Wirtschaft aktuell

01 / 2011 – Basic Issues and Social Policy

IG Metall's Position on Nuclear Power and Energy Policy

As a result of the nuclear catastrophe in Japan, the debate on the future of nuclear energy in Germany has flared up once again. IG Metall supports the supply of energy without nuclear power and presents the cornerstones of its policy for a sustainable energy supply.

Nuclear energy has no future – the Federal government must cancel the extension of the operational life of nuclear power stations.

As a result of the nuclear catastrophe in Japan, the debate on nuclear power in Germany has flared up again. IG Metall supports the supply of energy without nuclear power. The majority of people in Germany reject the coalition's extension of the operational life of nuclear power stations.

IG Metall demands the following:

- The withdrawal of the 14-year (average) extension of the operational life of Germany's nuclear reactors, a policy announced by the federal government in November of 2010. The temporary moratorium on the decision, announced by Merkel and Westerwelle [in the wake of Fukushima], is simply not enough.
- That the so-called »nuclear consensus« formalized in 2000 between the then-Red-Green coalition government and energy companies should once more be made the basis of a planned withdrawal from nuclear energy by 2020.
- The immediate shutdown of the oldest nuclear power stations (including Neckarwestheim 1 and Biblis A and B. According to the 2000 consensus, these reactors should have been taken out of the network by 2010.)
- An energy mix without nuclear power. Nuclear energy is not needed as a medium-term bridging technology.

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster. In 1979, there was a partial core meltdown at Three Mile Island near Harrisburg in the USA. There have also been serious accidents in Europe. These instances confirm that nuclear power is a high-risk technology, even when one is committed to the highest safety standards.

No level of safety can absolutely guarantee protection against natural catastrophes and accidents. The consequences for people are disastrous and impose a burden on the affected regions for an indeterminable period. And the radioactive waste accumulated from the use of nuclear energy imposes a burden on future generations.

Safety checks of the kind recently announced by the German government are insufficient. The speed with which calculations based on models can be invalidated has been shown all too tragically by the nuclear catastrophe still ongoing in Japan. In Germany, too, natural catastrophes, terrorist attacks or plane crashes cannot be ruled out. Human or technological errors can also lead to accidents.

Nuclear energy is not suitable as a bridging technology; on the contrary, it stands in the way of new and innovative solutions and a future-oriented restructuring of energy supply.

IG Metall: Cornerstones of sustainable energy generation

A strong infrastructure is indispensible for a modern industrial society. Energy is one of its pillars. A fully functional and climate- and resource-conserving energy supply is therefore assuming more and more importance. It is already clear that the generation and deployment of energy will undergo major technological transformation. For IG Metall the following are the cornerstones of a future-oriented restructuring of the supply of energy:

Published by: IG Metall Vorstand – Grundsatzfragen und Gesellschaftspolitik- 60519 Frankfurt am Main - 16. March 2011
Contact: www.igmetall.de/download- Tel.: +49(69)6693-2091 - Fax: +49(69)6693-80-2091

Nuclear Power in Germany				
Nuclear power station	**Came into operation**	**Planned shutdown (+extension)**	**Owner**	**Number of notifiable events since coming into operation**
Brunsbüttel	1976	2012 (+ 8 years)	Vattenfall/ Eon	462
Brokdorf	1986	2019 (+14 years)	Eon/ Vattenfall	210
Unterweser	1978	2012 (+ 8 years)	Eon	337
Krümmel	1984	2019 (+14 years)	Eon/ Vattenfall	321
Emsland	1988	2020 (+14 years)	RWE/ Eon	121
Grohnde	1984	2018 (+14 years)	Eon/ SW Bielefeld	221
Grafenrheinfeld	1981	2014 (+14 years)	Eon	220
Biblis A	1974	2010 (+ 8 years)	RWE	422
Biblis B	1976	2010 (+ 8 years)	RWE	417
Neckarwestheim 1	1976	2010 (+ 8 years)	EnBW	425
Neckarwestheim 2	1988	2022 (+ 14 years)	EnBW	80
Phillipsburg 1	1979	2012 (+ 8 years)	EnBW	337
Phillipsburg 2	1984	2018 (+ 14 years)	EnBW	181
Isar 1	1977	2011 (+ 8 years)	Eon	279
Isar 2	1988	2020 (+ 14 years)	Eon	72
Gundremmingen B	1984	2015 (+ 14 years)	RWE/ Eon	112
Gundremmingen C	1984	2016 (+14 years)	RWE/ Eon	99

Source: Handelsblatt.

