

Press Release

Paris, 10th July 2015

Franco-German statement on the energy transition: National academies recommend collaborative policies and identify areas for a closer cooperation

Paris, 10th July 2015. In preparation of the 21st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21), the French and German national academies of science and technology have published a joint statement advocating a stronger partnership between the two countries. This statement points out the fundamental challenges raised for the future - e.g., meeting the world energy demand, restraining energy consumption in developed countries and reducing global emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG). While France and Germany have taken different courses in handling their electrical energy generation system (which only represents about 25% of their energy consumption), they also have many common issues. The two countries can share knowledge and learn from each other's successes and difficulties, they can anticipate challenges ahead and identify areas for a closer scientific and technological cooperation. The four academies thus propose several cross-cutting subjects - e.g., energy efficiency, energy grids, mobility, nuclear technologies, renewable energy and energy storage, social and economic aspects - which could benefit from of a closer scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries. They also emphasise the need for a better perception of energy issues and their implications in society at large. Finally, the academies claim for a systemic approach for EU-wide energy policies.

To deal with the challenges raised by an energy transition resulting in a substantial reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the academies assert the central role of science, technology and industrial development. They consider that the energy questions should be tackled with a systemic approach balancing environmental goals, social expectations, economic objectives and security of supply. The academies advocate in particular strong funding programs for Research & Development on energy, relying on fundamental research on long-term cross-cutting themes and innovative approaches that can also contribute to improving the international competitiveness of European industry. They call for an intensification of scientific, technological and industrial cooperation in the priority areas of energy efficiency, network infrastructure, smart grids, mobility, security and management of nuclear waste, fusion, renewable energies, energy storage, and finally social and economic aspects of energy transition. The Academies underline the need to increase public awareness of energy issues and associated constraints.

The academies welcome European Union-wide collaborative programmes focusing on novel scientific and technological approaches to energy generation and use. They consider that the setting of priorities, the agreement on development programmes and the allocation of resources should constitute integral parts of any future European energy policy. EU-wide policies consistent with the long-term goals of the energy transition should be endorsed, aiming at compatibility with policies implemented in other parts of the world.

They also note that the effort committed by Europe to reduce greenhouse gas emissions would be of much greater value if the goal of GHG reductions were to be shared on a global level. The academies support the revision of the EU Emissions Trading System and stress that the inclusion of non-EU countries in this scheme should be given a high priority. The academies encourage efforts deployed by both governments to promote an ambitious international agreement in the context of COP21. And they suggest the establishment of an academy-led French-German consultative research committee which could discuss research areas of mutual interest and research priorities in connection with the transformation of the energy system.

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Joint Statement on the Energy Transition in France and Germany

by the Four Academies

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