Wind is at the heart of Europe's competitiveness

Wind energy is central to Europe's decarbonisation strategy and economic future. With a goal to supply over 50% of the continent's electricity by 2050, the sector is vital for reducing energy costs and maintaining Europe's leadership in renewable innovation. However, slow permitting processes, grid constraints, and stagnating electrification rates are holding back progress. At WindEurope 2025, industry experts will gather in Copenhagen to tackle these challenges and explore solutions for scaling up, electrifying, and delivering the wind energy projects needed to meet ambitious climate and energy targets.

Wind energy is uniquely positioned to support the decarbonisation of the continent's economy. The EU Competitiveness Compass and the Clean Industrial Deal place wind energy at the heart of the EU's industrial strategy. The goal is for wind to supply over 50% of electricity by 2050, up from 20% today.

Affordable, locally sourced renewables are essential for maintaining economic competitiveness, reducing electricity bills for households and businesses, and strengthening Europe's leadership in wind energy manufacturing and innovation. However, current installation rates of new wind turbines are falling short of meeting this ambitious target.

The biggest bottlenecks: permitting, grids and electrification

The pace of new wind energy installations is too slow to meet Europe's climate and energy security targets. One of the main barriers is the slow and complex permitting process. Many EU countries take too long to approve wind farm projects, and the process remains bogged down in paperwork, lacking sufficient digitalisation.

This delay is hindering crucial investments in wind energy. The solution? Simplify and accelerate permitting processes. While the EU's new rules are a step in the right direction, full implementation by Member States is key. Germany has proven it is possible, increasing its permitting rate sevenfold compared to just five years ago.

Expanding the electricity grid is another critical challenge, but it's essential for integrating more wind energy into our systems. To reduce curtailment and avoid delays in clean energy deployment, the EU needs €584 billion in grid investments by 2030.

Currently, hundreds of gigawatts of wind energy projects are stuck in grid connection queues. The EU could learn from the UK's approach, where the government is now prioritising grid connections by filtering requests and focusing on connecting the most promising projects first. This strategy could help unlock the potential of countless wind energy projects across Europe.

A third major challenge is the slow adoption of electrification, which is the most cost-effective and efficient way to decarbonise. By harnessing local resources of wind, solar, and water, we can reduce reliance on imported gas, oil, LNG, or uranium.

Direct electrification is often more efficient than complex, indirect methods like blue hydrogen, which involves carbon capture and storage, an unproven and novel approach to storing CO_2 underground. Yet electrification rates in Europe are stagnating.

It's encouraging that the EU Commission plans to address this issue with a dedicated Electrification Action Plan later this year.

Scaling, electrifying, and delivering: key focus areas for WindEurope 2025

The WindEurope 2025 event in Copenhagen will bring together the most experienced industry experts. The event tagline has three clear tasks: 'Scale up, Electrify, Deliver'. Firstly, we will discuss how to 'scale up'. This refers to strengthening the supply chain and building a resilient energy system.

Secondly, we want to 'electrify'. Electrification means reducing energy costs, expanding electricity grids, investing in electricity infrastructure like storage solutions, and driving the demand for renewable electricity.

Thirdly, we need to 'deliver'. That refers to building projects, including improved auction designs that work with today's market realities and fast-tracking permitting to get from the planning stage to the final project.

These three topics will feature prominently in our three-day conference program and in various side and social events. We'll explore these priorities through 70+ sessions and insights from 350+ speakers across government, industry, finance, NGOs, and academia.

A series of side events will dive deeper into key industry topics. Sessions will cover AI and smart tech in wind, offshore supply chains, wind energy and defense, and community engagement. Highlights include a visit to Esbjerg, North Sea Summit preparations, and new offshore solutions from MODEC. These events offer insights, networking, and the latest innovations shaping the future of wind energy.

The programme is live so plan your visit now and see you in Copenhagen this April.

www.windeurope.org