



INTERVIEW

Jürgen Trittin

Federal Minister for the Environment,
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Wind Directions: What are the main goals of the Berlin Conference and what are your hopes for its outcome?

Jürgen Trittin: The main goal of the Berlin Conference is to further strengthen the momentum for renewable energies worldwide, including in Europe, following on from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. The conference will address issues concerning the increased use of renewable energies that are relevant for Europe. A declaration that clearly emphasises Europe's willingness to further develop renewable energies and possibly defines new goals for 2020 would be an excellent contribution to the International Conference for Renewable Energy to be hosted by the German government in June 2004 in Bonn.

WD: Will there be any specific new initiative for European renewables policy to be announced in Berlin?

JT: New additional goals for the increased use of renewable energies by 2020 will be under discussion in Berlin. If we reach a positive outcome, this will motivate the European Commission and the EU member states to support a corresponding policy. Such objectives would also provide the industry with the necessary investment security for a continued commitment to this innovative branch of technology. Furthermore, an intensive exchange will take place in Berlin on suitable instruments for promoting renewable energies, which should assist politi-

cal actors in choosing their measures and instruments. This will create the impetus for the debate on an EU-wide harmonised support system for renewable energies, which should be held no later than 2005.

WD: There have been a lot of mega-conferences - from the Earth Summit to Kyoto and now Berlin leading up to Bonn - and many strongly worded declarations. What is so different about Bonn and why will it be successful where Johannesburg was perceived to fall short?

“All countries and regions are invited to contribute to the outcome of the conference in accordance with their capabilities and ideas”

JT: Germany has a great interest in advancing the increased use of renewable energies, not only domestically but also worldwide. In order to move towards this goal, energy was an important issue at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. Although we were able to achieve some success, there was unfortunately no agreement on concrete goals for the increased use of renewable energies.

We have learnt from this experience. The focus in Bonn should not be on enforcing one goal for all countries in a top-down process. Instead, all countries and regions are invited to contribute to the outcome of the conference in accordance with their capabilities and ideas. The contributions from individual coun-

tries or regions, for example, can be greater cooperation with other countries or regions in the field of research and development of renewable energies, a more intensive support for developing countries by rich countries in order to combat energy poverty on the basis of renewable energies, or setting new targets for the increased use of renewables, something I hope for within Europe. But international organisations, industry and the financial world, too, can and should commit themselves to measures for strengthening renewable energies. The voluntary approach is new, and I am optimistic that it will be a success.

The conference will be a significant achievement if all these actions can be merged into an action plan and if it sends a signal to trigger the global development of renewable energies.

WD: The JREC declaration called for “clear and ambitious time bound targets”. What does this mean exactly for the EU? Do you have a target for renewables in mind - and more specifically wind power - across Europe and worldwide?

JT: The European Union and its member and accession states already have clear and ambitious goals for the share of renewable energies in overall energy consumption, electricity production and in the transport sector. This does not mean, however, that we can now put our feet up and relax. As I have already mentioned, we should hold intensive discussions on new goals for 2020. These should be determined by

the Commission in cooperation and collaboration with the EU member and accession states. Germany has a goal for 2020 on the basis of a proposed amendment to the Renewable Energy Sources Act (EEG): the share of renewables in electricity production should total at least 20% by this date. I expect this amendment to be approved in Parliament by next summer.

I see no need for a separate goal for Germany and other countries for wind power only. What is important is for renewables to increase their overall market share and for the different branches to make use of their opportunities wherever their respective strengths lie.

WD: The German wind power market faces a decline in annual installations after a peak of 3,000 MW last year - how will this impact on government policy?

JT: We are aware of the fact that we are running out of space for inland wind farms, which explains the somewhat lower growth in the wind sector following our record year. But it would be wrong to think that growth could continue to rise indefinitely and that every year we could build more than the previous year! In order to continue to facilitate a strong growth in the wind sector, we are promoting the repowering of older installations to significantly improve capacity. Furthermore, we have ambitious goals for the increased use of wind power in the North and Baltic Seas. We are aiming for around 500 MW of offshore capacity by 2006. By 2030 around 25,000 MW wind capacity is to be installed offshore.

It is also important to remember that we not only have potential for wind power in Germany - we also have potential for biomass, solar power, hydropower and geothermal power. The draft amendment to the Renewable Energy Sources Act strengthens the position of small biomass power plants and photovoltaics and promotes the ecologically sound construction of large-scale hydropower plants. A few months ago the first German geothermal power plant joined the grid; more plants will follow. The slightly decreasing growth in the onshore wind power sector will therefore be offset by other renewable energy options. As we will use a mixture of different renewable energies I have every confidence that Germany will achieve both its "old" 2010 goal and its new 2020 goal.



