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ENERGY

[Special Report: EU on track for solar grid parity by 2017](#)

EurActiv

Solar photovoltaic (PV) power is set to achieve the environmentalists' holy grail of grid parity – the same cost price as fossil fuels – across the European Union by 2017, according to a UN expert.

[Analysis: U.S. wind growing again, but business still choppy](#)

Reuters

The U.S. wind industry is growing again after taking a big step backward last year.

[UK "green bank" focused on offshore wind](#)

Reuters

Britain's new 3 billion pound "green investment bank" will at first focus on offshore wind, the department for business on said Tuesday.

[U.S. smart grid to cost billions, save trillions](#)

Reuters

A planned modernization of the U.S. national power grid will cost up to \$476 billion over the next 20 years but will provide up to \$2 trillion in customer benefits over that time, according to industry experts.

[Wind forecast upgrade should mean big drop in fossil fuel use](#)

The Guardian

UK's electricity infrastructure controller now knows where the wind will blow next 87% of the time – potentially saving 1.5GW.

[Japan PM vows to boost renewable energy](#)

Reuters

Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan pledged on Wednesday to boost renewable energy to at least 20 percent of Japan's electricity supply in the 2020s, as he reviews the role of atomic energy after the world's worst nuclear disaster in 25 years.

[GE unveils gas turbine aimed at stabilizing grids](#)

Reuters

General Electric Co introduced a new design of power plant that can adjust production quickly to allow electric grid operators to better manage output changes from wind turbines and solar panels.

[EU should move towards common energy market: EP head](#)

Reuters

A common energy market for the European Union should be the next step of the 27-nation bloc's integration, the president of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek was quoted on Thursday as saying.

[Europe divided over nuclear power after Fukushima disaster](#)

The Guardian

UK and France lobby to have safety checks watered down, while Switzerland moves to phase out its nuclear power plants.

[Italy moves a step closer to shelving new nuclear plants](#)

The Guardian

Government wins confidence vote on measures scrapping construction after Japan disaster prompts public fears.

[Switzerland bins nuclear reactor plans](#)

EurActiv

The Swiss government has voted to scrap plans to build new nuclear reactors, but said it would not shut existing plants prematurely.

[Oettinger backtracks on nuclear stress tests](#)

EurActiv

In the absence of an agreement to include terrorism threats in nuclear stress tests, Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger said he was satisfied with a two-track approach, leaving a decision on this issue for later.

[Nuclear stress tests](#)

EU

The "stress tests" are a set of additional safety criteria drawn up in the light of the nuclear accident in Fukushima. These EU wide tests will be in addition to safety standards already in place at national level. Their aim is to assess whether the safety margins used in the licensing of nuclear power plants were sufficient to cover unexpected events.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

[Europe's largest annual environment conference explores the spectrum of resource efficiency](#)

EU

Green Week 2011 launches a call for citizens to "use less and live better". During the conference's four days, over 3500 participants will look for ways to use our planet's resources more sustainably. This year's Green Week gathers participants from a wide variety of backgrounds, including EU

institutions, business and industry, non-governmental organisations, public authorities, the scientific community, academia and the media.

[Green Week: Europe's Largest Environmental Policy Conference Begins](#)

UNEP

UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner, will be at the Conference and will meet with senior EU officials to discuss UNEP's recent groundbreaking Green Economy Report, a range of environmental issues from metals recycling to climate change, as well as the EU and UNEP's preparation for next year's UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20.

Among those he will meet are European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, Committee of the Regions President Mercedes Bresso, European Commissioner for the Environment Janez Potocnik, European Commissioner for Climate Action, Connie Hedegaard, Chair of the European Parliament's Environment Committee Jo Leinen, Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions, and Secretary-General of the EEAS Pierre Vimont.

Mr. Steiner will also have the opportunity to meet European leaders, including Spain's Minister for the Environment and UNEP Governing Council President Rosa Aguilar Rivero, and Belgium's Minister for Development Cooperation Olivier Chastel.

[Of course we need industrial goods, but to save Earth we must cut consumption](#)

The Guardian

We could lead more fulfilling lives by slowing down the rate of technological progress, says Simon Fairlie.

[Green bonds could spur on sustainable economy, reports OECD](#)

The Guardian

Scaling-up bond issuances from 'drop in the ocean' \$11bn level will promote greener world economy valuing the environment.

[Inquiétante pollution aux particules fines dans le métro marseillais](#)

Le Monde

Dans le métro marseillais, le taux de particules fines en suspension (PM10) serait par endroits cinq fois supérieur aux seuils tolérés par les autorités sanitaires.

BIODIVERSITY

[Fishing opportunities in EU waters in 2012: getting the balance right to reduce overfishing](#)

EU

The European Commission published its report on progress achieved in the Common Fisheries Policy over the last few years and its suggestions for fishing opportunities in EU waters in 2012. The document sets out how the Commission intends to act on the scientific advice it receives about the state of fish stocks when proposing catch limits and quotas for next year.

[Liberia looks to save its rainforests by barcoding trees](#)

The Guardian

Liberia has most of west Africa's remaining trees, but can its history of conflict and corruption be overcome?

[Brazil votes to ease Amazon rules](#)

BBC News

Brazil's Chamber of Deputies has voted to ease restrictions on the amount of land farmers must preserve as forest.

Supporters say Brazil needs land to boost agricultural production, while environmentalists say destruction of the Amazon rainforest will increase.

[Analysis: Land banks buffer Indonesian palm oil from forest ban](#)

Reuters

Palm oil firms in Indonesia can overcome a two-year ban on forest clearing by tapping into land reserves, but they face bigger problems attracting the labor needed to work the soil and boost yields.

[Sierra Leone chimps threatened by disappearing forest](#)

AFP

Deforestation is threatening Sierra Leone's wild chimpanzee population, west Africa's second largest, the country's deputy forestry minister told a meeting of wildlife experts Tuesday.

[Ecuador's highland bugs key to biodiversity](#)

BBC News

Of all the things to worry about, it is not immediately obvious why anyone would choose some tiny bugs living in a stream some 4,500m (14,765ft) up in the Ecuadorean Andes. But Professor Dangles and his fellow scientists at the French Development Research Institute and the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador are convinced that the rapidly retreating Andean glaciers offer an extra layer of stress not just to water supplies but also to the delicate mixture of fauna and flora in the region.

[Bruxelles veut durcir les règles sur les quotas de pêche dans l'UE](#)

Le Monde

L'UE compte réduire automatiquement les quotas de pêche lorsque des données scientifiques suffisamment claires feront défaut sur les espèces.

CLIMATE CHANGE

[Green fund targets energy, distressed CO2 assets](#)

Reuters

Carbon traders on Wednesday launched a fund targeting markets in carbon credits and renewable energy aiming to exploit market turbulence and government incentives respectively.

[Norway's greenhouse gases jump 4.8 percent in 2010](#)

Reuters

Norway's greenhouse gas emissions rose 4.8 percent in 2010 after a two-year decline and are well above the country's goals under a U.N. plan, Statistics Norway said on Wednesday.

[Australia releases first rules for CO2 farming scheme](#)

Reuters

Australia released rules on Wednesday that would allow farmers and indigenous land owners to earn carbon credits for changing the way they burn-off grasslands, a regular practice in the fire-prone north.

WATER

[China power crunch to worsen as drought slashes hydro](#)

Reuters

The worst drought to hit central China in half a century has brought water levels in some of the country's biggest hydropower producing regions to critical levels and could exacerbate electricity shortages over the summer.