

*THE WORLD WIND ENERGY AWARD 2004*

## Laudatio for Dr. Hermann Scheer

by Preben Maegaard in Beijing, China,  
1. November 2004

Dear Hermann,

This year the World Wind Energy Association is giving the World Wind Energy Award to you. As the legislator, writer, speaker, organizer and energy expert you have made decisive contributions for decades at the broadest possible level towards the general and unconditional acceptance and utilisation that renewable energy enjoys worldwide.

As one of the largest industrialised countries in the world, Germany is demonstrating results within wind energy and other renewable technologies that until now belonged only to the imagination. Nearly 10% of the electricity consumption in Germany now comes from the renewable energies, with all its positive impacts on the environment, job creation and industrial development. This provides the mere evidence that it is possible on a large scale to find practical and economical alternatives to scarce fossil fuels: the oil, the natural gas and the uranium by changing to the inexhaustible renewable energy forms.



With old and influential energy corporations within mining and power production Germany is now turning into a global demonstration project for the renewable energy forms of the future. It is happening even though your fatherland is not especially blessed by nature with the best wind resources, extraordinary solar radiation or extensive plains for the cultivation of energy crops. That the transition from the fossil fuels and atomic energy to the renewable energy is taking place in any event is concrete evidence of your efforts. And this is still a new development in its early stage.

The first important step was the revolutionary one page act on renewable energy drawn up and put through the German Bundestag in 1990 by you and your supporters. It was simple and precise, based on three main pillars: Free access to the grid, guaranteed fixed prices, and the obligation for utilities to purchase. The implementation of the law has resulted in an incredible yearly growth in wind energy and implementation of the 100.000 Solar Roofs' programme.

Wind electricity power capacity of 16.000 MW has emerged in Germany in the last 12 years as a result of the first renewable energy act and its successor, in German called the EEG. New capacity of 3.000 MW of wind power were added in 2003 alone. In 2004, in addition to the wind power, 300 MW of photovoltaic and 1.000 new biogas plants have been installed.

The legal framework of the EEG is your true brain child. It is based on a sophisticated bonus system with guaranteed and differentiated tariffs with the purpose of mobilizing all existing and known renewable energy forms, large and small, new and old, for electricity and for transport, with private or public ownership, for individual homes, industries, institutions and whole communities. But always based on the inexhaustible renewable energy sources: the sun, the wind and the many forms of biomass.

It is one of your best arguments that if the present rate of renewable energy implementation continues in the next four or five decades, the conventional German energy system with its big power plants fuelled by coal, fossil gas and uranium will be completely substituted. The results will be an additional 150.000 MW of renewable energy.

Long and vulnerable energy chains from overseas mines, remote oil wells and gas fields to the final consumer with losses of energy at every step of conversion and transformation will be replaced by short energy chains. The power producing solar cells are part of many of our buildings; windmills, small or large for single families or for the whole neighbourhood can be installed almost anywhere. Besides food the farmer of the future will also supply us with fuel for the vehicles and wood for the stoves. The present few highly centralized power plants will be replaced by thousands of decentralized plants.

You are often being confronted with the cost of this enormous transition to which you respond with answers that are logical to people and easy to understand. The fossil and nuclear costs inevitably rise while renewable energy becomes continuously cheaper through mass production and technological improvements. In the last ten years, wind power costs have fallen by 50% and photovoltaic by around 30%. The extra costs of today of some of the new energy technologies are the lower costs of tomorrow.

We see demonstrated in practice, what you sometimes reference to Albert Einstein, that it is not possible to solve a problem with the same methods and thinking that caused the problem. With all the instruments well developed and in industrial production the next strategic step is therefore to combine and integrate the many new energy forms for local, autonomous supply to communities, villages and towns. There will be no need for huge transmission systems and remote supply of energy. Advanced management systems based on information technology will make the existing one-way energy structure obsolete.

This can be achieved by continuous research and technological development, by new industrial capacities, by setting legal frameworks for renewable energy, by implementing a proper energy tax system which takes into account the environmental and social damages of conventional energy forms, and by giving the renewable energy

forms their international institutional “home”, an IRENA for which you have been struggling for a dozen of years, often alone and always against fierce resistance from the existing institutions that prefer the status quo.

But it is necessary for the survival of our civilization to create new dreams and visions with appeal and hope for the future; this you are told by people who attend meetings to listen to you or purchase your books. You meet them all over the world. The absurd spending of billions of dollars of the tax-payers money for an atomic renaissance must be transferred from the existing institutions to the renewable energy research and development which still get ten times less than the atomic energy that was a vicious dream and the most costly escapade of the past century as you have documented.

