new avenues for storage of energy.

Also taking a look at the political realities in Europe with regard to nuclear power one will on the one hand see a number of countries, including Denmark, defending a non-atomic energy policy. On the

other hand one will see a number of countries, where I think you could say, that a revival of nuclear power is taking place. The revival of nuclear power is in these countries often based on arguments such as the neutral CO2 impact of nuclear power.

The examples underline that we must also frequently revisits the considerations on whether all parts of the political framework for energy supply are still optimal. And whether we with profit can try to change the scenery.

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Most of you will be aware of the Danish government's sceptical approach to nuclear power. You will also be aware of the hesitant position taken with respect to a reform of the EURATOM Treaty in the course of the discussions on the Constitutional Treaty.

Let me however underscore that I have no preconceived views on the EURATOM Treaty. Let me rather emphasize that I am confident that today's highly qualified speakers and participant will come up with new ideas, angles and arguments that can serve as a basis for further consideration to the benefit of all of us. This makes me look forward to our follow-up discussions.

I hence not only welcome all of you as participants, I also welcome the initiative taken by today's conveners.

I wish all of you a fruitful and interesting day.

Thank you for your attention.