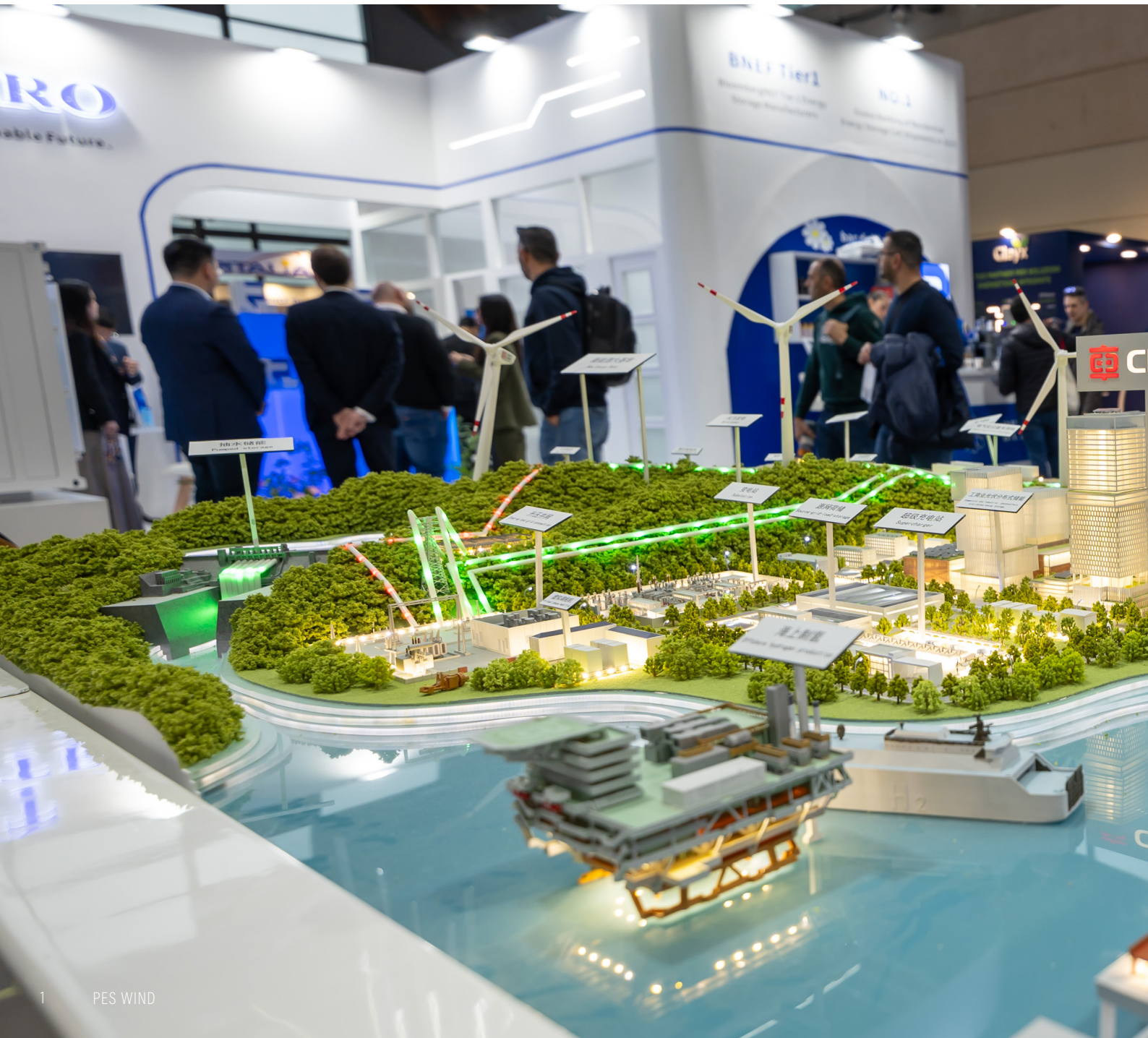


The strategic role of wind for the global energy transition

KEY 2026, organised by Italian Exhibition Group, wrapped up on 6th March, surpassing expectations with a 9% rise in international attendance. The event highlighted innovations in wind energy, reflecting the sector's growing global momentum.



