Rat für
NACHHALTIGE
Entwicklung

# In a nutshell: German Council for Sustainable Development

The German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) is an advisory body backed by the mandate of the German Federal Government. The 15 RNE members are public figures. In June 2010, the current members were appointed by Chancellor Angela Merkel for a three-year term. The RNE was first established in April 2001 by then Chancellor Gerhard Schröder.

## Tasks

The Federal Government has entrusted the RNE with the following tasks:

• Developing a national sustainable development strategy
• Identifying concrete areas for action and projects
• Boosting public discussion on sustainability

## Chair

Marlehn Thieme has chaired the RNE since 29 February 2012. She is a member of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and director of the CSR section at Deutsche Bank AG. Olaf Tschimpke, president of NABU (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union), is the RNE deputy chair.

## Mission Statement

Sustainable development entails treating environmental aspects on an equal footing with social and economic aspects. Making this abundantly clear is one of the Council's missions. Future-oriented management means that we have to leave future generations a globally intact ecological, social and economic system. The one cannot be achieved without the others.

The RNE seeks to make sustainable development a fundamental goal and field of action in all areas of the political sphere. It works towards citizens living a sustainable lifestyle and towards a broad public discussion on sustainability. It urges businesses and institutions to make their economic activities sustainable, to face the challenges posed by sustainability and to make use of its opportunities. The RNE seeks to broaden the discussion on sustainability within society and to make the outcomes of this more effective and more binding.

## Current issues

The Council further develops the national strategy for sustainable development in Germany in critical dialogue with the Federal Government and political, economic and social stakeholders. The Council, together with representatives of enterprises and the capital markets, has developed the "**German Sustainability Code**", a reference for a green economy. Since October 2011, the RNE has been recommending that organisations voluntarily implement it.
"**The Sustainable Shopping Basket**" shopping guide is updated annually and provides

interested citizens reliable guidance through the label jungle and general advice and information on sustainable consumption. The latest policy recommendations of the Council call for **energy efficiency** to be made binding, the **stabilisation of the financial markets**, agricultural reform based on the concept of sustainability and the development of a **circular economy for strategic raw materials**. In March 2011, the Council tested a new format for social dialogue on long-term policy with its "**Dialoge_Zukunft_Vision2050**" project. It is currently supporting an initiative of some 20 mayors for **sustainable urban development**. In 2009, the Council organised a critical analysis of German sustainability policy conducted in the form of a peer review by international experts. Both the German Bundestag and the Federal Government have used the "**Sustainability: Made in Germany**" review to advance sustainable development policies. In 2013, the Council is mandated by the Federal Government to organise another **international peer review of German sustainability policy**.

The German Council for Sustainable Development bestows the "**Social Entrepreneur of Sustainability Award**", extends invitations to the academic lecture series Carl-von-Carlowitz Lectures and awards the "Werkstatt N" quality label for outstanding sustainability initiatives for a year at a time.

## Instruments

**• Political Dialogue**
The Council advises – with policy recommendations and opinions – the chairman of the Committee for Sustainable Development as well as Ronald Pofalla, Minister and Head of the Federal Chancellery. Important topics are the National Sustainability Strategy, with its goals, indicators and institutions, as well as Germany's global responsibility. In addition, the Council cooperates closely with the political heads of the federal ministries, with the German parliament, and the sustainability initiatives of business and industry as well as of civil society. In the past, the Council has provided input on topics such as public procurement and consumption issues, on energy and climate protection policy, policies for research, land consumption as well as on the responsibility of private enterprise.

**• The Political Public**
The Council has introduced an annual public conference to serve as a political sustainability summit. Formats and participation portals for general public involvement alternate with contributions from top politicians, key representatives of business and industry, and experts in the field of sustainability from civil society. The Federal Chancellor regularly presents the Federal Government's sustainability policy at the Council's annual conference. The Council is a member of the European network consisting of European Environment and Sustainable Development Councils (EEAC), the Stakeholder Forum at United Nations level and is active in many other networks.

**• Publications**
The Council publishes policy statements, recommendations, studies and its shopping guide "The Sustainability Shopping Basket" as printed and digital brochures. Furthermore, the RNE provides information in up-to-date press releases. The publications of the Council are free and can be ordered or downloaded online at *www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de*. There, one can likewise subscribe to the two-weekly RNE newsletter "News Nachhaltigkeit" (Sustainability News).

