

Taiwan's New Energy Policy:

climate protection and the phasing-out of nuclear power by expanding the scope of renewable energy



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By Hans-Josef Fell

With the change of government in Taiwan in 2016 initiated by President Tsai Ing-Wen, climate and energy policy has also changed. Climate protection, the phasing-out of nuclear power and the expansion of renewable energy are now central to the new government's policies.

Her predecessor, President Ma, held for too long to the old energy policy of nuclear power and climate-damaging fossil

fuels. An effort had already been made to phase out atomic energy under the first DPP-government of Chen Shui Bian.

In the last election, President Tsai Ing-Wen made the nuclear phase-out an issue and promised to realize the long-standing wish of the majority of the Taiwanese for an atomic phase-out as per the German model. In January 2017, a law was passed stipulating that the three nuclear power plants must be deactivated by 2025. At the same time, the amount of renewable energy for power supply, which today stands at around 4 percent, has to be increased to 20 percent.

This was a clever decision that not only diminishes the risk of nuclear accidents, but will also provide this industrial nation, which is dependent for up to 98% of its energy on foreign suppliers, with greater energy security on the basis of domestic energy. The focus is on the expansion of solar energy, which Taiwan's strong solar industry has hitherto used only for export and which has hardly been used in the country itself. Offshore wind power is also on the government's agenda. Despite their huge potential, geothermal energy, onshore wind energy, bioenergy and wave energy along the long coasts of Taiwan are still not accorded adequate attention in government policies.

With a sense of responsibility for global climate protection, Taiwan has decided to reduce CO2 emissions by 50 percent by 2050, thereby strengthening the completely inadequate objectives of the previous government. However, Taiwan has to further increase these targets and try to put an end to all emissions by 2030 if the target of a maximum of 2% in global warming decided in Paris is to be reached. Taiwan also suffers considerably from global warming. Ever-worsening typhoons, floods and sea level rise will cause immense damage to the densely populated west coast. Therefore, Taiwan is well advised not to further promote global warming with additional CO2 emissions by 2050.

A conversion of Taiwan's entire energy supply to 100 percent renewable energy would therefore be the key strategy, following the lead of more than 50 countries in the world. With its strong industry in solar energy, batteries, e-mobility, Taiwan is well positioned to achieve this in 20 years.

Today, renewable energy is considerably cheaper than conventional fossil fuels. The Energy Watch Group has already shown how for many countries a full supply of 100 percent renewable energy with full security of supply is not only feasible but also economically advantageous. This also applies to Taiwan. The policy of President Tsai Ing-Wen has laid the foundation stone for achieving the goal of a full supply of 100 percent renewable energy.