

# GERMANY'S CLIMATE & ENERGY POLICY AND THE TRANSATLANTIC CLIMATE BRIDGE

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**Transatlantic Climate Bridge**  
 Climate protection pays off. Making an active commitment today to combat climate change will not only cost less than paying for the damage it will cause. It also offers enormous potential for technological innovation, increased security, job creation and a strong green economy.

In response to the challenge of climate change and the opportunities it offers, Germany has set itself ambitious emissions reductions targets. Its goal is to transition from an energy system based on fossil fuels, to a low-carbon society with renewable energies and high energy efficiency. It is achieving this through

proactive research and development, rapid market penetration for new, efficient products, innovative production processes and new transport concepts.

Germany has already proven through its integrated climate and energy policy, that climate protection makes economic sense. 280,000 people are now employed in its renewable energy sector, which is now the fastest growing economic sector in the country, and is attracting millions of dollars in investment from overseas.

Germany's energy costs have also been significantly lowered through increased energy efficiency, and renewable energy use. Savings in energy imports amounting to

approximately \$26 billion per year by 2020 are expected.

In other words, Germany's climate policy offers an effective response to the economic, environmental, energy and security challenges of our day.

Yet equally as important in speeding up the transition to an energy efficient, low-carbon society is increased transatlantic communication and cooperation, and an exchange of best practices.

Real efforts are being made throughout the U.S. to encourage renewable energies, energy efficiency and emissions reductions, even in the face of the unprecedented economic challenges. But there is enormous

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potential for more to be achieved more quickly - and this is one of the reasons behind the Transatlantic Climate Bridge initiative.

The German government launched the Transatlantic Climate Bridge in 2008 to foster greater cooperation

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on climate and energy and to establish networks between like-minded stakeholders from Germany and the U.S.

Already there is much cooperation to be proud of.

Companies such as First Solar, the largest manufacturer of thin-film solar cells in the world, is an excellent example of a U.S. company thriving in Germany due to its favorable business climate for renewable energies.

Research cooperation – such as the new MIT Fraunhofer Center for Sustainable Energy Systems launched by the German Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems and MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts – offers world-class opportunities to exchange best practices and expertise.

The launch of the Transatlantic Climate Bridge in the U.S. has also led to strong relationships being built up between Germany and a variety of

U.S. states and stakeholders.

A 'Joint Declaration' was signed in April 2009 by Virginia's Governor Tim Kaine and Germany's Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel, and a series of joint workshops and events resulted in America's first 'Community Energy Plan' being implemented by Loudon County in Virginia.

In June 2009, a group of U.S. policy makers from Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee and Virginia were invited to spend a week in Berlin and Munich by the German government. Through this 'Climate and Energy Policy Exchange', the participants witnessed first-hand the positive results of Germany's strong climate policies, and saw how German businesses are able to thrive in an increasingly low-carbon economy.

A similar exchange took place for stakeholders in the U.S. and German farming communities in July 2009 to promote awareness of policy options to address climate change. Together with their U.S.-counterparts, a group of German agricultural representatives, developed an understanding for both domestic and international climate policy issues, and spotlighted climate change solutions that the agriculture and forest sectors can deliver.

All these examples illustrate that Europeans and Americans can be a powerful engine for transatlantic and broader climate cooperation.

Through a range of Transatlantic Climate Bridge events, including the "Annual Renewables & Energy Efficiency Roadshow" in the Midwest,

Germany is reaching out to a variety of U.S. stakeholders – from regional politicians, to journalists, farmers, students, scientists, and to the corporate world.

Together, we can successfully increase transatlantic dialogue on issues such as emissions trading, renewable energies, and energy efficiency, and create an economy that is built on sustainable growth, climate protection and energy security.

*For more information about the Transatlantic Climate Bridge and future events, including a field trip to Germany for journalists, please see [www.transatlantic-climate-bridge.org](http://www.transatlantic-climate-bridge.org)*

