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Future made in Germany: Germany's growth is becoming increasingly sustainable

Federal Environment Ministry and Federal Environment Agency publish the 2011 Report on the Environmental Economy

The 2011 Report on the Environmental Economy, the second after the 2009 report, presents the latest developments, challenges and prospects of the environmental economy in Germany. It shows that Germany has already made significant progress on the road to new, environmentally sound growth. Today, much less resources, land and energy are used, and fewer pollutants are emitted, than just ten years ago to obtain the same yield.

The environmental economy is a cross-sectoral industry comprising companies that produce and supply environmental goods and services. The report documents the sector's increasing importance for the German economy as a whole and confirms the pioneering role of German companies in this field. There has been above-average growth in the production of environmental goods in Germany, now totalling a production volume of almost 76 billion euros. With a global trade share of 15.4 percent, Germany is at the forefront in the export of environmental goods. According to the latest calculations there are now almost 2 million employees in the environmental economy - a new record. Federal Environment Minister Norbert Röttgen is convinced: "the transformation of our energy system will considerably accelerate this trend." Minister Röttgen stressed that the report is also proof of the shaping force of policy on the road to sustainable, resource-efficient economic activities and lifestyles: "The innovative strength of the environmental economy is also a sign of the success of environmental and energy policy."

Renewable energies remain the driving force behind this dynamic development. Even during the global economic crisis, production of goods in this sector increased despite the general downward trend. According to a Roland Berger forecast, the global market for green energy technologies will almost quadruple by 2020, and for renewables such as photovoltaics, solar thermal energy, biogas and wind energy, annual worldwide growth rates in turnover of between 15 and over 30 percent are expected - a major opportunity for German companies.

The forward-looking focus of sustainable production is also emphasised by a further interesting development: in the environmental economy there is a huge amount of intensive and continuous research. Almost 80 percent of production areas in the environmental sector are especially research- and knowledge-intensive. The goal is to connect innovation and environmental policy in a constructive way and at the same time to tap new markets for environmental technologies - an important issue in the Science Year 2012.

The Report on the Environmental Economy illustrates that Germany has already made considerable progress with the ecological modernisation of the economy and society: between 1990 and 2010 energy productivity rose by 38.6 percent and raw material productivity by 46.8 percent. There were also positive developments regarding air pollutant emissions: a 56.4 percent reduction was achieved in the reporting period compared with 1990. Germany is also at the forefront of recovery of waste and its environmentally sound disposal: around 90 percent of construction waste and 63 percent of municipal and production waste are already being recycled.

Federal Environment Minister Röttgen commented: "Germany's growth is becoming increasingly sustainable. The 2011 Report on the Environmental Economy illustrates the dynamic and potential of this development. Germany is increasingly achieving a continuous reduction in environmentally harmful emissions, closing substance cycles where possible and using resources efficiently. The transformation of our energy system is the most important strategic guide on this path. It strengthens the capacities of our environmental economy and is the foundation for further accelerating the sustainable restructuring of our energy supply, our industry and our society. Germany wants to remain a highly industrialised country, but one that is high-tech, competitive and forward-looking. The Closed Substance Cycle and Waste Management Act and the resource efficiency programme are the next concrete steps on this road."

Jochen Flasbarth, President of the Federal Environment Agency, noted: "The Report on the Environmental Economy proves that environmental protection in Germany is a huge success story for the economy. Without environmental protection as an economic driving force, Germany would have been much worse off throughout the crisis. There are major opportunities for employment in particular in the fields of climate protection and increasing resource efficiency. There are also excellent prospects for the export of environmental and efficiency technologies because the global markets for these technologies will grow at a well-above-average pace in the coming decades. Germany should therefore resolutely follow the path to a green economy for economic reasons, too. This is important because other countries such as China and South Korea have also recognised the opportunities environmental protection offers."

The Report on the Environmental Economy is based on numerous research projects and data from statistical offices.

Further information:

- [Umweltwirtschaftsbericht 2011](#) (2011 Report on the Environmental Economy in German)