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## **Energy Lobbying in the Decision-Making Process of the European Union**

### **Abstract**

Lobbying is part of social life and constitutes an informal path of influencing politics at the national and international levels. The EU is a prime example of an organisation wherein Member States act as lobbyists trying to influence EU policy. The energy transformation that has begun is a process that is particularly dependent on the shaping of climate and energy policy at the European Union level should one compare it to previous socio-technical transformations, with interest advocacy playing an important role in this process. This article aims at examining and explaining the activities and influence of Germany's lobbying on the shaping of energy policy in the European Union (EU). The subject of the research is Germany's lobbying strategy based on the Europeanisation of the country's energy transition (in German, *Energiewende*). The research shows that lobbying activities have had the intended effect of Europeanising Germany's *Energiewende*, which has allowed for increased innovation in technology and as well as increased production of products from the broader environmental sector. Furthermore, these activities have created new jobs in the sector, which has kick-started and strengthened the German economy. In conclusion, the more resources a Member State has and the longer it has been a member of the EU, the better the conditions are for effective lobbying.

**Keywords:** Lobbying, Energy Lobbying, Energy Transition, Germany's Energy Lobbying, Advocacy of Interests, European Union

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## **Introduction**

In today's world, every entity is forced to engage with actors in its macro, meso, and micro-environments. Such activities are aimed at lobbying either for solutions favourable to a given entity or against any potentially unfavourable ones. Lobbying is firmly entrenched at many levels of a state's functioning, whether in the economic, political or social scientific spheres. The establishment of an adequate network, especially one of an interpersonal nature, translates into a strong negotiating position. On the one hand, political competition between pressure groups leads to a mutual balancing of the burdens imposed on society and the government subsidies granted. On the other hand, however, actions taken by various pressure groups aim to guarantee the partisan economic benefits of a specific stakeholder group, thus limiting societal benefits as a whole. Energy policy is of greatest interest to various pressure groups around the world. However, it is of particular interest to European Union (EU) Member States, mainly due to the energy transition underway in Europe which is causing numerous problems for many countries.

The aim of this article is to examine and explain the activities and impact of lobbying by Member States in shaping EU energy policy. The focus is on Germany's lobbying strategy based on the Europeanisation of the country's ongoing energy transition (*Energiewende*), as the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources (RES) is a necessary prerequisite for wider decarbonisation, which is a particularly difficult process for countries dependent on fossil fuels. Given the stated objective, it became necessary to answer the following research questions:

1. How does energy lobbying used by Member States influence the shaping of the EU's energy policy?
2. How did Germany's lobbying activities influence the Europeanisation of *Energiewende*?
3. What tangible effects did Germany's promotion of its preferences have?

To understand and explain Germany's energy lobbying, leading to the Europeanisation of *Energiewende*, the study used an integrated literature review method, which allowed for grouping literature sources based on adopted conceptual criteria. ScienceDirect, a database of scientific articles, was mainly used. Empirical data and materials to answer research questions were collected through a qualitative analysis of: EC texts on EU legislation; amendments proposed by the Council and the European Parliament during the negotiations; and the positions of Member States and interest groups towards Germany's diplomatic actions aimed at

promoting climate and energy policy based on renewable energy and striving to decarbonise the economy.

This article consists of four parts. After an introduction, the theoretical background of the development of lobbying is presented with an especial focus on the formation of the advocacy phenomenon in the European Union. Section 3 analyses Germany's lobbying activities in the Europeanisation of *Energiewende*. Section 4 presents the conclusions of the research.

## **Lobbying as a Tool to Influence Policy**

In the modern world, every actor is forced to establish contact with various other actors present in their macro and micro environments in order to lobby for favourable legislative solutions or, conversely, against unfavourable ones (Soimu et al., 2011, pp. 808–809). Lobbying is understood as all kinds of activities carried out by individuals, groups or organised citizens in order to influence decisions taken by public institutions (Matsueda, 2020, p. 2). It is an important element of contemporary democratic processes, and when it takes the form of dialogue, it provides a link between citizens and wider authorities, allowing for active public participation both in the exercise of power and in its supervision (Kurczewska, Molęda-Zdziech, 2002, p. 13).

