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Press Release

German Debate on renewable energies threatens European renewable energy targets, Germany's leading role in Europe and Europe's global dominance.

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Prof. Arthouros Zervos, President of the European Renewable Energy Council says to the current discussion on the future energy policy in Germany: "Economic knowledge and a sense of responsibility for future generations make it necessary to go ahead with renewable energies." Professor Zervos is concerned that the debate will create unnecessary uncertainty among investors on Europe's largest market for renewable energy technologies.

The target set out by Environment Minister Trittin is simply a necessary step to comply with European legislation. The European Union has adopted a directive, which sets national targets with the overall aim to increase the share of electricity produced from renewable energy sources from 14 % in 2000 to 22 % by the year 2010 in Europe. For Germany, the national target is 12.5 % renewable electricity by 2010.

The successful renewable energy act (EEG) is vital for investor confidence and has secured Germany's position as a European leader in renewable electricity deployment. All expectations and forecasts see Germany fulfilling its national target. However, that could change if investor confidence is undermined. A new framework is unlikely to be well functioning the first five years.

Moreover, the European Commission is expected to propose a EU wide renewable electricity framework as early as in 2005, which would possibly enter into force in 2012. This deadline was set advisedly to have a transitional period for national systems that is long enough to maintain investor confidence and allow stakeholders sufficient time to prepare.

Changing the framework just two years before the European Union proposes a framework will have a devastating impact on investor confidence and the market as rules are changed twice over a very short time.

Germany is the locomotive pulling the renewable energy development in Europe, which in turn is setting the global agenda when it comes to renewables. The law (EEG) itself has in the meanwhile already inspired other states like France or Austria to adopt similar rules. An unnecessary short-term disturbance in the German market would send a very unfortunate signal to the surrounding world.

“European companies are world leaders in renewable energy - a market with an annual turnover of more than € 10 billion - and employs about 200 000 people. Creating insecurity would be a serious blow to Germany and Europe’s dominant global position in one of the fastest growing sectors in the world,” adds Prof. Zervos.

The European Renewable Energy Council (EREC) is the umbrella association of the major European renewable energy industry, trade and research associations active in the field of photovoltaic, small hydropower, solar thermal, biomass and wind energy.

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