

The long road to IRENA – A Chronology 19 years after the initial idea and numerous attempts, the establishment of the International Renewable Energy Agency is close at hand



15 January 1990

EUROSOLAR-president **Hermann Scheer** presents the EUROSOLAR-„Memorandum for the establishment of an International Solar Energy Agency (ISEA)“ in Bonn. Here the word “solar” still signifies all kinds of renewable energies.

2 April 1990

Hermann Scheer presents the ISEA-Memorandum at the UN-headquarters. As a result, UN-Secretary General **Pérez de Cuéllar** implements the task-force „United Nations Solar Energy Group on Environment and Development“ (UNSEGED). It comprises 30 member states of the UN and Hermann Scheer as „special guest“. The Swedish representative **Prof. Thomas B. Johansson**, is appointed as chair to that group.

29 April till 02 May 1990

At the invitation of the US-senate, the „Interparliamentary Conference on the Global Environment“ is hosted in Washington and chaired by **Al Gore**. Following a proposal of **Hermann Scheer**, the call to establish an „International Solar Energy Agency“ (ISEA) is included in the Final Resolution of the conference.

09/10 May 1990

At the UN-conference „Action for our Common Future“ under the chairmanship of the Norwegian Prime minister **Gro Harlem Brundtland**, **Hermann Scheer** argues for the establishment of an ISEA as the most important institutional measure to introduce renewable energies on a global scale.

27/ 28 May 1990

At a conference on renewable energy in New Delhi, which was jointly organised by EUROSOLAR and the „Solar Energy Society of India“ (SESI), Nobel Peace Prize laureate **Willy Brandt** declares: „I support the swift installation of an international solar energy agency, as has been proposed by EUROSOLAR. This Agency will serve the global community which cannot wait for another ten years for joint actions“.

The Indian minister for the environment **Maneka Gandhi** agrees with this statement and adds that an international institution like the one that has already been established for nuclear energy is also necessary for renewable energy.

The president of SESI **Rajendra Pachauri** – who currently chairs the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – declares at the end of the conference: „The Solar Energy Society of India supports EUROSOLARs proposal to establish an International Solar Energy Agency. ISEA could make a substantial and effective contribution to facilitating the technology transfer to the developing world“.

18 September 1990

After consultations between **Hermann Scheer** and the Austrian Chancellor **Franz Vranitzky**, the Chancellor declared in Vienna that the Austrian Government will take the initiative to found an ISEA as international governmental organisation on the global level.

8 October 1990

Willy Brandt addressing the **Economic and Social Council** of the UN-General Assembly in New York states „In addition to those initiatives that are currently taken by governments, we

need an international institution for comprehensive technology transfer in the field of renewable energies. This would be the task for an international energy agency as has been proposed by EUROSOLAR“.

November 1990

In his speech at the UN-General Assembly the Austrian foreign minister **Alois Mock** suggests that EUROSOLARs proposal to establish an ISEA will be considered within the UN.

December 1990

The UN-General Assembly decides in one of its resolutions to establish an “international institution“ for the promotion of renewable energies.

November 1991

UNSEGED submits its final report to UN-Secretary General **Pérez de Cuéllar** which contains the recommendation to establish an ISEA. The UN-Secretary General refers this proposal to the Preparatory Committee of the „UN-Conference for Environment and Development“ (Rio-Conference). The committee rejects the proposal.

07 till 09 July 1993

In his function as programme director of the „World Solar Summit“, **Hermann Scheer** introduces a draft resolution which calls for the establishment of ISEA. The conference was organised in Paris by UNESCO in collaboration with EUROSOLAR and the International Solar Energy Society (ISES).

16 till 18 March 1994

In his speech at the EU-conference „An Action Plan for Renewable Sources in Europe“ in Madrid, **Hermann Scheer** invites the EU-commission to start an initiative for an ISEA.

Summer 1994

At the federal election in 1994, EUROSOLAR posts advertisements in national newspapers on the strategic-energy-initiative (SEI). This initiative requests that the German government take the lead to found an international solar energy agency.

15 February 1995

EUROSOLAR brings a „European Charter for Solar Energy“ forward. This charter proposes to „amend the nuclear non-proliferation treaty with an agreement for the promotion of renewable energy and to establish an international solar energy agency for the non-commercial technology transfer in the field of renewable energy“.

June 1995

EUROSOLAR drafts a strategic study for the EU-commission „Power for the World“. This study argues for the establishment of an ISEA which should be mandated to promote the production and use of renewable energy in developing countries.

