

Global wind power rich list: revealed

The Times of London has just published its **first green global rich list**, with many tycoons and executives from the wind industry making the top 100, including the USA's **Warren Buffett** who tops the poll at **number one**, being worth a cool €37bn. Here, PES presents your handy guide to the **top 10** movers and shakers in the **wind power industry**.



Warren Buffett

Ranking: 1

Worth: €37bn

Warren Buffett a Nebraska politician's son with a sufficient knack for business to enable him to file his first tax return at the age of 13 when he claimed a \$35 deduction for a bicycle. He took over the then poorly-performing textile firm, Berkshire Hathaway, in 1965 and transformed it into his investment vehicle

for holdings in well-known American companies and brands. Among the holdings now is MidAmerican Energy, a leading wind-energy utility which recently announced a joint venture with American Electric Power to invest in grid projects. The initial plans are designed to take advantage of wind developments in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. Buffett has also recently invested an impressive \$230m in the Hong Kong-listed company, BYD, which produces electric car batteries. Nevertheless, the so-called Sage of Omaha is not immune to the vicissitudes of Wall Street and his fortune has now reportedly fallen.



Marcel Brenninkmeijer

Ranking: 4

Worth: €22bn

Marcel Brenninkmeijer, a member of the Dutch family behind the fashion retailer C&A, is chair of Good Energies, a £3.6bn investment fund which targets green energy projects. Good Energies has investments in more than 30 companies in the US, Europe, and Asia, involved in wind and solar power. In Canada,

meanwhile, Good Energies' portfolio includes investments in the wind power developer Sequoia Energy, wind consultant Eolelectric, wind and run-of-river power firm C-Free Power Corp, and solar-grade silicon maker 6N Silicon Inc. C&A was started in 1861 by two brothers and has stores in 16 countries. The high street retailer has helped the Brenninkmeijer family to a £19bn fortune, according to the recent Dutch rich list in Quote 500 magazine.



Michael Bloomberg

Ranking: 6

Worth: €16.6bn

Michael Bloomberg, the mayor of New York City, has a vision for his home town. He would like to see wind turbines on top of the city's bridges and skyscrapers. Bloomberg made his formidable fortune from the traders' terminals and platforms which bear his name. As mayor of the city he promoted a green agenda and enacted

a scheme called PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater New York – to fight global warming, protect the environment and prepare the city for the extra 1m incomers expected to be living there by 2030. He also wants the city to start generating its own green power by using solar panels and harnessing the tides of the Hudson and East rivers. In its October 2008 list of the 400 richest Americans. Forbes reckoned he was easily worth £14.4bn.



Philip Anschutz

Ranking: 15

Worth: €6.7bn

Philip Anschutz bought out his oil prospecting father in 1961 although his big break came in 1971 when he purchased a massive tract of land along the border of Utah and Wyoming. In the 1980s the Anschutz Ranch – with its one billion barrel oil pocket – would go on to become the largest oil-field discovery in

the US since Prudhoe Bay in Alaska in 1968. Anschutz then sold a 50% interest in this to the giant Mobil Oil for \$500m in 1982, before moving into railroads and telecommunications and then branching out into entertainment. Having taken over the Millennium Dome in London, he rebranded it as the O2 arena in 2007. His Anschutz Corporation took over development of the TransWest Express Transmission Project – a \$3bn 900-mile transmission line proposal designed to deliver wind-generated electricity from Wyoming to California, Arizona and Nevada. Another Anschutz company is currently developing a 2,000MW wind farm.

**Aloys Wobben****Ranking:** 21**Worth:** €2.5bn

Germany's Aloys Wobben is an engineer who built his first turbine in his back garden, financed by building electronic elements. In 1985 his company Enercon produced 55kw turbines with a gearbox, capable of variable speed after realising how much untapped wind potential lay hidden in the German region of East

Frisia – today the area benefits from nearly 55% electricity from wind power. In 1992 he realised an ambition to build gearless windmills which functioned without hydraulics. Currently Enercon has more than 6,000 employees and a production area the size of 40 football pitches and the first Enercon turbine is still working. Wobben's personal fortune was placed at some £4.5bn in Germany's 2007 rich list produced by Manager magazine, a figure that has reduced substantially in the last few years.

