



Rat für  
NACHHALTIGE  
Entwicklung

## **German Council for Sustainable Development**

The German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) is a multi stakeholder body advising the German Federal Government. The 15 RNE members were appointed by Chancellor Angela Merkel. The RNE was first established in April 2001 by then Chancellor Gerhard Schröder.

RNE advises the Federal Chancellery on all aspects of the national strategy on sustainable development, NSSD, which was relaunched in 2012. The NSSD was first introduced in 2002 and has continuously been updated since then.

### **Chair**

Marlehn Thieme is Chair of RNE. 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 RNE Deputy Chair.

### **Modality**

The Council works through a secretariat directed by General Secretary Dr. Günther Bachmann, with an annual total net budget of €1,9 million. Regular working meetings and a couple of various additional dialogue conferences, leadership fora and expert panels are part of a robust working mode. Once a year, an audience of more than one thousand people attend a public Annual Conference featuring top politicians including Mme Federal Chancellor, key representatives of civil society and the private sector.

Since 2001 the Council produced more than 45 policy statements and a series of print publications, all of them based on scientific evidence, and for this purpose, the secretariat links up with the r&d community and engages stakeholder from all part of society in new forms of dialogue-style informed debates. The Council's website and newsletter service turn out an average monthly web-visits of 250000 resulting in some 5 million hits per month.

### **Outcome**

The Council shapes the national strategy for sustainable development in critical dialogue with the Federal Government and leading political, economic and social stakeholders. The following RNE projects and initiatives produced the most political impact:

#### **Green Economy: The German Sustainability Code**

Issued in 2011 the German Sustainability Code engages the corporate community and small and medium enterprises in a transparent sustainability management. It is a tool to frame Green Economy in the context of sustainable development. Providing transparent sustainability criteria it calls the private sector to take voluntary action in order to comply with the Code's requirements, or to explain why this is not the case. It was developed within the framework of a comprehensive dialogue - initiated by the Council for Sustainable Development and supported by numerous parties concerned. It has been tested and refined by way of an extended participation of the business community, the capital market and other stakeholders.

## **Energy change**

In 2011, five Members of the Council and the General Secretary found themselves involved in the ad hoc committee advising on the so called Energiewende (the final phasing out of nuclear energy). Previous results of the Council both on climate and energy issues formed a sound basis.

## **Dialogue**

RNE develops several visioning processes. The “*Dialoge\_Zukunft\_Vision2050*” involves young professional “under 27” in a dialogue on long-term policy. RNE facilitates a sustainable municipal development initiative engaging around 20 local mayors. In 2009, RNE organised the Peer Review, a critical analysis of German sustainability policy conducted by international experts. Both the German Bundestag and the Federal Government have used the “Sustainability: Made in Germany” review to advance sustainable development policies. The German Council for Sustainable Development bestows the Social Entrepreneur Award in the frame of the German Sustainability Award, holds the Carl-von-Carlowitz Lectures and awards the “Werkstatt N” quality label for a year at a time for outstanding sustainability initiatives.

## **Other key issues**

Of key importance is the recommendation on how to avoid and minimise land consumption in Germany. Issued in 2003 the recommendation was prompted by innovative and decentralised frontrunner action on the local level and major federal and Länder research programmes. Land consumption is being reduced, but still unsustainably high.

In recent years the Council worked on issues such as the lacking recycling of important mineral resources, on how to stabilise financial markets, and how to ensure the rise of organic farming in Germany.

## **Mission Statement**

Sustainable development entails treating environmental aspects on an equal footing with social and economic aspects. Making this abundantly clear is one of RNE’s missions. Future-oriented management means: we have to leave our children and grandchildren an intact ecological, social and economic system. One cannot be achieved without the other.

RNE seeks to make sustainable development a fundamental goal and area of action of politics. It works towards citizens living a sustainable lifestyle. It urges businesses and institutions to make their economic activities sustainable, to face the challenges posed by sustainability and to use the opportunities presented by sustainability. RNE seeks to broaden the discussion within society on sustainability and to make the outcomes of the discussion more effective and more binding.

## **Council Members**

*Marlehn Thieme*, Chairwoman of the Council, Member of the Council of Lutheran Churches in Germany (EKD), Director at Deutsche Bank AG

*Dr. Heinrich Graf von Bassewitz*, farmer, Federal Commissioner for Organic Farming of the German Farmers' Association (DBV) and Member of the DBV Presidium

*Dr. Ursula Eid*, former Parliamentary State Secretary for International Development Cooperation

*Dr. Joachim Faber*, Member of the Board, Senior Advisor of Allianz SE

*Dr. Hans Geisler*, former Saxony State Minister for Social Affairs, Health and Youth

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

*Walter Hirche*, former Parliamentary State Secretary for 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 and 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

*Dr. Wolfgang Schuster*, Lord Mayor of the City of Stuttgart

*Dr. Eric Schweitzer*, Member of the Board of ALBA AG, President of the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Berlin branch)

*Olaf Tschimpke*, Deputy Chair, President of NABU (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union)

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

*Hubert Weinzierl*, President of the German League for Nature and Environment (DNR), Chairman of the Board of Advisors of *Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt* (DBU)

*Prof. Dr. Angelika Zahrt*, Honorary Chairwoman of "Friends of the Earth Germany" (Bund für Umwelt- und Naturschutz Deutschland, BUND)

*Jochen Zeitz*, coopted member, Chairman of the Administrative Board of PUMA SE, CEO of the Sport and Lifestyle Group and Chief Sustainability Officer of PPR

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