The mechanism of exerting influence, having appeared in ancient times, is a long-standing phenomenon, with Britain and the United States being considered the cradle of advocacy (Paradowska, 2000). Lobbying is, therefore, a specific form of political action involving the deliberate conduct of an individual or group of individuals pursuing their own interests directly or indirectly related to political power (Malmborg, 2022, p. 2). These behaviours are characterised by a specific organisation of activities, known as a lobbying strategy. The implementation of the strategy depends on a number of factors, among which the most important is the specificity of the operating environment.

The literature on the subject distinguishes three features that facilitate the classification of the lobbying phenomenon. Firstly, the basis of any lobbying activity is the desire to exert influence. Secondly, lobbying is a link between citizens and government representatives in the communication process. Thirdly, lobbying is a form of communication through which pressure is applied (Kurczewska, Molęda-Zdziech, 1999, p. 50).

Competition in the economy is beginning to go beyond the market aspect of rivalry, with a new space of competition emerging – the competitive advantage of the company, achieved through marketing and

public-relations instruments. Now, found among the cohort of people and institutions involved in lobbying, representatives of economic interests are a very important group, and the creation of a positive image and the effective representation of one's own interests through the creation of appropriate relationships with all stake-holders allows goals to be realised via the influencing of the environment (Sławik, 2009, p. 10). Thus, well-formed advocacy can become a source of competitive advantage (Piechowicz, 2013, pp. 15–16).

### **Lobbying in the European Union**

Lobbying is a permanent feature of the institutional and decision-making system in the EU. The spectacular development of this phenomenon is a consequence of the integration of interest groups into the legislative process. Lobbying in the EU is of great interest among researchers (e.g., Gullberg, who shows that interest groups lobby both their allies and enemies on a given issue but under completely different conditions. There is also Markussen and Svendsen, who examined the extent to which dominant interest groups influenced the final shape of the EU greenhouse gas market (Gullberg, 2008a, pp. 2964–2972; Markussen, Svendsen, 2005, pp. 245–255). Transparency and openness are basic principles of the EU's concept of good governance in public administration, and, while first defined in a White Paper adopted by the European Commission in 2001, their final form was enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty, specifically in Article 15 of that piece of legislation. Those principles formalised the growing phenomenon of lobbying in the European Union, confirming the participation of the various interest representations in the process of European law-making and decision-making that shapes Community policy (Sapała, 2015, p. 72). The enlargement of the European Community has contributed to an increase in the number of interest groups and has influenced the Community lobbying market. Lobbying organisations from the Member States became part of European pressure group associations or undertook independent lobbying activities. There are now several thousand interest representatives in Brussels, most of whom represent the interests of the wider business community, and their forms of organisation, strategies, and tools to influence the decision-making process are in a state of constant evolution. The system of interest representation is diverse, with 70% of lobbyists representing business interests and the remaining 30% representing diffuse social interests (Coen, Richardson, 2010, pp. 3–18; Annual report, 2022, pp. 14–18). Countries that are more economically mature have been quicker to find and adapt to interest advocacy activities,

while members with a lower level of economic development find it more difficult to find their way in the reality that is EU lobbying, as there appears to be an acceptance problem in those countries.

Lobbying in the EU takes a softer form than in individual Member States and usually has nothing to do with providing financial support to EU officials. Advocacy for economic interests is most prominent in Brussels. This type of lobbying has existed since the creation of the European Communities in the 1950s and 1960s, at which time it was concentrated around the coal and steel sector and agricultural policy, but has grown rapidly in other areas as integration deepened and since the single market was created (Kurczewska, 2011, p. 76).

The European Union has a complex institutional structure. Indeed, the complexity of decision-making affects the way lobbyists operate. The EU presents interest groups with the dilemma of choosing between multiple roads of access to its structures while offering them the opportunity to influence the European legislative process (Greenwood, 2017, pp. 28–29).

Lobbyists, just as in Western political systems, contribute at the supranational level to agendas, to details of proposals, and to the choice of measures and modes of policy implementation. Typically, advocacy is associated with issues where interests are spread among a larger number of actors and subject to different political action involving diverse forces. It is worth noting that the institutional diversity in the European community makes it difficult for lobbyists to enter this level, which thereby excludes smaller players from the game. This state of affairs favours the predominance of established actors in the European/international arena (Schendelen, 2006, p. 92). The influence of interest groups and lobbyist countries on policy-making depends largely on the given political matter, and the environment and factors influencing a given political issue may be favorable or unfavorable for interest groups. Therefore, groups or states that lobby decision-makers in a favourable issue context should find it easier to succeed in their lobbying activities than interest groups that face an unfavourable issue environment (Mahoney, 2007, pp. 40–41).

