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PRESS RELEASE of the CLUB OF ROME

Solar Plan (MSP) becomes the flagship project of the Union for the Mediterranean

Dr. Gerhard Knies, Project Director of the Club of Rome's Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation (TREC), in an open letter describes the progress in the comprehensive TREC concept for energy, water and climate security in Europe, the Middle East and Northern Africa, in short: EUMENA (Europe, Middle-East, Northern Africa). Solarserver.com published the document as "point of view" in December 2008.

TREC was founded in September 2003 and the network aspires to realize its concept in cooperation with people in politics, industry and the financial world to supply clean power from the deserts for a sustainable world of 10 billion people.

Dear supporters of the DESERTEC Concept,
the original visions of the Transmediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation TREC of EU-MENA as a "Community for Development, Climate Stabilisation and Good Neighbourhood", as conceived in the TREC founding paper from October 6th 2003 (see attachment - it is very interesting to read this over 5 years old paper!) are beginning to become a reality, thanks to the Union for the Mediterranean and its Mediterranean Solar Plan (MSP). This is a very good message to all of us who worked for this goal since more than 5 years.

In fact, essential targets of the MSP are based on the DESERTEC Concept presented in our White Paper summarizing the DLR studies MED- and TRANS-CSP, and furthermore, as a senior member of the French Ministry for economy and finance told me at the end of the Ministerial meeting on the Solar Plan, on Saturday, 2008/11/22 in Paris, also the conception of the Solar Plan was directly stimulated by our work. After the sessions had ended, he approached me to tell me: " Mr. Knies, you should know: TREC is the father of the Solar Plan."

I replied that each success has many fathers, and that I know that there are many who contributed! But he insisted that our work gave the decisive kick to the French government, at the end of 2007. He told me that he had been reading the TREC web sites since some time and that he copied material, in particular the fresh White Paper on DESERTEC, and gave it to colleagues in the government who were working on the plans for the Mediterranean Union (now: Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean), and that the information about the DESERTEC Concept was received with great interest.

Indeed, I remember how we were surprised when Michael Straub was approached by the French Embassy in Berlin because of the DESERTEC Concept, on January 17th 2008, and then at January 25th, when I received an e-mail from /Antoine-Tristan Mocilnikar/ from the French Presidential office which said: "We are very much interested in these ideas. Can we have a talk about that?" We immediately had one and several long phone conversations followed.

The approach by the French embassy was triggered by our presentation of the DESERTEC-Concept at the "Zukunftssalon" of 4 MdBs (/Hans-Josef Fell, Josef Göppel, Michael Kauch, and Michael Müller/) in Dresdener Bank, at November-6 2007, and the approach by the Presidential Office went back to a recommendation to / Antoine-Tristan Mocilnikar/ by /Paul Suding/ from REN21. The DESERTEC Concept had also been brought to the attention of the European Parliament at a public event, organized by 4 MEPs (/Matthias Groote, Rebecca Harms, Vittorio Prodi and Anders Wijkman/) ***** in Brussels, by His Royal Highness /Prince Hassan bin Talal /from Jordan, on November 28th, and by handing over of the White Paper to the Parliament's president Prof. /Hans-Gert Pöttering/. As a follow up, this presentation led later to an appeal of 25 MEPs to the President of the European Council, /Nicolas Sarkozy/, and to the President of the European Commission, /Jose Manuel Barroso/.

Our communication with the French authorities in January then lead to an invitation to the French embassy in Berlin at February 12th, to a

2+1/2 hour meeting with 3 representatives from the embassy, where we then were asked about many details and about the status of the DESERTEC project. At this meeting we were assured that France was seriously looking into solar energy projects with the intent to create cooperation between Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, along the lines rolled out in the DESERTEC Concept, even though France was pushing for nuclear energy projects in this region at the same time. We were informed that its nuclear power plans France would continue to pursue bilaterally and directly with countries in this region. The solar energy projects as envisaged in the MED-CSP and TRANS-CSP studies of DLR and then summarized in our White Paper "The DESERTEC Concept", would be needed in addition for the upcoming power demands, and could be the core of joint efforts in the EU-MENA region and become an important activity of the Union for the Mediterranean. We were also asked if we would know or what we would expect how the German government might react when approached with this proposal.

The DESERTEC Concept then became a basic part of the first French preliminary working paper for the Solar Plan from February 6th. The communication and the cooperation with French President's office and with French government branches in the run-up to the July 13th event was very pleasant. We are glad that we not only contributed to the CSP studies for the German Government, but by our work also to the transfer of the outcome of these studies to European politics. Now there is the Solar Plan, and it is officially called the flagship project of the Union for the Mediterranean!

This is exactly what TREC originally wanted to achieve, but it is more than most of us believed we ever would achieve. With pleasure we here acknowledge the role of Minister /Jürgen Trittin/ who approved the financial support for the DLR-studies so swiftly at the end of 2003, and the approval of the AQUA-CSP study by BMU under Minister /Sigmar Gabriel/. We also enjoyed supporting efforts from various sides, in particular from the Potsdam Institute of Climate Change Impact Research (PIK), from the e-parliament network, and from ESTELA association.

I thought you all should be informed on this very important process.

The new DESERTEC Foundation will now accompany and support the further development of this great endeavour, to make it a real success on the ground, and to spread this concept to other parts of the world with the aim: DESERTEC - clean power from deserts for a sustainable world of 10 billion people.

My best regards
Gerhard Knies

PS: feel free to pass on this e-mail to further people with an interest in DESERTEC.

Informationen für Journalisten:

www.DESERTEC.org

www.DESERTEC.org/press.html

www.DESERTEC.org/downloads/articles/gerhard_knies.jpg

Statements by the President of the European Parliament Prof. Poettering
(please download first, then open):

<http://www.DESERTEC.org/downloads/articles/DESERTEC.avi>

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