

Brussels, 29 January 2008

European Commission recognizes outstanding sustainable energy projects

On 29 January six winning projects from four EU member states - Italy, Austria, Hungary and France - were awarded trophies at the Sustainable Energy Europe Awards ceremony taking place under the umbrella of the second European Sustainable Energy Week. The European Commission initiative aims to raise public awareness on the use of renewable energy sources and energy-efficient methods. The winners were awarded for the exceptional work they have already accomplished but, above all, for the commitment they have made to the sustainable future.

The Sustainable Energy Europe Awards 2008 is the second edition of the European Commission's initiative to award outstanding energy projects launched by local authorities, government agencies, private companies and associations. The winners were selected by an independent selection committee, comprising special representatives from key energy stakeholders at regional, national and European level from more than 240 project nominees. The awards were presented within the following categories: 'Cooperation Programmes', 'Demonstration and Dissemination', 'Market Transformation', 'Prom-Com-Educ' and 'Community'. A sixth, special award was presented for the most promising project.

The award ceremony was one of the highlights of European Union Sustainable Energy Week and brought together energy experts from all over Europe to celebrate the efforts of the projects that promoted the use of sustainable energy.

The winning projects were:

- Desire - Development and Sustainability with International Renewable Energies Network (ENEA, Italy). Based on e-learning and aimed at the countries of Eastern Europe and the Southern Mediterranean, the "Desire" programme is intended to promote renewable energy
- Fo.R.Agrì - Renewable Energy Sources in Agriculture in the Province of Mantova (by AGIRE Energy Agency – Mantova, Italy). One of the aims of this project is to produce local sustainable energy for local agricultural use. The programme includes, among other things, the creation of two high-tech Bio-energy Clusters that produce biogas; research and experimentation for an innovative biomass power station.
- ÖKOPROFIT® (City of Graz, Austria). The "Ecoprofit" programme has helped private companies to optimise their energy consumption, to bring about productivity improvements and cost reductions. "Ecoprofit" has now been adopted in several other European regions.
- Integration of Active Learning and Energy Monitoring with School Curriculum - AL (by Innoterm Energetics, Hungary). 16 partners in 14 European countries take part in this project that makes *Active learning* part of the curriculum in order to increase schoolchildrens' awareness of energy conservation. The schools involved have been able to reduce their energy bills by around 15%.

- Province of Milan Action Plan for Energy Efficiency (Province of Milan). New building regulations have been introduced to improve insulation for homes and heating systems. A system of energy certification and InfoEnergy centres were also created for better public communication.
- Special award for the most promising project was received by MODEL Management of Domains related to Energy in Local authorities (by Energie-Cités, France). MODEL is a brand new project aimed at ten new Member States of the EU and Croatia. The goal is to help 34 municipalities to become real models in terms of sustainable energy use.