

# Press Release



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## Desert Energy – A Mighty Stimulus for Economic Development

With the armed conflict in Libya coming to an end, the Arab Spring has reached an important milestone. Now the question arises of how to resolve the economical and social issues in the Arab world that triggered these events in the first place.

Paul van Son, CEO of the industrial initiative Dii, sees economic cooperation as the right answer to the challenges arising from the Arab Spring: "Joint cooperation in the field of renewable energies will bring the Mediterranean nations together and promote sustainable development in the region. This must include the creation of jobs as well as offering perspectives to the younger generations."

Today, roughly 85 million young people live in North Africa and the Middle East. Nearly a quarter of them are unemployed. By 2050, the population of this region will exceed that of Europe. During the same period, the need for energy in Europe will be eclipsed by that of its southern neighbours.

### Green light for Dii reference project in Morocco

Dii's reference project in Morocco, and subsequent projects in Tunisia and Algeria, are the initial steps on the road to realising the Desertec vision. "It's all systems go in Morocco. We have secured the support of politicians and investors", explains Paul van Son. Dii will disclose the details of the first stage of the 150-Megawatt project at the start of 2012. Publication of the Dii "EUMENA 2050" roadmap is scheduled for autumn 2012, providing guidelines on restructuring the energy industry in the Arab nations and Europe based on renewable sources of energy.

"Questions of energy have the power to effect political unity. This is what happened precisely 60 years ago with the European Coal and Steel Community. Now renewable energies are providing the Arab world with the same opportunity. I'm hoping from European policy makers that the desired energy partnership with North Africa and the Middle East will now be consolidated and moved forward", emphasises Paul van Son.

Around 400 Arabian and European representatives from the scientific, political and business sectors will meet at the second Dii Desert Energy Conference in Cairo on 2 and 3 November 2011 in order to discuss the challenges ahead. Cairo is a symbolic location for the new beginning in the Arab world and Egypt's important role in these events.

#### Contact Dii:

Klaus Schmidtke

Head of Communications, Dii

Tel. +49 151 4020 2412

Email: [schmidtke@dii-eumena.com](mailto:schmidtke@dii-eumena.com)