



International energy policy – an overview

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Introduction

In the context of the energy transition, Germany has set itself ambitious targets for its energy and climate policy. We are not the only ones transforming our energy supply: renewables and energy efficiency take on an ever more prominent role as technology costs drop and renewables become competitive in an increasing number of regions. As domestic resources, renewables reduce dependency on energy imports. They can also greatly help emerging economies and developing countries meet their growing energy demand without causing a rise in greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector and without harming the local environment. The lessons learned by Germany in the context of its energy transition are therefore being used as a reference by many countries. As more countries all around the world move towards an energy supply that is more efficient and uses more renewable energy, some of the pressure is taken out of the global competition for increasingly scarce resources. This also benefits Germany, a country very closely connected to the rest of the world. In order to meet our demand for energy resources and ensure security of supply, well-functioning and transparent international markets are also key.

Under our innovation and industrial policy – which has proven successful over many years – we are funding the development of new business models for low-carbon technology and energy efficiency. Thus, we are improving the ecosystem needed by German companies to be successful in global markets. At the same time, we are making an important contribution to ensuring that our energy supply is secure, affordable and climate-friendly.

The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy has adopted an international energy policy that sets out clear structures and targets: it is faced with both the challenge and the opportunity to convince others of the benefits of the German model – including targets and steps for implementation – to find new partners for setting up a sustainable energy supply and to work with them in order to identify scope for action and develop joint initiatives. By doing this, we are promoting the development of a forward-looking energy policy at global level.

This will make our energy supply more secure and environmentally friendly, in Germany and around the world, cut the costs for innovative technologies and keep clean energy affordable. This will also help us support German companies to become active in foreign markets and invest.

This overview lays out a number of key initiatives of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy in international energy policy planned for 2016. The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy regularly consults with other Federal Ministries, in particular with the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. These Ministries have their own priorities with regard to energy policy – in accordance with their areas of expertise – and work with partner countries all around the world. Coordination on energy policy issues between the different Federal Ministries is an opportunity to make better use of synergies that exist between economic policy, climate policy and development policy and to synchronize individual activities.

1. Energy partnerships

Formal energy partnerships are the Federal Government's central instrument for promoting bilateral cooperation on energy policy with strategically important partner countries. These partnerships include both a high-level intergovernmental dialogue on energy policy and project-related cooperation in working groups on specific subjects. Here, key challenges for the energy industry and energy policy are being addressed, which helps both sides develop innovative solutions. The strategic aim is and will continue to be to raise awareness of the German experience and technological solutions amongst decision-makers in the field of energy policy in the partner country. The energy partnerships bring together government officials, representatives of the public and private sector as well as research institutions from the two countries to share their experience.

Here, the active involvement of those German companies that are operating in the partner country is especially important as these companies can share their experience in the bilateral dialogue. In order to offer more political support to export promotion, our bilateral cooperation is very closely linked to our Energy Export Initiative.

Partner countries are very keen to learn more about Germany's experience with regard to implementing the energy transition. This is why most energy partnerships include working groups that focus on renewable energy, energy efficiency and systems integration.

2. International organisations

Germany is a member of many international organisations dealing with energy policy. Here too, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy is working closely with government officials from other member states and representatives from the business and scientific community. This is an opportunity for the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy to help shape the strategic orientation and agenda of these international organisations. The results of the work done by these bodies serve as an important basis for multilateral cooperation, for example in the G7 and G20 or the Clean Energy Ministerial. We are also dedicated to engaging in and promoting a close dialogue with the business community in order to ensure that the views of German businesses are reflected at global level.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) was founded in 1974 with the aim of guaranteeing an uninterrupted supply of oil. It brought together energy-consuming industrialised countries. Over time, the IEA has developed into an international forum where experience in almost all fields of energy policy is shared and policymakers can receive advice. It has 29 members (OECD countries) and publishes the World Energy Outlook, a key publication on energy.

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) was founded on a German initiative in Bonn in 2009 to promote the expansion of all forms of renewable energy on a global scale. Today, IRENA has 140 members. It provides analyses on financing renewable energy, on policy frameworks and cost development and also offers specific advice to policymakers. Consequently, IRENA is making a key contribution to security of supply, economic development and climate change mitigation around the globe.

The International Energy Forum (IEF) unites energy consumers and producing countries with major transit countries and emerging economies. The main goal is to improve security of supply by promoting a broad-based dialogue between the IEF's 74 member states.

3. G7, G20 and other multilateral fora for dialogue

International cooperation on energy policy has been constantly intensified in the last few years. Both the G7 and the G20 have set up specific working groups on energy policy where participants engage in dialogue on a regular basis. At the G7 and G20 Energy Ministers Meetings, the country's energy ministers take decisions in order to further boost cooperation. The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy represents Germany in the G7 and G20 working groups on energy policy where it is working together closely with government officials from other member states and representatives of international organisations. In 2015, Germany used its G7 presidency in order to place special emphasis on sustainable security of supply.

The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy is also represented in a wide range of regional and international networks and forums on energy policy. These include the International Renewable Energy Conferences (IRECs), the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), the Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM), the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC), the Middle East North Africa Renewable Energy Conferences (MENAREC) and other bodies and conferences. These networks and fora focus on different subjects and regions. This is an opportunity for us to work together with partner countries and share the lessons learned from the German energy transition, to find partners for the development of forward-looking energy systems and to promote the adoption of a sustainable energy policy at global level.