1. Expansion of renewable energies has priority

IG Metall advocates an environmentally sustainable strategy of energy policy innovation. Renewable energies are the supporting pillars of the low-carbon energy supply of the future. The aim is a switch to 100 per cent renewable energy in electricity generation by 2050. Renewable energies must be the leading technology, and conventional energy sources must be measured by whether or not they support the expansion of renewable energies.

The expansion of renewable energies is an example of new green markets, and indicates their growing significance as future factors in the economy. Over the past 20 years, wind and photovoltaic power in particular have made the leap from niche markets to innovative arms of industry. In Germany, green has grown an entire industrial value creation chain. The state must continue to provide a stable development path for renewable energies in the future with the Renewable Energies Law. The political tug-of-war concerning the revision of the Renewable Energies Law due in 2011 is likely to bring another round of distributional conflicts among utilities in the energy industry. We saw this recently with regard to the prolongation of the working lives of nuclear power stations. IG Metall advocates maintaining the efficacy of the Renewable Energies Law with regard to the expansion of renewable energies.

2. Innovative, highly efficient power station technology instead of prolongation of nuclear power stations

Conventional electricity generation will likely be needed for several more decades. Yet it is not necessary to keep ageing coal-fired power stations in the network. New and more efficient technology is already available, to provide power more efficiently and with less harm to the environment.

IG Metall therefore advocates a fundamental modernisation of conventional power via new highly efficient coal-fired and gas power

Published by: IG Metall Vorstand – Grundsatzfragen und Gesellschaftspolitik- 60519 Frankfurt am Main - 16. March 2011
Contact: www.igmetall.de/download- Tel.: +49(69)6693-2091 - Fax: +49(69)6693-80-2091

stations and the expansion of combined heat and power generation. The political decision to prolong the operations of nuclear power stations has contributed nothing to this aim. On the contrary, it has only cemented in place old plant and is thus detrimental to the modernisation of Germany's power stations. Prolonging the operations of nuclear power stations will act as a brake on innovation and investment.

3. Increasing energy efficiency has enormous potential – in terms of both environmental policy and employment policy

The dramatic increase in energy efficiency and the switch to low carbon energy generation are two sides of the same coin. IG Metall is calling for concrete policy measures so that our self-imposed goal of doubling energy efficiency can be achieved, such as the introduction of an energy efficiency fund and expansion of support for energy-related renovation of buildings. Raising energy efficiency also represents an economical path towards sustainable energy supply and would contribute to preserving workplaces. Many studies show that the potential for energy savings amounts to between 10 and 20 per cent of energy costs for businesses across the board. The branches in which energy-efficient technologies and products are increasingly relevant include transport, building technology, mechanical and plant engineering, information technology, energy-intensive industries and the energy industry.

4. Investments in network and storage technologies

Further expansion of renewable energies will require expansion of existing grid networks and storage technologies. Further development of the electricity supply system and the building of new energy storage units will therefore be key to the sustainable restructuring of energy supply. That ranges from new high voltage transmission technology, through the feed-in management of decentralised energy generation units, to more flexible measurement and control technologies for electricity consumers. The expansion of grid networks and storage units represents one of the biggest challenges with regard to the structural transformation of energy generation.

5. Structural transformation of energy generation must be accompanied by a labour-oriented industrial policy

The restructuring of energy generation is not only a technological challenge; it also has a social dimension. There are economic and employment policy opportunities arising from renewable energies. But wherever workers are affected by cutbacks or closures, solutions must be offered by way of social collective agreements and a regional structural policy that bolsters the prospects for new employment. Structural transformation must be accompanied by an effective labour-oriented industrial policy on the part of the Federal government and at the European level, aimed at maintaining regional value creation and employment in energy generation.

Structural transformation must offer workers real prospects. So good wages and decent employment conditions must be a high priority in the new branches of renewable energy. IG Metall aims to secure worker participation and collective wage agreements in far more workplaces than at present.

Published by: IG Metall Vorstand – Grundsatzfragen und Gesellschaftspolitik- 60519 Frankfurt am Main - 16. March 2011
Contact: www.igmetall.de/download- Tel.: +49(69)6693-2091 - Fax: +49(69)6693-80-2091