Wind energy continues to consolidate its role as a cornerstone of Europe's energy transition, supported by steady growth and an expanding presence across the continent. In 2025, Europe installed 19.1 GW of new wind capacity, reaching a total of 304 GW, according to data published by WindEurope in its latest annual statistics and outlook. Growth was largely driven by onshore wind, which accounted for around 90% of new installations, confirming its central role in scaling up renewable capacity across European markets.

In 2025, for the first time, wind and solar generation surpassed fossil fuels in the EU electricity mix, jointly accounting for around 30% of total generation, with wind alone

contributing approximately 17%, according to the European Electricity Review published by Ember.

Looking ahead, the Mediterranean represents one of the most promising regions for wind energy development, particularly offshore. New floating technologies are opening up entirely new scenarios, making it possible to install wind farms even in deep waters such as those off Italy, overcoming the limitations of traditional solutions.

In this context, the Italian PNIEC targets 28.1 GW of installed wind capacity by 2030, including 26 GW onshore and 2.1 GW offshore. According to ANEV (National Wind Energy Association), the offshore wind potential is far greater and, by 2040, it is expected to make a

significant contribution to the decarbonisation of the national electricity system.

The fourth edition of KEY – The Energy Transition Expo, organised by IEG, reflects this evolution, positioning itself as a reference event for the energy transition across Europe, Africa and the Mediterranean basin.

Held at the Rimini Expo Centre in Italy from 4th to 6th March, the event brought together key stakeholders involved in the development of renewable energy, including wind, offering a platform to explore solutions, share expertise and strengthen international collaboration.

After three intense days featuring a wide range of innovative solutions and technologies for decarbonisation, as well as



numerous round tables and institutional and commercial discussions, the event closed with results once again exceeding initial forecasts.

Indeed, KEY 2026 recorded a 10% increase in total attendance, with foreign visitors up 9% and a significant presence of investors, confirming the growing interest around the technologies and market trends shaping the future of wind energy and the broader energy transition.

From turbines to ports: exploring wind energy

Wind energy's central role in the green economy and the energy transition was highlighted through WEM, Wind Expo for Med, the dedicated exhibition area that showcased the sector's full range of technologies, from small-scale wind and community energy projects to large onshore and offshore turbines.

The area has expanded significantly and, for the first time, has occupied three entire halls covering 6,000 sq m, driven by an increasingly active supply chain engaged in developing approved projects that are now awaiting implementation. WEM brought together all key players along the value chain, including developers, turbine and component manufacturers, floating wind technology providers, utilities, investors, O&M specialists and market operators, providing a dynamic

environment for knowledge exchange and the creation of new partnerships.

A key feature of the wind pavilion was Su.port, Sustainable Ports for the Energy Transition, which had debuted at KEY 2025 and emphasized ports as strategic hubs for floating renewable parks, offshore wind, and hydrogen storage and transport, highlighting practical solutions for maritime sustainability such as port electrification and cold ironing.

An edition beyond expectations

The 2026 edition of KEY, inaugurated on Wednesday 4th March by Italian Minister of the Environment and Energy Security, Gilberto Pichetto Fratin, was an exceptional showcase for industrial and technological expertise from Europe and elsewhere.

In a total exhibition area of 125,000 square meters spread over 24 halls, more than 1,000 exhibiting brands, including 320 from abroad, showcased products and innovations in the event's seven product sectors: photovoltaics, wind power, hydrogen, energy storage, energy efficiency, e-Mobility and Sustainable City.

There was also significant international participation with 530 hosted buyers and delegations from 59 countries involved in the show, thanks to the support of the Italian Trade Agency (ITA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI).

A total of 412 accredited journalists from around the world covered the event, contributing their insights and perspectives on clean energy, a dynamic sector that is particularly central to a sustainable future.

