



Wind started blowing in the Russian energy sector

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Wind power industry is experiencing a boom in modern world. Thus, even in 2009 world's crisis wind power market turnover reached 50 billion Euros, the highest increase since 2002, told the President of the Russian Association of Wind Power Industry Igor Bryzgunov, in view of the Wind Day celebrated on June 15 in Europe.

He said that the potential wind energy use in Russia is huge. Experts calculated that it would be economically feasible to generate about 33 billion kWh annually. And although, according to Bryzgunov, today's modest performance is still very far from this forecasted level, we can still say that the wind has blown in the right direction in Russia as well and things started moving in this field. And, if "windmills" adversaries usually used to refer to the expensiveness of wind farm construction, due to imported plants implantation because of the low efficiency of domestic ones. Today the Russian Industry is fully capable to set up modern equipment production, 200 times more efficient than the ones used 10 years ago. And the price of one kW of wind generated electricity is already approaching the price of gas generated by power plants and is actually cheaper than fuel oil and coal generated electricity, stated the President of RAWI.

However, he continued, we wouldn't want to compare, say, natural gas and wind. "We are deliberately moving away from the definition of "alternative energy" to the concept of "renewable energy", - explained companion of Vesti.Ru. Of course, in his opinion, we also need to think about the fact that oil and gas reserves in our country are not unlimited, and that these conventional sources of energy are not recovered for free too. Moreover, the wind energy, being relatively free, is more environmental friendly. And these advantages are being recognized in Russia more and more in recent years. A number of projects like, the wind farm in Kalmykia, is already in operation. By the way, a map of projects is planned to be published on RAWI website soon.

However, a number of practical issues should be resolved first so investors could begin to develop this promising industry: in particular, premiums to wholesale market prices for RES-generated electricity, and technical grid connection compensation for small generators (up to 25 MW). These issues are now being resolved by the Ministry of Energy. The Russian President Dmitry Medvedev instructed the government to complete these by-laws preparation before October 1, reminded Bryzgunov.

Among other things, the issue of compulsory RES- generated power share purchase by market participants is still awaiting his decision. It is quite a pending problem for Russia, where the conventional energy is cheaper today, said the head of "Small-scale Power Generation" subcommittee of the Russian Duma Energy Committee George Leontiev to Vesti.Ru. And it is necessary, said the deputy, to establish domestic modern equipment production for solar and wind power generation, as well as local fuels, such as peat (Russian reserves are the second in the world), to change this situation. Some preference for

Russian generators (including concessional lending, tax holidays, etc.) are already included in the energy efficiency program, which is being developed by the Government, said Leontiev.

While discussing this topic experts have mentioned that the RES-generated power energy will remain inefficient until Russia increases power prices to a much higher level as, for example, in Europe.

In addition to the well-known expensiveness of capital investments in wind power industry, the fact that it needs backup facilities, due to volatile nature of wind, should also be taken into account, notes Igor Kozhukhovskiy, Agency for Energy Industry Balance Forecast Director General, to Vesti.Ru. Therefore, he concluded substantial state support will be required for this promising field development. Taking into account state resources by 2030, Russia's level of wind power development is expected to increase up to 6 GW, whereas now it is only a few MW, said Agency Director General.

About 30 GJ of wind power energy is generated all over the world at the moment, of which only 1.5-2 GJ in Russia, noted Academician, Secretary of the Energy Sciences Division of RAS, Vladimir Fortov. He also supported the message that the Russians should not be "spitting against the wind." "We must make use of all forms of energy available to us. Including, wind energy, which is also renewable and environmental-friendly energy. Its generation, of course, should be developed by Russians," - concluded the discussion Academician Fortov.