



## The Focus-Abengoa Foundation brings the Energy Transition and Climate Change School to a close

- Over the course of three days, economists and experts have examined the central issue of this edition and debated the energy transition process in the context of climate change
- Lord Nicholas Stern, author of the renowned “Stern Review”, was responsible for giving the opening lecture.

Seville, 28 May 2014.- The Focus-Abengoa Foundation today celebrated the last day of the Energy Transition and Climate Change School, which brought together important economists, scientists and environmentalists at the Hospital de los Venerables, the Foundation’s headquarters, over the course of three days.

On May 26, 27 and 28, the Energy Transition and Climate Change School, directed by Prof. Josep Borrell, offered a total of nine lectures examining the energy transition process in Europe. The theme is set against a backdrop in which the economic crisis has overtaken climate change on the political agenda, even though the latest report from the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) continues to warn about the seriousness of this problem. During the three days, ten experts in economics and energy analysed the legal, technical, political and economic aspects of the global fight against climate change.

On the first day of the School, Lord Nicholas Stern, Chair of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, a former Chief Economist of the World Bank and author of the “Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change”, gave the opening lecture entitled, “*The future of action on climate change: An opportunity for sustained growth*”. In his speech, the British peer gave a review of his renowned report. As Lord Stern admitted himself, he underestimated the risks of climate change, saying “Emissions are at the limit or above the forecasts that were made, and some predictions have even occurred earlier than expected, such as arctic melting or ocean acidification. Indeed, CO<sub>2</sub> levels have risen from 280 parts per million (ppm) in 1800 to 400 ppm today, while there has been a 5°C rise in temperatures that has not been seen in 30 million years”. Lord Stern highlighted some of the consequences that could result if temperatures rise by more than two degrees, such as mass migration and serious social problems, in which some parts of the globe that are currently densely populated would once again become uninhabitable. He made reference to Putin, who said that “one of two degrees more in Moscow would not be a bad thing”, while saying that Andalusia would become a desert. He also repeated the Pope’s words, who issued a plea to safeguard our environment, saying “if we destroy Creation, Creation will destroy us”. According to Lord Stern, “efforts should focus on religious leaders, municipal mayors and children as the groups most likely to produce action”.

That is why the renowned economist has called for action from every part of the planet



and in every economic sector. “If a robust, clean and credible policy is established, it is possible to make the transition to a sustainable, low-carbon economy that will give rise to a dynamic period, full of innovation, investment, creativity, opportunities and growth”.

Tuesday began with a speech by Prof. Josep Borrell, Director of the Energy Transition and Climate Change Forum, who highlighted the importance of publicising and raising awareness among society of the need to transform the current energy sector into a low-carbon system. In the framework of the lecture entitled, “*Prospects of the Energy Transition in Europe*”, Borrell underscored the need for a debate in order to be able to reach global conclusions.

The same sentiments were echoed by Dr. Mario Ragwitz, Director of the Renewable Energy Business Unit of the Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research; Teresa Ribera, former Secretary of State for Climate Change; and Dr. Laurence Toubiana, Director of the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations in France. In perfect Spanish, Toubiana focused on the fact that more than eight million people in France currently have problems paying for electricity and live in “energy poverty”. She therefore called for the role of local and regional agents in this issue to be strengthened and to search for a “financial compromise, vital for renewable energy”.

Meanwhile, Teresa Ribera, former Secretary of State for Climate Change, stated that “The energy transition must be undertaken globally. Partial ideas and tools are insufficient”.

The day continued with Dr. Jacques Le Cacheux, lecturer in economics at the Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour and Director of the Department of Economic Research at the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po), with his talk on “*Instruments and macroeconomic impact of the fight against climate change*”. The School was also addressed by Dr. Jorge Fabra, president of Economists Against the Crisis, and a former chairman of Red Eléctrica, who analysed the “*Regulation of the Spanish electricity sector*”, stating that “Auctions by technologies could capture the strong learning curve offered by renewable technologies”.

The last day of the School, held today, began with the talk by Antonio Soria, head of the Climate, Energy and Transport Unit of Seville, who spoke about the “*European perspective of the new Climate Change and Energy Package for 2030*”.

He was followed by Prof. Jean Michel Glachant, Director of the Florence School of Regulation of the European University Institute (Italy), who reviewed the last “*Seven years of European energy and climate policy: The age of reason or divorce?*”. During his lecture, Dr. Glachant referred to the main difficulties in the European market while pointing out that, “regulations have not kept pace with technology”.

The last talk of the Energy Transition and Climate Change School organised by the



Focus-Abengoa Foundation was given by Prof. Servando Álvarez, professor of the Department of Energy Engineering of the Higher School of Engineering of the University of Seville.

The grand finale to the School, which was well attended and a great success, was the visit to Solúcar, Abengoa's solar platform in Sanlúcar la Mayor (Seville), where those participating had the opportunity to learn about the solar technology developed by Abengoa.

The School is part of the Forum of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation. Its objective was to publicise and debate the energy transition process in Europe. We are currently in a situation in which the economic crisis has overtaken climate change on the political agenda, even though the latest IPCC report continues to warn about its seriousness. Renewable energy policies, the controversy surrounding shale gas, regulation of the Spanish electricity market and the impact of the crisis in Ukraine on Europe's energy situation were just some of the issues that were examined during this course.

#### **Focus-Abengoa Foundation**

The Focus-Abengoa Foundation was created in 1982 as a result of the cultural work begun in 1972 by Abengoa with the publication of the works *Temas Sevillanos* (Themes of Seville) and *Iconografía de Sevilla* (Iconography of Seville). A collection of documents, books and engravings on the Kingdom of Seville and by Sevillian authors was created during the same period. This initial cultural work showed Abengoa's directors the importance of the company's involvement in activities that directly benefit society, beyond the firm's core technology work, which led to the creation of the Seville Cultural Fund Foundation. The Hospital de los Venerables, a 17th century monument and the headquarters of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation in Seville, has housed the Diego Velázquez Research Centre, a leading institution for studying and disseminating the Baroque era and the Sevillian period of this universally renowned artist, since the acquisition of Velázquez's Santa Rufina by the Foundation in 2007. The focus on this crucial era of the Golden Age is complemented with the legacy from Professor Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez, bequeathed to the Foundation in 2011. It comprises his library, photo library, personal archive and art collection and is being catalogued to help create a library specialising in the art and culture of the Baroque period. <http://focus.abengoa.es/>

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