

PRESS RELEASE

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EUROPEAN WIND NOISE STUDY SHOWS NEED FOR NEW UK GUIDELINES

A major new study published today by Dr Frits van den Berg of the University of Groningen, one of Europe's leading experts on wind turbine noise, and colleagues at the University of Gothenburg has prompted a call for the UK to develop new guidelines on the noise generated from wind turbines.

The study, resulting from the long running WINDFARMperception project, aimed to investigate the perception of wind farms by residents living close to the sites.

The study consisted of a survey of residents in the Netherlands, and detailed calculations of the aural and visual exposure. Amongst many important findings was the crucial confirmation that:

1. Wind turbine noise is more annoying than other industrial noises of the same magnitude.
2. Wind turbine noise is poorly masked by background noise.

In their own press releases the authors write:

"Three out of four participants declare that swishing or lashing is a correct description of the sound from wind turbines. Perhaps the character of the sound is the cause of the relatively high degree of annoyance. Another possible cause is that the sound of modern wind turbines on average does not decrease at night, but rather becomes louder, whereas most other sources are less noisy at night. At the highest sound levels in this study (45 decibel or higher) there is also a higher prevalence of sleep disturbance."

Dr John Constable, Director of Policy and Research for the Renewable Energy Foundation, said:

"This is an extremely important study and should stimulate the UK government to protect local residents by replacing the obsolete and widely discredited noise regulations (ETSU R97) controlling wind turbines."

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For further information please contact Margareta Stanley on 020 7930 3636 or 07968 049 832, email press@ref.org.uk or visit our website www.ref.org.uk

Notes for Editors

1. Renewable Energy Foundation is a UK registered charity supporting research into renewable and alternative energy. The Foundation is supported by private donation, and has no corporate membership or political affiliation.

2. The press release, summary, and full study are freely available from:
<http://www.rug.nl/wewi/WFP1?lang=en>

3. Dr van den Berg, who advises Renewable Energy Foundation on noise nuisance from wind power developments, is available for comment: + 31 612 541 865,
email: g.p.van.den.berg@rug.nl.

4. The project is a co-operation of the Universities of Groningen (NL) and Gothenburg (S) and the University Medical Centre Groningen (NL) and started in January 2007. The project was financed by the European Union in its Science and Society Program.