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German wind power still flying high

Another record-breaking year sees German wind power capacity climb to 12,000 megawatts

Osnabrück (22.02.03). German wind power grew faster than ever before in 2002. Last year, 2,328 wind turbines with a total capacity of 3,247 MW were newly installed, 20% more than the 2,659 MW installed in 2001, the previous record-breaking year.

Wind power is becoming an inherent part of Germany's energy supply. At the end of December 2002, there were some 13,750 turbines with a joint capacity of 12,000 MW installed throughout the nation – 37% more than at the end of 2001. "In an average wind year, the installed capacity in Germany can meet about 4.5% of the country's electricity demand," says Peter Ahmels, president of the German Wind Energy Association (Bundesverband WindEnergie – BWE).

Increased use of wind power is essential not only for environmental and climate protection reasons. Clean wind energy also stimulates the labour market. At present, the sector employs around 45,000 people, almost a fifth of whom were hired just last year. "Considering the otherwise negative developments on the jobs market, this is a very welcome trend," says Ahmels.

Looking at the regional breakdown of installed wind power capacity in Germany, the state of Lower Saxony still leads with 900 MW newly installed in 2002. At the end of the year, 3,626 turbines (3,325 MW) were up and running there. Wind power can now meet nearly 14% of the state's power demand.

Behind Lower Saxony, however, the sequence of the states has shifted somewhat in comparison to previous years. Schleswig-Holstein, which for years had occupied the number two position, dropped to number five with only 246 MW newly installed. In this state between the North and Baltic Seas, it's gradually becoming noticeable that most of the certified areas are already built up. Also North Rhine-Westphalia, which for a long time had come in third place, fell to number four. Brandenburg (504 MW in 2002) and Saxony-Anhalt (498 MW), on the other hand, both moved up the list, while coastal Mecklenburg-West Pomerania added a mere 108 MW.

But the biggest share of wind power is still in Schleswig-Holstein, where 2,513 turbines (1,799 MW) now meet more than 25% of the power demand. Mecklenburg-West Pomerania follows with about 21%, trailed by Saxony-Anhalt with more than 18% and Brandenburg with more than 14%.

Market leader in 2002 was Aurich-based Enercon, which built 34% of the newly installed capacity (28.5% in 2001). Vestas Deutschland GmbH based in Husum follows with a market share of 17.8% (19.5% in 2001), then GE Wind Energy GmbH based in Salzbergen with 13.1% (10.9% in 2001), Nordex AG of Hamburg with 8.7% (10.4% in 2001) and NEG Micon Deutschland GmbH based in Ostenfeld with 8.3% (11.4% in 2001).

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