Interest groups in the EU can be divided according to various criteria. One of the most frequently used typologies is the one based on the transparency register, and interest groups can be divided into:

- Consulting companies, law firms, self-employed consultants (e.g., Schuttelaar & Partners – S&P);
- In-house lobbyists and trade/business professional associations; (e.g., *BUSINESSEUROPE*);
- Non-governmental organisations (the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century – REN21);

- Think tanks, research and academic institutions (e.g., Główny Instytut Górnictwa – GIG);
- Organisations representing local, regional and municipal authorities, other public or mixed entities, etc. (e.g., the European Energy Network – EnR);
- Organisations representing churches and religious communities (Transparency Register, 2024).

Non-affiliated lobbying, which includes consultancies and law firms, is receiving increasing attention in the EU forum. They act on behalf of large companies, representing their interests for a fee. Other representatives of non-affiliated lobbying are professional lobbyists, who are former staff members of EU institutions, and who are highly valued on the European lobbying market due to their knowledge and experience in that field (Piechowicz, 2013, p. 207; Massaro, 2019, pp. 1–3).

The most important institutions involved in legislative processes in the European Union are the European Commission (EC), the European Parliament (EP), and Council of the European Union (CJEU). The European Commission is one of the main targets of lobbyists, as it oversees the application of EU law and implements the budget and manages programs. This particular institution has legislative initiative and performs coordination, executive, and management functions. This means that, unless otherwise provided by law, Union legislative acts can only be adopted on a proposal from the Commission. The Commission is composed of 27 members, so-called “Commissioners”, who are elected for a five-year term by its President. Interest groups are an important element in legitimising the activities of this institution, and lobbyists provide expert information and draw attention to the possibility of possible complications, at a particular stage of decision-making. Lobbyists are, therefore, in constant contact with the Commissioners (Mrozowska, 2014, pp. 109–110). In addition, the Commission often finds real support in the interest representatives for its decisions and can influence the governments of individual EU members through national or international pressure groups (Nugent, 2010, p. 196; Civitas, 2015).

Another institution around which the efforts of lobbyists are concentrated is the European Parliament. It is worth noting that access to the EP appears to be easier than for the Commission or the European Council, as plenary sessions and most committee meetings are open to the public (Mrozowska, 2014, p. 112; Hooghe, Marks, 2001, p. 8). Lobbying activities in this institution consist of directly influencing MEPs and, especially, rapporteurs or chairs of the many different committees during the start of the drafting of reports and related discussions. Most pressure

groups try to establish contact with specific EP political groupings as they support rapporteurs from their faction. As research shows, political groups exert a significant influence on Parliament's working methods (Hardcare, 2011, pp. 99–102). In addition, by members of political parties establishing contact with lobbyists, these factions both support the formation of international coalitions on specific issues and foster the building of unanimity, which has a crucial role in the functioning of the institution (Eising, 2007, p. 206).

The third forum for lobbying in the EU is the Council of the European Union, which is an intergovernmental institution with one representative at the ministerial level from each Member State. Member States are represented in the Council by the ministers responsible for the matters on the agenda, hence the Council does not have a permanent composition. The Council is headed by a representative of the country holding the EU Presidency. Akin to Parliament, the Council has legislative and budgetary functions. In the legislative phase of the procedure, when the Council takes the final decisions, national pressure groups have the possibility to influence the ministries in their country. It is worth emphasising that intervening in the European Council requires maintaining good relations with both the representatives of one's own country and other MEPs (Mrozowska, 2014, pp. 113–114; Klüver, Braun, Beyers, 2015, pp. 10–11).

The lobbying strategies of European employers' and industry groups are based on a long-term perspective. Their activities cover a broad spectrum and do not just focus on a single selected issue. They therefore carry out what is known as general lobbying, which aims to build trust with decision-makers, co-shape the public debate on climate policy, and consequently influence decisions on specific issues (Gullberg, 2008b, pp. 167–169).

