

# FINANCIAL TIMES

February 5, 2012 4:21 pm

## Europe sees surge in clean power

15

By Pilita Clark, Environment Correspondent

A record 71 per cent of all the new power generating capacity fitted in the Europe Union last year came from solar panels, wind turbines or other renewable energy sources, new figures show.

In a sign of how green subsidies are reshaping Europe's energy landscape, the amount of clean power installed in 2011 rose to 32 gigawatts, according to a European Wind Energy Association report, largely thanks to a surge in solar installations in Italy and Germany.

That is a jump from the 23 GW installed in 2010, which accounted for 54 per cent of new power capacity put in that year, and the 3.5 GW fitted in 2000, which was just over 20 per cent.

The EWEA report comes amid growing opposition to onshore wind farms in many countries, which opponents claim are unsightly and inefficient.

More than 100 Conservative party MPs in the UK have written to the prime minister to demand a cut in onshore wind subsidies, the Sunday Telegraph newspaper reported.

New wind power installations across Europe last year were about the same as in 2010, the EWEA report shows.

But the report depicts a steady rise in the amount of green power being installed in the bloc, which is committed to getting 20 per cent of all its energy needs from renewable sources by 2020.

"The 21st century sees the EU power sector moving away from fuel oil, coal and nuclear while continuing to increase its total installed capacity with gas, wind and solar PV to meet increasing demand," it said.

Solar photovoltaic systems were the clear leader in 2011, making up 47 per cent of all new installations, more than gas and wind power, the next two biggest sources, combined.

The rise was especially pronounced in Italy, which became the world's biggest solar PV market for the first time in 2011, according to the European Photovoltaic Industry Association.

One reason, the association said, was the "rush of installations" at the end of 2010 prompted by a rule that allowed systems installed by the end of 2010 but connected by mid-2011 to benefit

- from more advantageous subsidies. A total of 9 GW of new capacity was connected in Italy, up from just 2 GW in 2010.

Subsidy rule changes also saw a spurt of solar installations in the UK, where 700 megawatts was put in over the year.

Germany still leads the world in terms of the total amount of solar installations fitted and the European market as a whole is still the world's largest, accounting for 75 per cent of global installations.

The EWEA figures show that of the 302 GW of new power capacity installed in the EU since 2000, just under half (48 per cent) has been from renewable sources.

Gas power plants have also grown sharply, meaning gas and renewables together accounted for more than 90 per cent of all the new power installations since 2000.

Though coal power has declined in many EU countries, more coal capacity was installed than decommissioned in the bloc in 2011.

Printed from: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/58dfb090-4fef-11e1-8c9a-00144feabdc0.html>

Print a single copy of this article for personal use. Contact us if you wish to print more to distribute to others.

© THE FINANCIAL TIMES LTD 2012 FT and 'Financial Times' are trademarks of The Financial Times Ltd.