**Nicolas Berggruen****Ranking:** 25=**Worth:** €2.0bn

Nicolas Berggruen grew up in France and Switzerland, the son of a man who was at one time the world's greatest Picasso collector. He now lives in US hotels, having amassed a fortune through finance although initially he went into buying and selling property. He went on to start an investment company in 1986 and

has never really looked back. Berggruen Holdings now has net assets of more than \$3bn. Today the 47-year-old invests in art, property and private equity as well as owning an Indian hotel chain and real estate in Israel. For our purposes, however, he also owns several wind-power licences in Turkey. Forbes put his fortune at a cool £2.03bn although the Sunday Times list cut him back to £1.8bn.

**Sir Richard Branson****Ranking:** 35=**Worth:** €1.4bn

Sir Richard Branson remains one of Britain's most high-profile entrepreneurs, with an empire embracing railways, planes, media, mobile phones, the internet, music, wine sales and holidays. There are now some 285 Virgin companies, either controlled by the 58-year-old or in which he has a

significant stake. Their 2007 combined revenue amounted to more than £10bn. However, for our purposes he has also been busy developing his green credentials, launching Virgin Fuels in 2006 – to aid research into renewable energy – while his transport business will provide up to £1.5bn towards renewable energy over the next decade. Branson has also spent £16m on bio-ethanol plants in the US and has committed more than £50m to similar projects. Branson has even offered a \$25m prize for an invention to remove carbon dioxide from the environment. It has been estimated that the Virgin business empire is worth at least £1bn.

**Tulsi Tanti****Ranking:** 49**Worth:** €751m

Indian tycoon Tulsi Tanti started out running a textiles business which was subsequently thrown into crisis by soaring power costs in 1994. He was, however, able to commission two windmills to supply electricity to his plant in Gujarat which in turn led to the creation of the Pune-based Suzlon

Energy which sold its first wind turbine in 1995. Six years later, the textile business had been sold off and Tanti, along with his three siblings, went into wind-turbine generation. Now, with factories spread over an impressive four continents, Suzlon is the world's fifth-largest wind-turbine maker even though collapsing values have hit the tycoon hard. In March 2008, Forbes valued Tanti at £2bn but, in a study of the biggest losers from the downturn at the end of that year, he was valued at a rather more modest £648m.

**Jaiprakash Gaur****Ranking:** 50**Worth:** €718m

Jaiprakash Gaur, one of India's leading tycoons, founded the Jaypee Group in 1958 after taking a degree in civil engineering and working for local government. The company now has interests in hydropower, cement production, hospitality, construction, real estate and IT education systems. It

has also diversified, however, into wind and thermal power generation, airports, and oil and natural gas exploration. Jaypee is also building India's first Formula One facility for the 2010 Grand Prix in New Delhi as well as being the sub-continent's largest private sector employer of former Indian soldiers. Forbes valued Gaur at £1.9bn in early 2008, although his personal fortune was reputed to have fallen to just £620m by the end of the year.

**Jean Michel Germa****Ranking:** 90=**Worth:** €231m

Entrepreneur Jean Michel Germa who founded alternative energy company La Compagnie du Vent in 1989, is the top Frenchman in our list. His company built its first wind farm in 1991 and grew rapidly subsequently. In late 2007, its Spanish partner, Acciona, sold its share to the French company GDF

Suez. Germa, who remains as head of the company, has just under half the shares in this, with a formidable stake valued at around £200m by the deal. La Compagnie du Vent has also committed itself to a promising foray into biofuel. Its subsidiary Biocar is preparing to build a new biofuel factory, by 2010, with a yearly capacity of 200,000 tonnes, in the port of Marseilles. Germa is now looking at expanding into solar power. Meanwhile La Compagnie du Vent has installed and now runs six wind farms. ▴