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A Step Towards a Vandal State

If, against all common sense and political decency, the Danish Government and Parliament force through the controversial test centre comprising seven 250 metres high wind turbines in Thy, the Danish political establishment has turned Denmark into a vandal state with totalitarian characteristics.

The wind power fever is raging all over Europe, indeed all over the world, but very rarely reflected in a project which is so grotesque, e.g. to clear 15 square kilometres of forest in a beautiful landscape to create the right wind conditions in a national test centre for wind power.

Wind power can never be “the future energy source”, though this was exactly what Vestas claimed in ceiling high posters in Copenhagen’s metro stations during COP15, followed by the appeal “Demand wind power now”. It’s a physical impossibility because wind turbines only generate electricity when it is blowing sufficiently. No wind, no electricity. Wind is a force of nature, it’s not possible to control it by hitting the on and off bottom as you please.

Experts call wind power an intermittent energy source (intermittent meaning that it stops and starts at irregular intervals). This means that wind power is a fluctuating and instable energy source. Thus, it can only be a supplementary energy source, unless the powerful wind power industry and it’s green supporters manage to change the laws of nature.

Based on the above, the plans to clear a vast area of forest in Thy to create a test centre for wind power is an absurdity. It will be crystal clear, when on Wednesday, 10 February, the Danish Minister for the Environment, Mr. Troels Lund Poulsen, attends a meeting discussing the issue with citizens in the areas which his plans are going to change into a gigantic industrial site with devastating consequences for nature and citizens.

In the strictest sense, the Minister is merely swimming with the current. From Lapland to Gibraltar, Europe is being turned into one large compact industrial site, supervised by the wind power industry. It will leave very few places for people to breathe freely, to push it to extremes. In Piteå, a municipality in the northern part of Sweden, the construction of 1100 giant wind turbines is about to become reality. The Government in Stockholm has adopted a framework goal counting approx. 6000 wind turbines inland and 3000 offshore.

This should be seen in the perspective that it takes at least 2500 wind turbines of 2 megawatt each to replace one reactor in a nuclear power plant – when it is blowing. Add to this perspective, that the CO₂ emission from the Danish production of electricity has not been reduced by one single gram despite the huge stake on wind power. According to public Danish statistics, the emission was 20.7 million tons CO₂ in 1990 and 21.0 million tons CO₂ in 2008.

The enthusiasm for wind power is way out of proportion. In Sweden, firstly the Royal Swedish Academy's Energy Committee and then the Engineering Class of the same academy strongly questioned the Government's goals for wind power.

All over Europe thousands of giant wind turbines are built beyond all reason and without regard to people and in places where you would least expect it. At the same time, we witness growing protests from the people who have to live with the inconveniences of industrial wind power, sound, shadows and flashing lights. But the protests are systematically neglected by the wind power industry as well as the authorities in a way that it makes you think of totalitarian conditions. How can we allow this in 2010? It has come so far that public funds are spent on university level scientists' studies to find ways and means to meet the opposition and on a scientific base make people accept something against their own will.

Today, hundreds of active protest groups are formed all over Europe. Some of the best organized groups formed EPAW, the European Platform against Windfarms, about 18 months ago. At the beginning, EPAW counted less than 200 groups,

however, the number is now almost 400. Having in mind the importance of the Enlightenment's French philosophers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and Montesquieu to the development of societies in Europe, EPAW's president is, not surprisingly, a French chairman of a major environmental organization. On November 8 last year, a national Danish organization was founded, counting 31 member groups today.

In Thy, the Minister for the Environment is ready to clear 15 square kilometres of forest and for his test centre to include a total of 30 square kilometres of forest, meadows, dune moors, and wetlands, situated between a nature reserve and Northern Europe's biggest breeding area for summer resident birds.

It might well be that, for a period of time, we shall need wind power as a supplement to electricity supplies but there is a limit. Maybe we need wind power for the good of everybody. But again, we need to draw a line between the end of the public good and the introduction of tyranny. In Thy, we are alarmingly near that line and perhaps about to cross it.

It is about time that responsible politicians wake up and start facing a reality where not all decisions are controlled by the wind power industry and their commercial interests. The issue of the national test centre forms a fine opportunity to use the common political sense which, after all, forms the ground for Danish democracy. It is time to think twice and avoid making hasty decisions. For the better of both the population and the wind power industry.

Government and Parliament hold the power to force through the project. In a worst case scenario, it will have profound consequences for nature and people in Thy, for no or very little use. Therefore, as the Scandinavian and Baltic spokesman of EPAW, I intend to focus particularly on the national test centre. I shall follow the development closely and report to the international community through EPAW channels.

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