4. Creating new markets – supporting German business activities abroad

Our goal is to ensure that the use of renewable energy increases all around the world while at the same time promoting the deployment of innovative, highly efficient energy installations, products and services. By doing this, we are not only helping to build an energy supply that is secure, efficient and in line with our climate targets, but also supporting German companies so that they can market their expertise, cutting-edge technology in the areas of renewables and energy efficiency as well as business models on how to save energy on a global scale.

We want to significantly strengthen international cooperation, in particular when it comes to systems and market integration of renewables and efficiency technologies in the electricity, heat and transport sectors. We also want to pool international efforts in these areas. Here, we are relying on a close dialogue with German companies that are active in other countries. We also give these companies the opportunity to present their views and technological solutions in a number of bilateral and multilateral fora. Our goal is to support the development towards sustainable energy systems around the world and create good conditions for German companies so they can invest and do business. In order to support German companies' activities in foreign markets, we are not only relying on our tried-and-tested foreign trade and investment instruments, but also on the Energy Export Initiative.

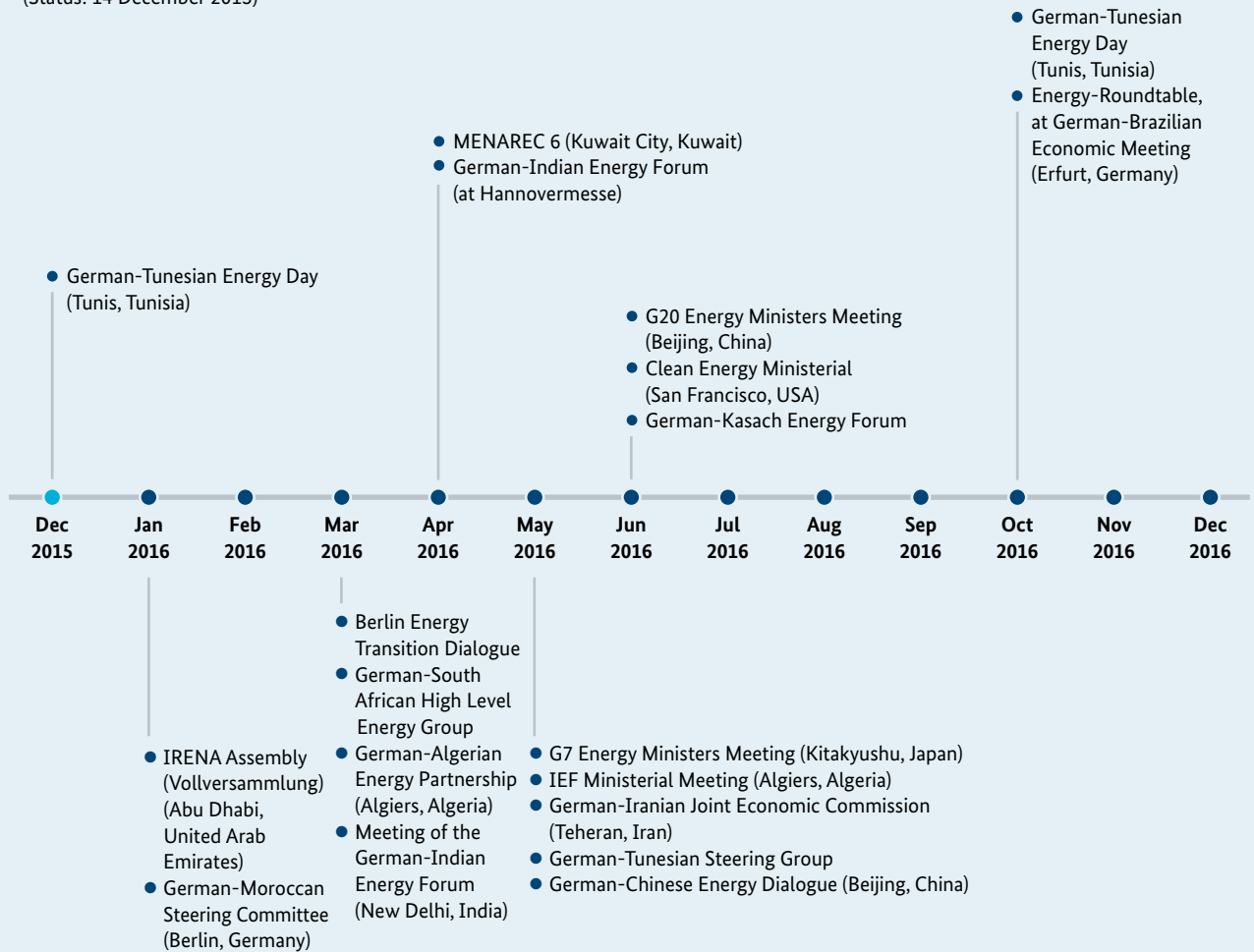
5. Advocating the energy transition

We want to increase understanding for the energy transition at global level. We are aware that each and every country has a different energy policy framework and different priorities. This is why we want to take on an active role in the dialogue on the opportunities and challenges connected to the global transition to a sustainable energy supply. Many countries are very keen to learn more about Germany's energy transition. We would like to harness this opportunity, and explain measures and interdependencies, strengthen our role as a constructive partner in the international debate and actively involve other states. This will also enhance other countries' perception of Germany as a leader in advocating a sustainable energy supply at political level and in developing renewables technology.

Here, bilateral dialogue with individual countries, multilateral discussions and high-publicity events are key. This is why the 'Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue' (BETD) – which had been organised for the first time in 2015 in cooperation with the Federal Foreign Office and other relevant Ministries – will now be held annually. In addition to this, we will regularly publish and update information material such as newsletters or brochures in English and other languages.

Schedule of events

(Status: 14 December 2015)



Source: BMWi