When looking at the phenomenon of lobbying in the energy sector, one cannot fail to mention environmental organisations. At the end of the 1990s, with the acceleration of environmental policy development, European environmental associations became an important partner in environmental policy-making (Kurczewska, 2011, p. 164). Unlike business (sectoral) organisations, environmental associations are forced to deal with a wide variety of fields, ranging from the problem of environmental pollution, to the impact of smog on human health and life, to the genetic modification of food. At the same time, those associations' financial and organisational resources are limited. Therefore, they have to choose their priorities carefully in order to achieve their goals. A turning point was the increasing number of companies that decided to implement new environmental regulations because they saw them as an opportunity to

increase both energy efficiency and their profitability. Hence, one of the ways in which many environmental measures can be implemented is through alliances between environmental organisations and businesses. Such cooperation gives producers the opportunity to increase their profits and enables a given company to be perceived as being responsible for a common good such as the environment, taking into account the legal framework set by the EU. Environmental organisations, on the other hand, know that they do not have the resources to fight climate pollution by themselves, so they look for actors who are well positioned in the market and have the potential to modify their business strategy to be more environmentally friendly. Such unbureaucratic coalitions make a positive contribution to the development of new technologies based on renewable energy sources and to environmental policy (Kurczewska, 2011, pp. 193, 203). As research conducted by A.T. Gullberg has shown, in the area of climate policy, business organisations lobby the EP, the EC, and the CJEU, but they prefer to cooperate with the EC rather than with the EP. Conversely, environmental organisations lobby mainly in the EP (Gullberg, 2008b, p. 169).

### **Lobbying in the EU on the Example of RES – Europeanising *Energiewende***

For more than a quarter of a century, the EU has been in the process of recognising the strong link that exists between the energy sector and environmental concerns. For this reason, environmental objectives have been an integral (and more recently a priority) element of EU energy policy. The biggest lobbyist as regards this issue among all EU members is Germany. This is linked to the German government's decision on the country's energy transition.

*Energiewende* is the term adopted by the German government to denote a state-supervised turn away from fossil fuels and nuclear power towards renewable energy sources and energy efficiency. Climate change, oil crises, rising hydrocarbon prices, and problems with hydrocarbon scarcity were the main reasons for the sweeping changes to the German energy system. The process began many years ago, and the basis for the measures taken was the German Power Supply Act, which established the obligation to purchase and promote green energy from 1991 (Report of the H.B. Foundation, 2015, pp. 7–8). After the Green Party entered government, there was a change in the previous energy policy. In 2000, the Renewable Energy Sources Act came into force, which created some of the best conditions in the world for investment in this industry, giving



investors a guarantee of receiving energy produced at favourable prices. German decision-makers were particularly keen on the development of RES in EU countries, as this was to facilitate their own energy transition. The development of RES in Germany led to the development of a new industrial policy concept, which is based on the assumption that a global economy increasingly based on depleting fossil hydrocarbon resources will have to look for other alternative energy sources. The German green energy equipment industry is thus set to cash in on the global trend of greening the economy. The new premise of Germany's policy has united environmental advocates and industry representatives (Poplawski, Bajczuk, 2019, p. 67). The activities of large energy companies play a key role in Germany's energy transformation, and the shape of the country's energy policy is mainly influenced by the so-called "Big Four" energy companies (E.ON SE, RWE AG, EnBW Energie Baden-Württemberg AG, and Vattenfall Europe AG), which control nearly 90% of the German electricity market. Those companies aside, companies from the renewable energy sector have developed into significant players over the last decade (Sühlsen, Hisschemöller, 2014, pp. 316–317).

In 2007, during Germany's EU presidency, intensive work began on expanding RES in the Union, increasing energy efficiency in the context of climate protection policy, developing research into modern low-carbon technologies and developing the EU's position on the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions after 2012. German lobbying for renewables has been, and continues to be, multi-level, and not limited to the national nor EU levels. The biggest initiator of the favourable changes to the climate and energy package for Germany was a national organisation named Bundesverband Erneuerbare Energie (BEE), which brings together all interested organisations from the renewable technology sector in Germany<sup>1</sup>. BEE's lobbying strategy was aimed at decision-makers in the country, but at the same time the organisation worked to promote the interests of the industry in EU institutions. The national strategy was based on lobbying two ministries; the Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Economy. In addition, BEE also used two indirect lobbying channels, firstly by putting pressure on the Government through the identification of so-called "renewable, technology-friendly" politicians, especially within the two parties in power at the time (SPD and CDU/CSU), and, secondly, by creating an informal alliance with environmental organisations, including Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, that actively lobbied government members on climate policy. The aim of the

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<sup>1</sup> The BBE was founded in 1991 to improve conditions for the RES industry in Germany.

above activities was to gain the widest possible group of support, including that of the public's. An important step in the lobbying strategy for the adoption of the climate and energy package was an extensive mass media campaign that presented the positive impact of the energy transition on the environment and the German economy. Thanks to the use of such a broad spectrum of lobbying tools, German politicians, realising the consequences of not supporting the proposed RES legal changes (i.e., the loss of the public's support), swiftly passed those changes into law in the Bundestag.

