

# Welcoming message from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the German Environment Ministry, I would like to welcome you to this international exchange of experience on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Renewable Energy Research Association.

Our Parliamentary State Secretary, Ursula Heinen-Esser, had to change her plans for tonight on rather short notice. So, she asked me to apologise for this and to take over this welcome address for her. I would also like to convey the best wishes of Federal Environment Minister Norbert Röttgen.

“Global climate protection is the pre-eminent environmental policy challenge of our time.” This is one of the key statements in the Coalition Agreement of the new government. It clearly shows that climate protection will remain at the top of the German environmental policy agenda in the years to come.

In a few weeks, the eyes of the global community will be on the Copenhagen conference. People expect the countries of the world to take responsibility. Our goal is to reach a consensus on all core issues in Copenhagen. In 2010 this outcome must be translated into a detailed, internationally binding agreement.

Despite the difficulties that objectively exist, we are optimistic that a breakthrough will be achieved at the Copenhagen summit. Germany has always been a driving force in climate protection. It will continue to play this role. We stand by our climate policy goals. We are committed to the target of limiting global warming to a maximum of 2 degrees, and the target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 80 to 95% by 2050. By 2020, we want to achieve a 40% emissions reduction in Germany compared to 1990.

Climate policy is essentially energy policy.

Two aspects are particularly important:

1. We need to expand renewable energy.
2. We need to use energy more efficiently.

Next year, the German government will present a new energy concept. Among other things, this concept will outline

- the intended development of the energy mix
- and perspectives for integrating a steadily growing share of renewable energy in the overall energy supply system.

Our goal is for renewable energy to provide the main share of energy supply. In a dynamic energy mix, they will gradually replace conventional energy sources.

Chancellor Angela Merkel reaffirmed this in her recent policy statement: “We want to pursue the path towards the age of renewable energy”. The most important instrument in this policy will be the Renewable Energy Sources Act, the EEG. The new government remains committed to the EEG – this has also been laid down in the Coalition Agreement. We are delighted that feed-in tariffs for renewables have been put in place in many countries. The EEG has become a major German export good. A number of countries have used it as a model for a successful policy to facilitate the market introduction of renewable energy.

Germany is an international leader in many renewable energy technologies. There are various reasons for this. But a decisive reason is that Germany has top research institutes and excellent scientists in the area of renewable energy. Thanks to their expertise – thanks to your expertise – renewable energy made in Germany are in great demand throughout the world.



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It goes without saying that financial framework conditions have an important impact on research. Decisive impetus was already provided during the last legislative period. With the High Tech Strategy, R&D funds were stepped up considerably. This also benefitted support offered by the Federal Environment Ministry for renewable energy research. We will continue this policy. Our aim is to focus research funding on sectors that are particularly relevant for society. These include climate protection and energy.

Successful research is vital for reaching our ambitious energy policy objectives. The research institutes united in the Renewable Energy Research Association can make a major contribution to reaching these objectives. I am very pleased about the great interest in this meeting, and I am delighted to see so many young participants here. The students of today will be the researchers of tomorrow. Your ideas are needed. Germany will only be able to maintain the current standard of living if we defend our position as technology leader. This means that we need scientists and engineers.

I welcome very much that the Renewable Energy Research Association is addressing international cooperation at this meeting. Climate change does not stop at borders. We are all affected. And we can only cope with this enormous challenge if we work together.

I am therefore delighted to see so many representatives of embassies here tonight. I wish you all fruitful and informative discussions and every success for the conference.