Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidts speech at EWEA 2012, 16 April in Copenhagen.

Statsminister Helle Thorning-Schmidts tale ved åbning af EWEA 2012 den 16. april 2012 i København

Det talte ord gælder

Your Royal Highness, distinguished panel, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a real privilege to open the EWEA conference in Copenhagen. I am deeply impressed that more than 10,000 people are expected to participate over the next four days. This is truly the place to be when it comes to renewable energy and green growth.

As his Royal Highness underlined, the pressure on our climate, our environment, our resources and our planet is growing.

Essentially, this leaves us with only one way forward. We must take the green road ahead.

All of us present today are fellow travellers on this green road. The wind power sector is absolutely crucial on our common journey.

In Denmark, we have a long tradition of using wind energy. Through centuries, the wind – and we have plenty of it – has driven our ships, our pumps and our turbines.

Building on this strong tradition, the Danish wind industry represents 25,000 jobs in Denmark. Exports amount to close to 60 billion Danish kroner a year. In short, the Danish wind industry is a vital source of growth and prosperity in Denmark.

We need our wind industry to prosper even more. We need all green energy sectors to prosper. All over Europe. And you – the industry – need stable long-term conditions to do so. You need to know what the political framework is.

Let me outline today how my government strives to provide the best conditions for green growth in Denmark and in Europe.

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Less than a month ago, the Danish government secured broad political support for an ambitious national energy plan for Denmark.

This is, I think, the most ambitious plan ever in Denmark and – to my knowledge – in Europe. Perhaps even in the world.

With the agreement, we have broad political support for a number of important objectives that Denmark should reach by 2020:

We will ensure that 35 percent of our total energy consumption should be generated from renewable resources.
We will construct new major wind farms. The goal is that half of all Danish electricity consumption will be provided by wind energy by 2020.

And we have charted the course to our next, even more ambitious goal: One hundred percent renewable energy in Denmark by 2050.

With our new energy agreement, we have set the bar even higher than before.

And it not only brings Denmark in the lead when it comes to the green economy transition. It is also estimated to create up to 8,000 new jobs in the next few years. Jobs that we really need.

The new energy plan gives you a fair wind to continue your course.

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We are still in times of trouble and crisis in Europe. And in times of crisis, political priorities tend to shift.

There is a danger that long-term objectives give way to short-term goals. There is a danger that green ambitions are lowered. I know this is a concern throughout the green industry.

But my government firmly believes that the green agenda is both about job creation in the short run and about our climate in the long run.

Also, the green agenda is about reducing our dependency on scarce and very costly energy sources. We will save money, when we use less energy. And we will save money, when we are less vulnerable to rising oil, coal and natural gas prices. The cost of inaction today will only increase in the future.

Green investments are investments in both the present and the future.

And Denmark will be making huge investments where we will need contributions from competent companies all over Europe.

We will welcome numerous bidders for the Danish projects. And we will design the tender process in an open dialogue. In this way, we will ensure strong competition and the best possible end result.

Look at this as a very open invitation.

We expect the tender to be published next year. So keep an eye out for Denmark – you are already needed for the dialogue.

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You are needed to create green growth in Denmark. You are needed to create green growth in Europe.

More than 20 million European jobs are linked to the environment in one way or another.
The Commission estimates that their proposal for a new energy efficiency directive will deliver about two million new jobs.

And the European Policy Centre in Brussels has even higher predictions for new jobs.

This clearly illustrates the potential of pursuing the green agenda.

But to realise the potential we must act. And we must act now.

This is also why Denmark works hard to promote green growth during our EU Presidency.

An overwhelming majority in the EU support that we forge ahead on the road to a low carbon economy by 2050. Some might still be hesitant but we remain convinced that this is the only path forward for Europe.

This is also the case in the ongoing negotiations on the next EU-budget. Denmark is working to ensure that EU funding is better targeted to growth and greening of the economy.

For many years, the EU has been a front runner globally on sustainable development and clean technologies.

Today, we need to scale up our investments in Europe’s green sector. We need to move speedily to adopt the necessary legislation in Brussels. Because without the political framework things will not happen.

And also, we need your engagement, the private sector’s engagement, in the green transaction.

My message is clear: Together, we can transform the European economy into a green Super Power. But we need action to do so.

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Let me conclude: The potential for green growth is huge.

And two factors are essential to realize this potential:

First, a green and long-term political framework. Second, your innovation, growth and jobs.

This includes the innovations which you will present at the exhibition here at EWEA 2012.

I have been told that a wind turbine consists of 8,000 components. This certainly leaves room for numerous innovations.

I wish you all a good conference and four inspiring days.

Thank you very much for your attention.