

Title: What's new at COP27 is OMC MED Energy Conference

Text: Since its inaugural year in 1993 as the Offshore Mediterranean Conference & Exhibition, OMC has always prioritised the importance of energy issues in the Mediterranean Basin, and over the course of its 30-year history has always adapted to the changing international energy scenarios. Over the years, OMC has brought together institutions, companies, associations to have an all-encompassing debate around the key issues facing the energy space. For the 2021 edition, OMC changed its name to MED Energy Conference & Exhibition, demonstrating its willingness to represent all Mediterranean energy interests.

Its participation at COP27 has been a unique opportunity for OMC MED Energy Conference to form new relationships and share experiences and ideas on the issues of sustainable development and climate change.

Over its 30 years it has been running, the role of OMC MED Energy Conference has always focused on the Mediterranean not only because it is a crossroad of cultures and civilizations, but also for its natural function as a bridge between south and north, with regards to energy and development. In the last few years, OMC MED Energy Conference has transformed and adapted the conference to the changing energy scenario by widening and strengthening cross-border partnerships.

We have the chance, the privilege and the responsibility to bring the perspective of the energy business world into the energy transition debate, especially here, during COP27, where 170 countries are discussing how to reduce the global temperature increase in the years coming. This dialogue will continue during 2023, with one of the highlights taking place next May in Ravenna for the 30th edition of the OMC MED energy Conference.

We strongly believe that reducing carbon intensity of energy activities is a competitive advantage for the industry.

In fact, the energy sector is committed to the energy transition, aiming to reduce or eliminate emissions in the medium-long term. To achieve this target, the sector is massively investing in technologies to adapt to the energy transition, as well as adopting strategies and new business models, to concretely realize the change we need.

After the Ukrainian crisis, we are strongly experiencing the importance and urgency of the three elements of the 'trilemma' of the transition, which includes competitiveness, availability and sustainability.

It is clear that energy sustainability and energy security are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, to address this dual challenge, the only option is to accelerate the energy transition with a focus on building a new and more resilient energy system as quickly as possible.

This challenge also requires pragmatism and an understanding that different levels of development might require different paths to decarbonize the energy mix, while bearing in mind that the energy transition will only succeed if it can be just and sustainable from a social, environmental and economic point of view. On the basis of these complex issues, we are all aware there is no single solution, which is why an array of paths must be explored to reach a just and inclusive energy transition.

Cooperation among all stakeholders, institutions, energy producers, contractors, associations and consumers – both at national and international level – is the key lever to succeed and effectively focus experiences and expertise towards common goals, encouraging investments and implementing projects.

OMC MED Energy Conference's perspective can therefore be summarised in one simple word: alliance. First and foremost, this refers to the alliances necessary to develop different energy sources. We strongly believe in technological neutrality and in the opportunity to use all available solutions to decarbonize the energy system, from renewables, hydrogen, biofuels, decarbonized gas, as well as marine energy and so on.

It is therefore crucial to form an alliance among a diverse group of energy-related stakeholders who can work together on aligned goals and find adequate solutions. Alliances along the entire value chain are essential to enable companies to produce lower carbon emissions, enhance efficiency, boost performance and remain competitive.

The word "alliance" acquires particular importance here, especially when considering the Mediterranean.

The per capita energy demand in the South Mediterranean is currently less than half that in the North which implies a GDP per capita of less than 1/3 of the Northern GDP. However, the region holds over 9% of world's conventional gas resources, 98% of which are in the South. This does not take into account the huge opportunities in renewables including both onshore and offshore wind, bio energies and marine sources.

Moreover, the important gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean can significantly lower Europe's import dependence for this source.

The future primary energy demand in the Mediterranean Region is expected to grow substantially over the next 25 years, spurred by sustained population and economic growth in the region (+2.3% per year on average), especially in North Africa.

Energy consumption will double by 2040 in the South Mediterranean countries, accounting for around 2/3 of the final energy consumption, and electricity consumption will triple.

In the electricity sector, renewables will contribute 30-35% of energy supply in 2050 as the Region has the most competitive resources at a global level.

The partnership between renewable energies and decarbonized natural gas is likely to reinforce the energy status of the Mediterranean Region.

The current period of history we are living through should lead Europe towards a strong collaboration among MED countries to exploit its combined expertise, technologies, assets and expertise from different stakeholders at all levels in order to ensure sustainable growth while effectively cutting CO₂ emissions.

African countries have huge energy resources, but they lack access to markets, investments and technology. On the other hand, European countries have financial resources, technology, and

market demand, but lack energy resources. There is therefore mutual gain to be had in this cross-continent partnership.

The energy transition in the Mediterranean can also serve as a catalyst for transformative changes that could revitalize the regional economies while meeting more ambitious decarbonization goals. However, this will also require further multilateral responses and collective actions.

OMC MED Energy Conference promotes a European Mediterranean Green Deal, integrating the perspectives of the current policies to an inclusive and comprehensive goal, and leveraging the synergies between the North and South sides of the Mediterranean.

These alliances will be reinforced in Ravenna on 23-25 May 2023 and will represent another crucial step towards our shared goals.

Extract: For the first time, the OMC MED Energy Conference & Exhibition participated at COP. OMC MED is a voice for the interests of countries in the Mediterranean region and promotes a just energy transition based on the principle of technology neutrality.

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