



COMMENT



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Welcome to 'Club Med'

co-ordinating decentralized energy for 21 countries

'All that concerns the Mediterranean is of the deepest interest to civilized man, for the history of its progress is the history of the development of the world; the memory of the great men who have lived and died around its banks; the recollection of the undying works that have come thence to delight us for ever; the story of patient research and brilliant discoveries connected with every physical phenomenon presented by its waves and currents, and with every order of creatures dwelling in and around its waters. The science of the Mediterranean is the epitome of the science of the world.' Edward Forbes

The Mediterranean region is unique, in that it links together three continents (Europe, Africa and Asia) and 21 countries over an area of 2.5 million square kilometres. The region's history is rich in trade and commerce, as it was an important route for merchants and travellers of ancient times, allowing for cultural exchange between emergent peoples of the region. Today, it represents a strategic opportunity to advance energy and environmental issues and share best practices throughout the region.

In an effort to capture the opportunities for decentralized energy in the Mediterranean region, WADE has recently launched WADE Med, based in Rome, which has produced significant interest and support from the three continents.

While there have been some efforts, through the EU and elsewhere, to advance collaboration in the region around energy, there has been virtually no attention given to regional dialogue on decentralized energy, cogeneration and energy efficiency. According to the IEA, combined heat and power is a relatively insignificant piece of the power generation portfolio in a number of Mediterranean countries, especially when compared with the experience in northern European countries. This is, perhaps, not surprising given the greater emphasis on energy efficiency and demand for waste heat in colder climates.

However, as climate change concerns escalate, the need for regional sustainable energy solutions becomes more acute.

The severe droughts and fires that have stricken some of the Mediterranean countries, and potential for flooding of low-lying coastal areas, will drive greater regional investment in efficient decentralized solutions. In addition to climate change, the current economic climate will provide a number of challenges for increased investment in energy infrastructure, but will also provide the impetus to maximize productivity and squeeze every Btu out of imported fossil fuels.

Although there is not an equal distribution of oil and gas resources amongst the countries of the region – some countries relying primarily on imports and others being blessed with abundant supplies for export – there are signs that greater co-operation in regional energy trade and investment is in the works. Through regional energy co-operation, supplies of natural gas can be made available to fuel local combined heat and power projects. The abundant sunshine and wind offers endless opportunities for local power production, and their intermittency can be bolstered through quick-start decentralized generation technology.

The Mediterranean diet, rich in olive oil, is now recognized globally as a heart-healthy way of life. By forging this regional alliance around decentralized power we can reduce the oil and the fat in the energy diet and improve the health of the 21 countries of the Mediterranean. We hope that you will join us in this effort and come to WADE's new Club Med.

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