

Germany: Environmental policy pioneer

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nine percent of total generation, and replace it with renewable energies. The promotion policy dating from the early 1990s makes the use of renewable energies attractive and economical. The Renewable Energy Sources Act, a market incentive program to promote the use of renewable energies is regarded as the driving force behind the upswing in climate-friendly energy sources. Its fundamentals have been adopted by several other countries. The increased use of renewable energies and the efficient use of energy also constituted one of the pillars of the Federal Government's 2009 coalition agreement.

In spring 2011 the Federal Government decided on a major change in energy policy: the accelerated phasing out of nuclear energy. As a result



Vineyards near the city of Bad Honnef at the Rhine

of a re-evaluation of safety following the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, the eight oldest of the 17 nuclear power stations in operation were immediately shut down. The Bundestag, with a big

majority of its MPs, voted in favour of a schedule according to which the remaining nine reactors would also be decommissioned by 2022. Hence, atomic energy which in 2011 still supplied around

18 percent of the electricity consumed, should be reliably replaced by, among other things, renewable forms of energy, an expanded electricity grid, and new storage capacity for green electricity. By the year 2020, renewable energy sources are intended to be generating 35 percent of electricity, and 80 percent by the year 2050. In Germany, green electricity was booming even before the decision to phase out nuclear power generation, with its share rising from five percent in 1990 to 20 percent in 2011.

Trailblazing and efficient: Renewable Energy Science has described in vivid detail the background of the consequences of climate change. They include increases in temperature, floods, droughts, accelerated melting of the polar ice-caps and species extinction. In view of constantly increasing global demand for, and consumption of fossil fuels, renewable and

climate-friendly alternatives are becoming increasingly more significant. The availability of wind, water, sun, biomass and geothermal energy is unlimited, and they release no emissions which are damaging to the climate. Renewable energies now make up for more than ten percent of all German energy consumption. With almost 14 percent of global wind energy output, Germany comes third behind China and the USA. The North Sea Offshore

Initiative, in which Germany and eight other EU Member States have joined forces, sees new potential for its use. With regard to photo-voltaic technology, which is used to turn the sun's rays into electricity, Germany, with an installed output of 17,300 megawatts, even placed first in 2010, ahead of Spain and Japan. The DESERTEC initiative, largely being funded by German companies, is a major European investment in sustainable energy

technology. By 2050 the energy produced by solar power stations in North Africa is expected to cover 15 percent of European electricity requirements.

Innovative and good for exports: Green technologies

The measures in the Integrated Energy and Climate Protection Program not only serve to protect the environment, but also to promote the development of an innovative future industry. It is a tremendous job creator,

highly competitive internationally, and increasingly active in foreign markets. In 2010 one solar cell in five and every seventh wind turbine came from Germany. More than 360,000 people work in the renewable energies industry. In addition, there are around one million more jobs in environmental technology, such as water purification, filter technology, recycling and re-naturalization. Another job driver are companies

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