The conference programme and focal points

The extensive programme of 160 conferences scheduled during the three days of the event, characterised by high quality and a rigorous scientific approach, reaffirmed KEY's position as one of the most important events in Europe, confirming the diversity and completeness of its exhibition and content offering, which makes it unique among European trade shows on the same theme.

An open and strategic forum for discussion, where international expertise, data, know-how and best practices were shared and systematized with the aim of accelerating the energy transition.

Among the many topics discussed were the importance of energy efficiency for decarbonisation, energy storage and the use of artificial intelligence to optimise electricity grids, predict energy production from renewable sources, and manage energy flows in real time.

A significant focus was placed on finance, new financial and investment models, capital allocated to renewable energy projects, and innovative tools for controlling energy costs. These included new forms of financing, green





bonds, sustainable project bonds and participatory models involving citizens, businesses and communities. KEY 2026, therefore, strengthened its position as an international hub and a privileged meeting point for every player involved in the transition by converging technological innovation and the dynamics of finance.

Engineers, technology developers, investors and institutions gathered in Rimini to discuss highly topical issues such as the need to make renewable projects bankable and accelerate their implementation while reducing risk.

The associations and industries present also reiterated the urgent need to increase grid flexibility and adopt clear rules to encourage investment and competitiveness.

The show's new layout

New features at the KEY 2026 exhibition project included an entire hall specifically for the world of EPC Contractors (Engineering, Procurement & Construction), banks and finance as part of the vast thematic area on solar energy.

In the energy efficiency area, an ever-present pillar of KEY that, once again this year, played a central role with its transversal vision embracing all sectors, from industry, including energy-intensive industries, to the residential sector and, in general, the built environment, also saw an additional new project: HOME, Healthy, Optimized, Measured, Efficient.

The area featured a reproduction of a 100% smart, efficient and sustainable house erected as an educational and cultural space where visitors and operators could discover how healthy and energy efficient buildings are designed, built and measured.

Innovation and green skills for the future

Technological innovation and increasingly sought sustainable skills were the focus of the Innovation District, an area entirely dedicated to the innovation ecosystem within Hall D4. Here, 32 innovative Italian and international start-ups and SMEs had the opportunity to showcase their most promising innovations and projects by taking part in one of Europe's most important events on the future of energy.

The Green Jobs & Skills initiative also played a crucial role in fostering dialogue and direct encounters between the demand for green skills and job offers in a sector which, according to the IEA-International Energy Agency's World Energy Employment 2025, is growing at twice the rate of the overall economy, but at the same time, is still not keeping pace with new demands due to a shortage of newly qualified workers.

The evening of 4th March saw the prize-giving ceremony of the Lorenzo Cagnoni Innovation Awards, one for each of the seven product categories in the Expo Centre halls, given to the seven KEY start-ups with the highest innovative potential and the seven companies exhibiting at the event that stood out for their cutting-edge approach.

KEY CHOICE - unlock the future of PPAs

On Tuesday 3rd March at Rimini's Palacongressi Conference Centre, KEY was preceded by a successful new edition of KEY CHOICE - Unlock the future of PPAs, KEY - The Energy Transition Expo's B2B event, organised by Italian Exhibition Group in collaboration with Elemens.

The event spotlighted Power Purchase Agreements by bringing together energy-intensive companies, renewable energy producers and project developers, energy sector traders and institutions to stimulate discussion and qualified networking between supply and demand and interaction between the parties with the aim of encouraging new agreements.

DPE - International Electricity EXPO

In conjunction with KEY, a new appointment with DPE - International Electricity Expo, the event specifically for the electrical generation, transmission, distribution, safety and automation ecosystem, was also back this year. The event was organised by Italian Exhibition Group in collaboration with the Distributed Generation Association - Motors, Components, Generating Sets, a confederate of ANIMA Confindustria and Federazione ANIE.

KEY will be back at Rimini Expo Centre from 10th to 12th March 2027.

key-expo.com/en