

IRENA has started - International Renewable Energy Agency established in Bonn, Germany.

Bonn, 26 January 2009 - Today 75 states founded the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in Bonn. Since the nineties EUROSOLAR and the WCRE have continuously promoted the idea of IRENA. The German government has initiated the process that now leads to the foundation of IRENA. Nearly 400 representatives from 120 countries, among them 43 ministers, took part in the founding conference.

IRENA-Initiator Hermann Scheer, president of the European Association for Renewable Energies (EUROSOLAR), who held a speech during the founding conference, said: "IRENA will push forward the global use of Renewable Energies and accelerate their introduction. Now IRENA can start its work without delay and create first structures. After 19 years of preparation we should not lose any more time."

The idea to establish IRENA can be traced back to Hermann Scheer. Over the last two decades, as president of EUROSOLAR and chair of the World Council for Renewable Energy, he has constantly argued for the establishment of a political institution in the form of an international governmental organisation for renewable energy. "The long way from the initiative to the foundation of the IRENA shows that you do not only need further leading ideas but also patience and stamina for their realization." said Scheer in retrospect.

He continued: "IRENA will provide advice and support for both industrialised and developing countries for a rapid introduction of renewable energy. IRENA will offer practical and concrete policy advice, accelerate technology transfer and facilitate access to effective financial mechanisms. The agency will support the know-how-transfer and help build capacity." says Hermann Scheer. IRENA will act as an institutional counterbalance to the International Atomic Energy Agency and the International Energy Agency.

The German government had invited all member states of the UN to the founding conference in Bonn. Among the 75 founding states are Spain, Denmark, France, the Scandinavian countries, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, India, Chile, Colombia, Nigeria and Kenya.

On the day of the founding conference the signing nations will discuss the further steps and the first tasks for IRENA including the selection process for the seat of the organisation and the general director.