At the European level, BEE participated in meetings and exchanged information with two associations, namely, the European Renewable Energy Council (EREC), and the European Renewable Energies Federation (EREF) along with other European associations. It is noteworthy that all renewable energy organisations lobbied those responsible for the drafting of the Renewable Energy Directive (the so-called 'First Climate and Energy Package'). German MEPs who could influence their colleagues in Parliament were of particular interest to BEE (Ydersbond, 2012, pp. 42–43).

One key conclusion emerges from the above analysis; the pooling of resources, especially of organisations and countries with an interest in renewable energy, allowed for a significant expansion of information and political contacts. This, in turn, allowed for more intensive lobbying and expanded lobbying channels (Marshall, 2010, p. 572), which meant that decision-makers in Germany, as well as at EU level, were able to encounter a unified and coordinated lobbying strategy.

One of the key elements of the German RES energy lobbying strategy was to push through the 1st climate and energy package.<sup>2</sup> Negotiations on the package were very difficult, as the vital interests of practically all spheres of the economy were at stake. They were defended by some Member States, including Italy, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia. An encompassing variety actors, ranging from organisations representing industrial interests to NGOs, conducted lobbying campaigns of varying intensity, especially during the first stage of the legislative process, in favour of their demands being

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<sup>2</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> climate and energy package, adopted in December 2008, is a set of binding laws designed to ensure that climate change targets are met, as well as to increase the security of energy supply. The package consists of three pieces of legislation based on the following assumptions: reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% in 2020 compared to 1990 emission levels, increasing the share of renewable energy to 20% in 2020 in the EU energy balance, and increasing energy efficiency by 20% by 2020; <https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/2020-climate-energy-package> (Access 19.01.2024).

included. Poland, together with the above-mentioned six countries, demanded that Western countries bear a greater financial burden related to the implementation of the package, due to the huge disproportion in the energy mix between the old and new EU members, which was dominated by coal-fired power generation. An important factor that influenced the adoption of the package in that form and at that time was the political calendar. The legislative process of the package had to be completed by the end of 2008, as the world climate summit in Poznań, where European leaders wanted to show off the community's achievements in climate protection, was scheduled for that period. In addition, the European Commission and the European Parliament wanted to play a special role ahead of the forthcoming EP elections in June 2009 and the appointment of a new Commission. The Parliament therefore acted as an intermediary in the negotiations between the various parties. The Commission, on the other hand, became a leader creating EU policy independently of the Member States. However, it needed the support of the Member States for its decisions, and was therefore willing to work with representatives from different backgrounds. A special role should be attributed to the parliamentary rapporteurs, who prepared various reports on new regulations; they urged various stakeholders to adopt the package.

Mention should also be made of the unusual procedure by which the document was passed. European leaders decided that all decisions on the package would be taken at the level of the European Council, i.e., by the heads of government and the heads of state of the Member States, and not, as before, at the level of the Council of Ministers, in this case for the environment. This was a deliberate move, as it was feared that the package would be blocked during the vote by a possible coalition of less developed countries. In addition, there was also a change in the order of work on the package in the various Institutions. In this way, the Council issued its decision on the adoption of the package before Parliament had agreed on it. In the normal procedure it is the other way around; it is the Parliament that adopts its position before the Council's decision in the expectation that it may influence the outcome of the vote. Many analysts believe that the use of such a formula did not give MEPs a choice, forcing them to approve the decision on the package reached by the Council. Thus, after intensive diplomatic consultations firstly held with the German government, then with the French government during their EU presidency, it came to pass that all Member States accepted the final version of the package (Kurczewska, 2011, pp. 346–349).