Ten years back you said to me: “As long as I am member of The Bundestag, no majority for building new atomic power stations is possible.” In the meantime Germany has got the world’s most progressive legislation beneficial to renewable energy, an impressive new industry based on renewable energy, and broad popular support to a switch-over from fossil fuels. Germany has become a model to other countries. You have been able to achieve a broad acceptance amongst your political colleagues for your visions on renewable energy in the future, as no politician, of course, will work against a better environment, against new industrial development and more jobs. By that you have gained a resonance and influence on German politics, of greater importance than any other present energy-politician.

It was a personal pleasure for me in a book, in homage to your 60<sup>th</sup> birthday this year, to contribute an article that I titled, “Bringing the power of the sun in the service of mankind”. This is what you have been doing now for almost two generations in dozens of different ways in your political life, in EUROSOLAR as your operational platform, the World Council for Renewable Energy and your many books that have been translated to a dozen languages and sold in tens of thousands of copies. The results are very visible and serve as inspiration to people all over the world.



The World Wind Energy Award 2004 was given to the German Minister of Environment, Jürgen Trittin and to Dr. Hermann Scheer, MdB, General Chairman of WCRE

You describe in your books how the global economy can and must replace its dependence on fossil fuels with solar and renewable energy - and the enormous and multiple benefits which will follow. You explode the myth that fossil fuel is “cheaper” and show the road towards renewable energy that will create a truly sustainable global economy - and the only secure prospects for future prosperity that can be shared worldwide.

You express yourself clearly in documentation with images and convincing arguments without the risk of being misunderstood. That your books are of universal importance, not just concerning German or European matters, is evident, as they have been translated into numerous languages. This in itself reflects the fact, that a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energies is a matter of colossal importance to people in the most diverse regions and cultures all over the world.

Your books offer an alternative programme to what has been until now the fruitless international negotiations to reach consensus with the existing fossil-fuel lobby. You realize that we have to start with changes in our minds. What is not in the mind is not going to the hand, to any practice. Here we are not only speaking about cultural issues, but also about the problem of how we think about energy. The basic challenge to change this is to create a consciousness about renewable energy. This also includes creating a basis for intellectual capacity. That all conventional energy can be substituted by renewable energy is for you not an abstraction. You always point at realistic and realisable solutions that can be used by the individual, the manufacturers and community leaders.

You encourage, enlighten and inform but you are not a demagogue. In this way you create the true basis for each human being to recognize the importance and necessity of their own participation: To realize their own energy consumption, to consider from where it comes, and to think about the implications and consequences. Citizens so engaged have become indispensable in the transition from fossil fuels by installing solar collectors, building windmills and local district heating stations. In this way a significant share of the energy supply has become peoples' common interest. To break the electric power monopoly was at the same time to avoid the nuclear power.

The comprehensive view on energy you are advocating is an important part of your analysis, by making the correct cost calculations of the whole energy chain, and not just calculating the cost of one technology, to calculate the costs of importing fossil fuels, etc.

You have proven that it is possible without compromise and against fierce resistance to maintain the target and struggle for the 100% renewable energy society of the future. And time is with you. The critical climate changes and the damages caused by the use of fossil fuels are making it more and more obvious for the world community that there are no long term alternatives to the renewable energies.

You have through your political work, your books, numerous articles, in the media and more than 3.000 speeches in large and small assemblies, all over the world, analysed and advocated for a broad variety of energy solutions that are better than the existing scenario.

To obtain such results requires a strong personality, effort and endurance. As a legislator, writer, philosopher and organisational leader that has, for 15 years, worked vigorously and with dedication for the widest possible use of renewable energy, not only in your home country, which is Germany, but more and more world-wide, The World Wind Energy Association gives you the World Wind Energy Award 2004.

It is of course a special personal honour and pleasure for me to give you to day the World Wind Energy Award. I have for more than a dozen years followed and admired your work in renewable energy at many levels. We have worked together in EUROSOLAR, the WCRE, the European Solar Prize and many ad hoc events, and always in an atmosphere of dedication and friendliness. You also brought to birth this association during a memorable meeting in Copenhagen in 2001.

It is not an isolated incident for you to be honoured. You have received a catalogue of very prestigious awards: The 1998 World Solar Prize, the 2000 Alternative Nobel Prize, the 2000 World Biomass Prize and the 2004 Leadership Award from the American Council for Renewable Energy.

In August 2002 the American TIME magazine recognised you as Hero for the Green Century, and quoted you: "Renewable energy is necessary for the assurance of life on earth. There is no time to waste."

It is in this spirit that you are receiving the 2004 World Wind Energy Award. Wind energy has, due to your vision and efforts, developed and acquired acceptance world-wide and is now considered as the single most promising and economical source of a wide spectrum of renewable energy solutions.



I congratulate you whole-heartedly on your World Wind Energy Award 2004.

*Preben Maegaard,  
President of the World Wind Energy Association*

*This is the full version. A shortened version of the laudatio was presented to Dr. Hermann Scheer by Preben Maegaard during the award ceremony at the World Wind Energy Conference 2004 in Beijing, China, on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2004.*