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Germany's biggest pump storage power station inaugurated in Goldisthal

In the presence of the German Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and the Prime Minister of the state of Thuringia Dieter Althaus, Vattenfall's German subsidiary Vattenfall Europe AG today inaugurated the biggest German pumped storage power station in Goldisthal, Thuringia.

After a construction period of six years and investments of € 620 Million this plant is now largely completed. The project is the biggest private investment in Thuringia to date since German unification. Its completion makes Vattenfall Europe the German No.1 in the use of hydro power (in total 2,914 MW of installed capacity in run-of-river, storage and pump storage power stations).

The plant consists of an artificial upper (12 million cubic metres of water) and lower (18 million cubic metres) reservoir. For the lower reservoir a purpose-built 67 metre high dam was constructed. During periods of low power consumption – generally at night – water is pumped from the lower reservoir into the upper reservoir. When power consumption increases during the course of the day, the water flows back downhill through six metre thick pipes and drives the four turbines with an installed capacity of 1,060 MW.

The Chairman of the Management Board of Vattenfall Europe, Dr. Klaus Rauscher, says, "The project in Goldisthal is the keystone of our investment programme of almost € 10 billion, with which we have completely remodelled and reorganised the energy landscape in the new Federal States within a few years".

Since the beginning of the 90s Vattenfall and the predecessor companies have fundamentally modernised or rebuilt lignite power stations in Lusatia and Central Germany and strengthened and extended the 11,000 km long transmission network.

The idea of innovation was the prime focus here, said Rauscher. Because of its size and in part completely new types of technological components, with the Goldisthal pumped storage power station Vattenfall Europe was defining the latest state of the art, as it had already succeeded in doing for the field of lignite power generation with the new plants constructed in Lausitz and Central Germany.

Against the background of the planned introduction of CO2 certificate trading in the EU, Rauscher claimed that these early modernisation achievements by the company since the early 1990s would have to be counted for the award of the certificates:

"A decisive part of the German CO2 reduction was achieved in Eastern Germany, and in fact by us. If this was not taken into account, there would be a gross distortion of competition to the detriment of the new Federal States."

In this context Rauscher demanded strong agreements on the energy mix of the future with the full inclusion of lignite. Only in this way was any planning certainty possible for the company and its future investments.

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