In 2014, Berlin stepped up energy diplomacy efforts to continue the EU's existing climate and energy policy beyond 2020. The Germans began

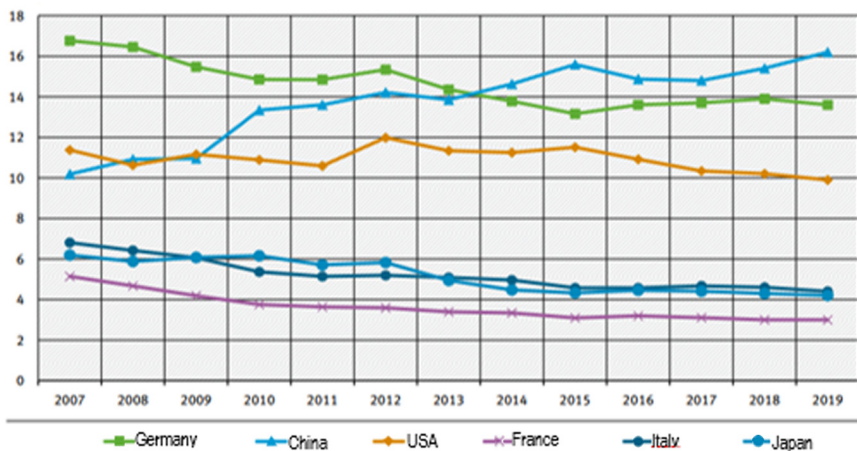
lobbying for the establishment of higher targets than in the first climate and energy package of 2007. In order to achieve their target, they won over representatives from the UK, France, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands, who all signed a letter to the European Commission expressing their support for setting a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 emission levels. The so-called “second energy package”<sup>3</sup> adopted by the EU reinforced previous trends of increasing CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions and reducing emission allowances. This improves the attractiveness of other fuels such as gas and uranium used in nuclear power plants. In turn, the administrative increase in the volume of green energy has boosted demand for, *inter alia*, gas turbines and photovoltaic panels (Turowski, 2014, p. 85).

The continuation of the EU’s green energy development policy beyond 2020 was expected to increase the chances of Germany maintaining national support for RES investments. While the energy transition in Germany is supported by the majority of the public, political parties, and business representatives, the dispute is about the distribution of the costs of this project and its pace. The green technology sector stands to benefit enormously from the establishment of legislation to increase the share of RES in the EU’s energy mix. Therefore, it was in the interest of German businesses specialising in products and services related to clean energy production to provide political support for that sector. Furthermore, the industry related to the production of environmental services and goods is seen in Germany as an opportunity for the German economy to break out and become stronger in that sector in the global market. Indeed, the wind, photovoltaic, and biomass industries are already thriving in Germany today. Government figures show that in 2019, Germany reached a 13.9% share of global trade in goods from the environmental sector (Die Umweltwirtschaft in Deutschland Produktion, 2021, p. 63).

Since the beginning, Germany has tried not to implement its regulatory approach to climate and energy policy alone, but also to transpose it into the legislation of other European countries through the European level. German environmental companies, especially those focused on exporting their products, urged the federal government to take action to bring European environmental standards in line with Germany’s level of regulation to prevent a decline in their competitiveness (Saerbeck, Jörgens, 2016, p. 307). Thanks to the above-mentioned activities having been undertaken in the

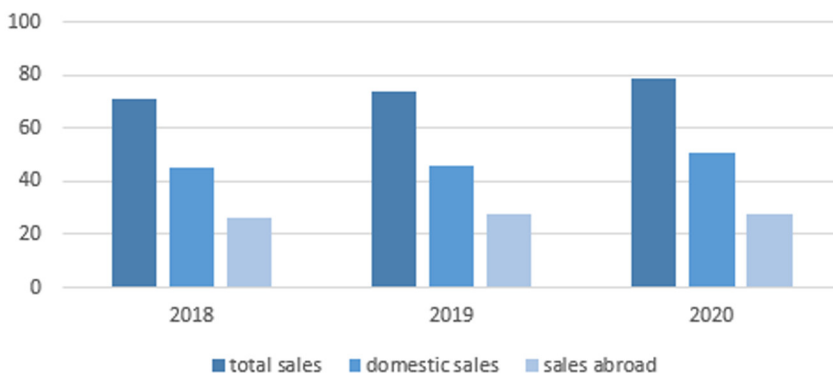
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<sup>3</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Climate and Energy Package includes two targets: to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% as compared to 1990 levels by 2030, and to increase energy production from renewable sources to 27% of total energy consumed by 2030. European Council Conclusions 23–24 October 2014, EUCO 169/14, p. 1.5.