Photo: Pedro Armestre

INTERVIEW

Mechtild Rothe

Member,
European Parliament
and President, EUIP

WD: What will be different in the outcomes of the Berlin Conference in terms of European policy on renewables compared to existing policies and targets such as the Renewables Directive of 22%?

MR: The Renewables Directive was the first piece of European legislation on renewable energy. It is still a milestone in terms of support for renewables. A conference cannot achieve the same effect as a directive and it is not its job to do so. But as I already mentioned, the conference has an important role in analysing and planning further steps, providing, so-to-speak, the necessary link between legislative steps to be able to create new strong policies.

WD: In mid-2004 Europe will become a force of 25 countries. How do you see the future of renewables, and of the Directive in particular, in an enlarged Europe? What should be done at a European and national level to ensure that the agreed renewables targets will still be met within the 2010 deadline?

MR : It is absolutely clear that the ten new member states have to fulfill all the targets set by European directives. The "acquis communautaire" has to be implemented. However, that is the theory. In practice, it will be very difficult for the new member states to achieve the targets. Nevertheless we cannot accept any general reduction for them; after May 2004 they are full members of the Union and have the same duties as all

Wind Directions: What are your expectations from the Berlin Conference?

Mechtild Rothe: The most important piece of work to be accomplished at the Berlin Conference is the analysis. What have we already achieved? What has been the effect of European - and also national - legislation? Was the Campaign for Take-off a success? We should take stock of the present situation, very openly and honestly and, once we are aware of where we stand, we should look forward and develop new targets and build up a strategy to achieve them. An important part of our work will also be the strong focus on renewable energies in the upcoming enlarged Europe.

The Berlin Conference offers a great opportunity to meet the main stakeholders in the renewable energy sector. I expect an intensive but also controversial discussion. In the end we will have to agree on a strong declaration that gives the European input for the June 2004 Renewables Conference in Bonn.

other states. Some new member states have already implemented national support systems and I am very happy that some of these are comparable with the German feed-in system. So I am quite optimistic that at least those countries with an implemented feed-in system, such as Cyprus, Hungary and the Czech Republic, will achieve the targets.

It is also very important to go on with awareness building – in the new member states but also in the existing European Union. It is necessary for the Union to have regulation targets for

target. So let's take them at their word! And I am pretty much sure that particularly the countries with political willingness and an efficient support system will meet the targets. If we look at the various implemented systems, we notice that the feed-in system is the most successful system: in fact it was the basis of the success of wind energy across Europe.

One thing is absolutely clear: the quantity of sun or wind is not an indication of the "quality" of an energy policy. In practice that means that some countries still have to do their homework.

important policy instruments, I would also wish that we defined new targets for the Union for the year 2020. From my perspective, it is necessary that from Berlin we send a very strong signal to the Bonn Conference in June that the European Union is committed to do more in the future about cooperation with developing countries. The success of renewable energies in the Union should be used to build on the energy future of developing countries.

WD: Europe is world leader in renewable technology deployment. How will that be reflected at Berlin and in particular at the Bonn Conference in June?

“Renewables are already an € 8 billion turnover industry in Europe, and they have grown to become a mature industry sector”

heating and cooling, which are currently absent. I would like to propose to the European Parliament that it acts on this issue as soon as next year's elections are over.

WD: At EWEC 2003 you mentioned that there are three main categories of countries: those that will meet the target, those that will perform on average and the black sheeps of Europe. Do you have a perception of which countries will meet the Directive targets?

MR: I mentioned these three categories after taking account of the first country reports produced after the directive on green electricity came into force. Some countries had already implemented or changed to an efficient support system because of the directive, other countries, such as France, Austria and the Netherlands, announced efforts towards a new system. In the meantime they really have installed a good system and are on the way to improving. Only a few countries disappointed me – Italy and Ireland among others – and unfortunately they are still far behind the others.

If I rely on the national reports the member states have sent this year, nearly all countries say they are able to fulfill the

WD: In order to be successful, what do you think should be the key concrete results achieved at this Berlin Conference?

MR: In view of the upcoming enlargement, the Conference is a great opportunity to devise new strategies and targets within a larger Europe. Existing problems can be identified and lead to new necessary policies. Concretely, Berlin should send out a strong message that the European Union is determined to be a frontrunner in the renewable energy sector, as it is already, but also in the future. Since targets are

MR: European cutting-edge renewable energy technology and the industry behind it will be a very important player in future renewable technology deployment. Renewables are already an 10 billion Euro turnover industry in Europe, and they have grown to become a mature industry sector, employing more than 200,000 people. The key players should be participating in both events to express their point of view, and especially what they think is necessary for future development.



Photo: Valerie Pettjean