

Press Release No. 21/2011

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Energy turnaround requires greater energy efficiency

25-30 million additional tonnes of carbon dioxide could be saved in electricity alone

The energy turnaround in Germany is in full swing. Emissions of greenhouse gases are set to be reduced by 40 percent over 1990 levels by the year 2020. These are the provisions of the Integrated Energy and Climate Programme (IEKP) of August 2007 which was extended in the federal government energy plan of September 2010. However, according to a new study by the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) there is still potential through implementation that can be realised. UBA President Jochen Flasbarth believes this potential can be easily tapped, remarking "Energy efficiency in particular is an area that can and must be stepped up. Whether it is electricity savings in the household or in industry, or climate-friendly remediation of building stock or fuel-efficient cars, the measures taken to date are not enough to reduce emissions to the extent that is aimed for. Greater effort is clearly needed." Flasbarth also called for better integration of renewable energies in the electricity grid.

The greatest shortcomings in implementation of the IEKP are in electricity savings, where an additional 25-30 million tonnes carbon dioxide (CO₂) if measures already resolved were transposed consistently. Enhanced and binding minimum efficiency standards as well as improved energy consumption labelling on electrical devices could achieve this. The UBA study reports that efficiency improvements in buildings could save some 20-30 million tonnes of CO₂.

The transport sector must also reduce its CO₂ emissions significantly. Although the interim target of an average 130 grammes CO₂ per kilometre (g/km) will likely be achieved in new vehicles by the year 2015, achieving EU Commission targets of a mere 95 g/km in 2020 will require even more intensive efforts. Currently, new registered vehicles in Germany still emit about 152 g/km. Through use of renewable energies in power and heat generation there is a good chance that the IEKP target of ca. 69 million tonnes carbon dioxide less in 2020 over 2006 levels can be achieved as a result of legislation already implemented. UBA nevertheless recommends pushing forward on optimisation. UBA President Flasbarth remarks, "The positive trend in renewable energies is not a self-starter. The Renewable Energies Act (German: EEG) should be revised continuously, with an eye to improving sales of EEG electricity. Moreover, we must expand and redesign the electricity grid sustainably so as to facilitate integration of the growing shares of wind, solar, and similar energies in the electricity mix."

The IEKP makes provisions for 29 measures, 14 of which were transposed as legislative acts or ordinances in August 2007. The package of measures is designed in such a way that Germany's climate protection goals can also be achieved once nuclear energy is phased out in accordance with the correspondent legislation (*Atomausstiegsgesetz*) passed in 2002.

The UBA *Statusbericht zur Umsetzung des Integrierten Energie- und Klimaschutzprogramms der Bundesregierung* [Status report on implementation of the federal Government Integrated Energy and Climate Protection Programme] study (in German) is available for free download at <http://www.uba.de/uba-info-medien-e/3971.html>.

Dessau-Roßlau, 14 April 2011