**Figure 1. World Trade Share of the Largest Exporters of Environmental Products 2007–2019 (%)**

Source: Die Umweltwirtschaft in Deutschland Produktion, Umsatz und Außenhandel Aktualisierte Ausgabe 2021, p. 63.



**Figure 2. Domestic and Foreign Sales of German Ecological Goods and Services in Billions of Euros**

Source: Umsatz und Beschäftigte für den Umweltschutz 2020, Statistisches Bundesamt 2022, p. 6.

EU for years, German companies already have an established position in the environmental protection market. They generate a large part of their sales from abroad, and, on the domestic market, they often compete with international corporations. It is worth emphasising that the development opportunities of the German environmental protection industry will

continue to be strongly dependent on exports. In 2020, Germany continued to be the second largest exporter of environmental goods (exports stood at 28 billion euros). The share of sales of environmental protection products in total sales in Germany currently stands at 29.3%. German companies have so far sold goods worth a total of 78.9 billion euros that could have been used for environmental protection purposes (Umsatz und Beschäftigte für den Umweltschutz 2020, 2022, pp. 8, 10) (Figure 2). Increased demand for environmental products in the global market is causing employment in this sector to grow (2.9 million employees in Germany as at 2019) (umweltbundesamt.de, 2023).

In 2020, German companies held between 7% and 17% of the global environmental technology markets, including the markets for the circular economy and sustainable mobility (17% each), with the least being in the sustainable agriculture and forestry sector (7%) (GreenTech made in Germany, 2021, p. 76).

German energy diplomacy is using a number of tools to spread the idea of the energy transition around the world. One example of this was the inclusion of the areas of energy and climate protection in the priorities of the German G7 presidency in 2015. Germany, for several years now, has been concluding bilateral energy partnership agreements with countries including African countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Nigeria) as well as India, China, Turkey, and Brazil where there is a high demand for the import of RES technologies. An example of important export support instruments is the specialised agencies set up by the German Ministry of Economic Affairs which help German companies enter foreign markets (Die Umweltwirtschaft in Deutschland Entwicklung, Struktur und internationale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit, 2020, pp. 9–10).

In recent years, global zero-emission activities have been significantly intensified. Many countries have adopted economic packages with a high percentage of funds for environmental protection, which are aimed at the economic development of companies in the sector and which also aim at competing for the environmental technologies market. Germany can only maintain its leading role in this area if it plays a pioneering role in environmental protection and systematically promotes innovative technologies (umweltbundesamt.de, 2023).

## **Conclusions**

Lobbying at the EU level is becoming a phenomenon that is increasingly accepted and recognised as an essential part of the functioning of the EU and Member States. Energy lobbying is multi-dimensional and multi-

faceted. From the point of view of the European energy puzzle, bigger players can do more. The ongoing energy revolution generates regulations that are unfavourable to coal and other fossil-fuel consumers.

There are two reasons the environment and climate protection are important areas on Germany's political agenda. On the one hand, internal political factors, such as the relatively high level of ecological awareness of society and the unique size and strategic activities of the German environmental movement, have meant that Germany has been working on its image as a European and global forerunner in environmental protection since the 1980s. On the other hand, economic and political globalisation favours a stronger orientation of Germany's foreign policy towards environmental protection. Currently, Germany is unable to sustain further independent national efforts in the field of climate and energy policy in the long term, because neither society nor producers will be willing to bear the huge costs of energy transformation, while in other EU countries, the industry will be much competitive due to smaller environmental protection burdens. Germany's interest in sharpening its foreign policy profile is, therefore, linked to the need to better support its national environmental policy with international regulations.

In conclusion, the Europeanisation of the German energy transition is a prerequisite for Germany for the success of this strategy at home. By 2014, more than two-thirds of EU Member States, including France and Great Britain, with programs promoting renewable energy based on a more market approach, had introduced a national feed-in tariff system for renewable energy, modeled on Germany's example (Sühlens, Hisschemöller, 2014, p. 273). The popularisation of *Energiewende* both in Europe and globally has allowed for an increase in the production of the technology, which has contributed to lowering the costs of its production. Furthermore, these measures have created new jobs in the sector, which has kick-started the German economy. So far, the German energy transition has become a widely recognised process worldwide.

Forcing a faster pace of decarbonisation of European economies, imposing a mandatory share of renewable energy in the energy mix, and/or reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emission limits for individual EU Member States weakens their economic potential and increases the role of the German economy in Europe.

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