5 till 7 May 1997

In his speech at the EU-congress „Renewable Energy Implementation“ in Athens, **Hermann Scheer** renews his call for an ISEA because existing international institutions continue to neglect renewable energy.

14 April 1998

In cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry for Energy, EUROSOLAR hosts the conference „The Establishment of an International Solar Energy Agency“ in Cairo.

January 2001

EUROSOLAR publishes a „Memorandum for the Establishment of an International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)“. It is argued that IRENA should be established as international governmental organisation outside of the UN-system.

June 2001

EUROSOLAR organises the Impulse Conference „Promoting Global Transfer Activities for Renewable Energy“ in Berlin. This conference was attended by 450 participants from different continents and mobilised support for IRENA. The World Council for Renewable Energy (WCRE) was established with **Hermann Scheer** as General Chairman.

Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, federal Minister for economic cooperation and development declared in her speech: „I view the proposals for the founding of a new international agency for renewable energies as providing an important and necessary impulse for the intensification of international co-operation“.

Summer 2002

In its campaign „Model Solar Germany“ during federal elections, EUROSOLAR asks the German Government to take the initiative to found the International Renewable Energy Agency. As member of the executive committee of the SPD, **Hermann Scheer** includes this demand in the government programme of the SPD for the federal elections. The green party associates itself with this demand.

13 June 2002

The WCRE and EUROSOLAR host the First World Renewable Energy Forum in Berlin. They submit an „Action plan for the global dissemination of renewable energy. It states: “Among international organisations one is missing which concentrates with its entire strength on the promotion of Renewable Energies and constitutes with regard to that the international point of reference: the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). The contradiction must be overcome that the IAEA promotes the international proliferation of atomic technologies, while there is no comparable international organisation for renewable energies“.

Federal Minister **Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul** states: „Almost exactly one year ago we held the pioneering International Impulse Conference for the Creation of IRENA here in Berlin. And I can tell you something: since then I have been unable to get this topic out of my mind!“

8 July 2002

Hermann Scheer proposes to chancellor **Gerhard Schröder** that the federal government invites governments around the world to come to an international conference on renewable energy, and to introduce the initiative to found an IRENA at that conference.

26 August 2002

In his speech at the UN-conference on Environment and Development, chancellor **Schröder** invites delegates to attend this conference.

October 2002

The coalition agreement between SPD and Green Party explicitly supports the initiative for the establishment of IRENA.

January 2003

On the occasion of the war in Iraq, EUROSOLAR starts a campaign „Peace through solar energy instead of war because of oil“. It asks for an immediate implementation of the coalition agreement on the establishment of IRENA.

10 April 2003

The German Parliament adopts the resolution „Initiative for the Foundation of an International Renewable Energy Agency“.

08/ 9 May 2003

EUROSOLAR hosts the impulse conference „From EURATOM to EURENEW“ in Berlin. Analogical to the EURATOM treaty, the conference calls for the establishment of an EURENEW treaty at the European level and an IRENA at the global level.

2 June 2004

At the invitation of the German parliament and in parallel to the „renewables 2004“ conference, the International Parliamentary Forum on Renewable Energies convenes in Bonn, chaired by **Hermann Scheer**. In the conference's Final Resolution, more than 300 members of parliament coming from more than 70 countries unanimously call for the establishment of IRENA.

October 2005

The intention to establish IRENA is once again stated in the coalition agreement of the newly elected German government.

January 2007

The federal government, under the leadership of the foreign office, the ministries for the environment and for economic cooperation and development, initiates a series of bilateral talks with governments all over the world to get their support in establishing IRENA. Three special ambassadors, **Harald Ganns**, **Peter C. Hauswedell** and **Hans Ulrich Spohn**, are appointed. Together with **Hermann Scheer** they hold talks with 60 governments between spring 2007 and summer 2008.

April 2008

The first preparatory conference with participants from more than 60 countries takes place in Berlin. Here the German government declares that the establishment of IRENA is no longer a matter of “if” but rather one of “how.”

19 June 2008

The German parliament votes in favour of a resolution that welcomes the first steps of the German government to establish IRENA.

June / July 2008

At the German parliament, Germany hosts an IRENA workshop with representatives from more than 40 governments. The initial work-programme of IRENA together with the statutes and the financial regime are discussed.

October 2008

At the invitation of the Spanish government, delegates from more than 50 governments attend the Final Preparatory Conference in Madrid. IRENA's statutes are finalised.

26 January 2009

IRENA is established in Bonn.

29/30 June 2009

Member states nominate Mrs. H el ene Pelosse as IRENA's first Director General and elect Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, as headquarters of IRENA.