



**Declaration by the Council of Europa Nostra**  
**On the impact of wind-power on the countryside**

1. The Council of Europa Nostra, Pan-European Federation for Heritage, meeting at The Hague on 30 September 2004, debated the environmental and heritage implications of the rapidly increasing use of wind-power for electricity generation, and reached the following conclusions.

**General considerations**

2. The Council recalled Europa Nostra's statutory commitment to the protection and enhancement of the heritage in all its aspects (immovable and movable, built and natural) in the wider context of the cultural landscape.
3. The Council fully recognised, and shared, the serious international concerns which exist about climate change, as reflected notably in the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the need for all countries to have energy policies which take these into account. It intends to consider progressively the impact on the landscape of all forms of renewable energy.
4. The Council held that energy policies must be comprehensive, addressing both demand and supply problems, and in the latter category considering all forms of energy supply and must in particular focus on a reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases, notably CO<sub>2</sub>.
5. The Council considered that many national energy policies do not sufficiently address the demand side, save energy, and promote energy efficiency.
6. The Council believed that greater efforts should be made to promote all forms of renewable energy.

*(continued)*

## Considerations specific to wind power

7. Whilst the Council fully supported the drive for renewables, including wind-power, it considered that wind-turbines must be sited in appropriate places.
8. The Council also considered that many countries have so far tended to focus too heavily on wind-power, whether on or off shore. They have provided heavy incentives for its development, relaxed planning legislation, and failed to make a balanced assessment of its merits and demerits, with the consequence that vast areas of beautiful landscape throughout Europe are now dominated by groups of ever larger wind-turbines - every one of which constitutes a small power station - and are thus being effectively industrialised, with consequent serious damage to the natural heritage.
9. The Council held that, in many European countries, a situation is being created in which social, economic, tourism, historical, cultural, wildlife and landscape impacts are being insufficiently addressed in the decision making process relating to wind-power.
10. Against this background the Council took the view that, in relation to on-shore wind-turbines, or groups of wind-turbines, the decision making process of public authorities should include wide consultation; should be based on an understanding of the significance of local landscape character and values; and should for any project always take into account the following considerations:
  - a) The impact on the local Community
  - b) The results of a careful and objective analysis of the claims made by the developer, with regard to the saving of greenhouse gases.
  - c) The degree of visual intrusion, relating this to the character and quality of the surroundings, bearing in mind that modern wind-turbines are eye-catching because they are very large (over 100 metres high and growing), usually prominently placed.
  - d) The supplementary damage to the landscape, sensitive habitats, water courses, and other aspects of the environment, caused by the construction process, including the provision of access roads, additions to electricity networks, pylons, and buildings necessary for electricity generation and transmission.
  - e) The degree to which restoration of the site to its original condition at the end of the working life of the wind-turbines can be guaranteed.
  - f) The impact on, and proximity to, sites designated internationally, nationally, regionally or locally as protected areas.
  - g) The impact, on communities in the vicinity of wind-turbines, of noise and infra-sound nuisance, light interception, and/or reduction of property values.
  - h) An assessment of the need for back-up capacity when the wind-turbines are inactive (i.e. for much of the time), which will usually be gas, thus affecting the claimed benefits of the project in terms of greenhouse gas production and real production costs: the need to treat "repowering" (i.e. replacing existing wind turbines with larger ones on the same basis as the original project.
  - i) The need to treat "repowering" (i.e. replacing existing wind-turbines with larger ones) on the same basis as the original project.
11. As regards off-shore wind-turbines, or groups of wind-turbines, some but not all of the above considerations apply. Furthermore, as a general rule, the further out to sea a wind-turbine can be placed, the less it is likely to give rise to objections.