

Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservancy and Nuclear Safety (BMU)

(from) Michael Müller
Parliamentary State Secretary
Member of the Federal German Parliament

(to) Herr Hans-Josef Fell MP

Reference Parliamentary Cabinet Paper
Berlin, 7 April 2008

Dear Member

Re your written question reference 03/192 dated 27 March 2008 from the office of the Federal Chancellor:

Question 1

What new measures and activities are planned by the Federal Government to support the generation of solar and wind energy in North African countries in the Mediterranean Union, as suggested in the DESERTEC proposals? Some of the surplus power generated would then be available (to supplement) European power supply.

The reply is as follows:

The build-up of renewable energy, especially solar thermal power supply, in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East (MENA), in conjunction with a cooperative grid in the Mediterranean area, is in the interest of all of Europe. The concept of solar energy imports from power stations in the MENA area plays an important role in several scenarios concerning the development of renewable energy. The BMU, in its research support, has enabled three studies by the German Centre for Air and Space Travel to promote the idea of solar energy cooperation with Africa, with special consideration of the solar potential in the MENA area and its use in solar thermal power stations. The BMU will in future also promote the proliferation of solar power stations within the framework of its research in the field of renewable energy, i.e. by supporting research, development and demonstration projects.

In addition the Federal Government is co-financing the Cairo-based Regional Centre for Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency (MCREEE) to the tune of 6 million euros, together with Egypt (4 million euros), Denmark (2 million euros), and the European Commission (3 million euros). MCREEE will become the regional think tank for regional energy and energy efficiency. It will provide research and political consultancy services and become the key institution for energy discussions between the MENA countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen) and the EU and its member states.

Also, within the framework of the “Barcelona Code: Mediterranean Union” (the Federal Government) is in a position to carry out appropriate programmes and projects. With the considerable financial resources of the “European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)” that should be available for the greater part of the Mediterranean area, ambitious projects can be financed. This is even more significant as the ENP is in favour of new regional projects, which include energy projects.

A summit conference of EU member states and their Mediterranean neighbours is planned to take place on 13 July 2008; there is a need to identify concrete measures and cooperative activities for this conference.

The Federal Government will take both this opportunity and others to devote a high priority to support cooperative efforts in the fields of renewable energy, building on the existing cooperation within the framework of the Barcelona Code and in accordance with the “Priority Action Programme for Euro-Mediterranean Energy Cooperation” adopted by the EuroMed Energy Ministers in December 2007.

Over and above this, the Federal Government supports the position that, in order to reach the goal that 20% of the total energy use of the 27 member states should be supplied by renewables by 2020, electric current from renewable sources in North Africa transmitted for consumption in the EU, can be taken into consideration. The suggestion of the EU Commission for new comprehensive guidelines for renewable energy allows for this, and Germany supports it. The excellent wind and solar energy potential of the southern countries of the Mediterranean area can be developed in this way and provide these countries with further income and energy exports.

In addition to this, there have already been a number of activities in all the MENA countries since 2003 under the control of the BMWi (Federal Ministry for Economics and Technology) within the framework of the Export Initiative. Among these are functions of the AHK (German Chambers of Commerce) Business Travel Programme, information and social events, participation in exhibitions, various demonstration projects (such as) a solar roof programme in buildings providing effective publicity in the target country, and the renewable energy touring exhibition. The market entry of German companies in the field of solar thermal power in the MENA region will be supported (by these initiatives.)

With kind regards