An Oasis in the Desert: Tunisia's Solar Plants will Quench Europe's Energy Thirst

By: Joe Rinaldi

Nur Energy, a Tunisian company, plans on harnessing solar energy in the Sahara Desert, one of the largest deserts in the world. With a global depletion of natural resources, energy scientists and companies have begun to utilize alternate forms of energy. Raw forms of energy, like solar energy from the sun, have become increasingly popular. Solar energy is inexpensive and in many places, like the Sahara Desert, is readily available for use. The Sahara, with its vast desert plains and almost constant sunlight, proves to be a great place for multiple solar plants. The intense radiation from the constant incoming rays along the Sahara, especially in Tunisia, can prove to be a major solution to this negative dependency on fossil fuels.
The desert, a place where fossil fuels are in high abundance, can now be a place where renewable energy prevails. "Desertec claims that if only 0.3 percent of the expanse of the Sahara was covered with solar panels, it would power the entire European continent. Up to 1 percent of the desert were covered, it could power the entire world." [vi] Now that this thriving opportunity for renewable energy exists for Europe, the continent just has to transfer the energy produced in the Sahara to its countries. High-voltage DC lines will have to be buried below the Mediterranean Sea and come to the surface in places, like Italy, which is about 100 miles from Tunisia. [vii] Nur Energy and many more companies to follow will slowly implement this renewable energy to Europe, and hopefully, over the next couple decades, will power the entire continent. [viii]

Nur Energy plans to "cover the incredible 100 square kilometers with thousands of mirrors that concentrate sunlight onto a tower in the center. In the tower, energy will be stored through a process of melting of the so-called molten salts, which convert water into steam, and then power." [ix] The world is truly looking towards Tunisia, especially after the wake of the Tunisian conflict, with hopeful eyes. With this innovative, renewable energy initiative in the Sahara, clean energy power over the masses can become a reality. A once desperate mirage is now a reality for billions and even billions of people.

[ii] Id. Luleva, supra note 1.
[iii] Id.
[iv] Id. Luleva, supra note 1.
[vi] See id.
[vii] Id. Luleva, supra note 1.
[viii] Id. Luleva, supra note 1.