## Recent publications and speeches

- Der Strompreisdebatte fehlt die Nachhaltigkeit. Empfehlung des Rates für Nachhaltige Entwicklung an die Bundesregierung, 14. Februar 2013 (The debate on electricity prices lacks sustainability. The Council for Sustainable Development's recommendation to the Federal Government, 14 February 2013)
- Für ein politisches Signal zur Stärkung der Rolle des ökologischen Landbaus in Europa. Stellungnahme des Rates für Nachhaltige Entwicklung, 1. Februar 2013 (For a political signal to strengthen the role of organic farming in Europe. Opinion of the Council for Sustainable Development, 1 February 2013)
- Nachhaltiges Wirtschaften: Zehn Forderungen – Einladung zum Dialog. Stellungnahme des Rates für Nachhaltige Entwicklung, 20. November 2012 (Sustainability: Ten Demands - Invitation to a Dialogue. Opinion of the Council for Sustainable Development, 20 November 2012)
- Empfehlungen des RNE zur Stärkung der Innenentwicklung in Städten – Vorschläge zur Novelle des Baugesetzbuches zur Baulandpotenzial- und – bedarfsermittlung, 27. September 2012 (Recommendations of the RNE to strengthen internal development in cities – proposals for amending the Building Code with regard to determining building land potential and requirement, 27 September 2012)
- Die Energiewende braucht eine verbindliche und wirksame Energieeffizienzpolitik. Empfehlung des Nachhaltigkeitsrates an die Politik, März 2012 (The move to new energy sources demands a binding and effective energy efficiency policy – the Sustainability Council's policy recommendations, March 2012)
- Der Deutsche Nachhaltigkeitskodex. Empfehlungen des Rates für Nachhaltige Entwicklung an die Bundesregierung, Januar 2012 (The German Sustainability Code: The Council for Sustainable Development's recommendations to the Federal Government, January 2012)
  „Nachhaltig wirtschaften – welche Verantwortung hat der Finanzmarkt?" Vortrag von Marlehn Thieme bei den Ständehaus-Gesprächen zur gesellschaftlichen Verantwortung von Unternehmen, 4.Oktober 2011 (Sustainable management – what are the responsibilities of the capital market? Paper by Marlehn Thieme at the Ständehaus Discussions on the social responsibility of business and enterprise, 4 October 2011)
- „Gold-Standard Ökolandbau": Für eine nachhaltige Gestaltung der Agrarwende. Empfehlungen des Rates für Nachhaltige Entwicklung an die Bunderegierung, Juli 2011 (Gold-Standard Organic Farming: For a Sustainable Agricultural Turnaround: The Council for Sustainable Development's recommendations to the Federal Government, July 2011
- Dialog der Verantwortung. Stellungnahme des Nachhaltigkeitsrates zur Fortschreibung der nationalen Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie 2012, Juni 2011 (Accountability dialogue: Council for Sustainable Development's statement on the perpetuation of the National Sustainability Strategy 2012, June 2011)
- Wie Deutschland zum Rohstoffland wird. Empfehlungen des Rates für Nachhaltige Entwicklung an die Bunderegierung, Juni 2011 (How Germany can evolve into a raw materials nation: The Council for Sustainable Development's recommendations to the German Government, June 2011)
- Stabilisierung der Finanzmärkte. Empfehlung zu internationalen und nationalen Maßnahmen der fiskalischen Nachhaltigkeitspolitik, March 2010 (Stabilising the capital market: Recommendations on international and national measures for a fiscal sustainability policy, March 2010)

## Council Members

*Marlehn Thieme*, chairwoman of the Council, member of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), director at Deutsche Bank AG

*Olaf Tschimpke*, deputy chair of the Council, president of NABU (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union)

*Dr Heinrich Graf von Bassewitz*, farmer, federal commissioner for organic farming of the German Farmers' Association (DBV) and member of the DBV Board

*Dr Ursula Eid*, former parliamentary secretary for International Development Cooperation

*Dr Joachim Faber*, senior advisor of Allianz SE

*Dr Hans Geisler*, former Saxony minister for Social Affairs, Health, Youth and Families

*Alois Glück*, president of the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK)

*Walter Hirche*, former parliamentary secretary for the Ministry of the Environment, former minister in Lower Saxony and Brandenburg; president of the German Commission for UNESCO

*Prof. Dr Lucia A. Reisch*, professor at Copenhagen Business School, visiting professor at Zeppelin University, Friedrichshafen

*Max Schön*, managing partner of Max Schön Verwaltungsgesellschaft mbH & Co. Service KG, president of the German Association for the Club of Rome, chairman of the supervisory board of the DESERTEC Foundation, Executive director of the initiative 2° - German CEOs for Climate Protection

*Dr Wolfgang Schuster*, former lord mayor of the city of Stuttgart, managing director of Institut für Nachhaltige Stadtentwicklung GmbH Stuttgart

*Dr Eric Schweitzer*, member of the board of ALBA Group, president of the Berlin Chamber of Industry and Commerce, president of the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce, DIHK

*Michael Vassiliadis*, chairman of the Industrial Union of Mining, Chemicals and Energy (IG BCE)

*Hubert Weinzierl*, honorary president of the German League for Nature and Environment (DNR), chairman of the board of advisors of the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU)

*Prof. Dr Angelika Zahrnt*, honorary chairwoman of "Friends of the Earth Germany" (Bund für Umwelt- und Naturschutz Deutschland, BUND)

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