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The International Dimensions of the Energy Transition

TimeLoc

19 January 2018 to 21 January 2018

Berlin

Germany

[Graeme Maxton](#) [1]

[Martin Kaiser](#) [2]

Dr. Markus Hartwig

[Dr. Camilla Bausch](#) [3]

 [4]

"Do we need coal phase out and system change to live in a sustainable fashion?"

At a time of turbulence and change in the EU, the Tönissteiner

Kreis discussed options for "Building green bridges for Europe" at its annual conference. As part of this broad subject, Dr. Camilla Bausch of Ecologic Institute discussed the energy transition, its prospects and international dimensions with Graeme Maxton (General Secretary of the Club of Rome), Martin Kaiser (Executive Director at Greenpeace Germany) and Dr. Markus Hartwig, a green energy entrepreneur.

In his keynote address bestselling author Graeme Maxton argued that the 1972 Club of Rome report ["The Limits to Growth"](#) [5] still holds true today. Looking at long-term trends like population growth, economic growth and consumption, he warned that with our current ecological footprint, we are clearly overstepping the "carrying capacity" of our planet. As a symptom of this problem he highlighted climate change with its current impacts (e.g. sea level rise and increasing migration). According to Maxton, our current economic system is one of the key problems in this context. However, he flagged the strength of collective action to change the system and, in doing so, contribute to a sustainable way of life as well as distributional justice.

The keynote was followed by statements by Martin Kaiser and Markus Hartwig. Kaiser, who has a strong background in environmental campaigning, and Hartwig, who has worked for incumbents like Vattenfall for many years, took Maxton's remarks as a foundation to discuss the status quo of and the outlook for the German energy transition. While principally agreeing with the goals of the energy transition and the need for embedment in the European context, they controversially discussed the role of a coal phase-out against the backdrop of energy independence and clean power.

The discussion concluded with a lively discussion with the audience, which included representatives from industry, academia, science, policy, and civil society. The discussion was multifaceted and controversial, touching on topics like energy efficiency, decentralized systems, carbon capture and storage, prices and the role of the state. It also addressed questions of the responsibility of individuals and companies. An audience member even suggested that the Tönissteiner Kreis became carbon neutral - a proposal met with laughter and support by those assembled.

Dr. Camilla Bausch moderated the event, contributing her own insights from a legal and a governance perspective. The Tönissteiner Kreis a network of leaders in business, academia and politics. A prerequisite for membership is a strong international background and interest in international affairs. For 60 years, the Tönissteiner Kreis has organized events and debates, study tours and projects promoting an international perspective and a culture of welcoming foreigners to Germany.

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Links

[1] <https://www.clubofrome.org/member/graeme-maxton/>

[2] <https://www.greenpeace.de/die-geschaeftsfuehrung-des-greenpeace-ev>

[3] <https://www.ecologic.eu/3020>

[4] https://www.ecologic.eu/sites/files/presentation/2018/tonissteiner_logo2015_pfade_94i94i30i20.png

[5] <https://www.dartmouth.edu/~library/digital/publishing/meadows/ltg/>