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## All Eyes on Copenhagen

The United Nations dubbed 2009 the Year of Climate Change as it embarked on 12 months of global meetings with high-level executives and leaders, as well as events to increase worldwide awareness. Each event has built upon the last and is leading to one of the most significant gatherings for the climate change fight in Copenhagen the first two full weeks of December.

The German government and the German Embassy in Washington, D.C., partnered this year with Ecologic Institute and other organizations to help sponsor trips to Germany and Washington for qualified people working and studying in the fields of climate change, global warming, energy and the environment. The sponsorship was derived from the German Federal Foreign Office under the Transatlantic Climate Bridge program, which is an initiative to foster transatlantic cooperation and partnerships among Germany, the United States and Canada for climate and energy policies at the local, state and federal level.

The events were comprised of single and panel presentations about topics including alternative energies, energy efficient technologies, the economics of non-conventional fuels vs. alternatives now and in the future as well as public policy. Representatives from government and academia presented analyses and case studies to show the issues, challenges and potential solutions of the climate change debate as well as the roles the United States and the European Union have to play.

I had the opportunity to take part in the German event in May, traveling to Berlin, Bonn and small cities in between, meeting with government officials and touring the Vattenfall CCS pilot plant at Schwarze Pumpe (see photo at right), which is a

research and development facility. Project officials told us they hope to develop commercial concepts for CCS at power plants between 2015 and 2020. I also traveled to the Q Cells facility, saw how they manufacture solar cells, and learned about increasing solar technology and its benefits.

This past October I was invited to take part in the U.S.-based event in Washington, D.C., which juxtaposed the U.S. legislation with that of the E.U. Speakers discussed energy climate security, state initiatives on greenhouse gas emissions, the effects of climate change on ecology and agriculture, and more.

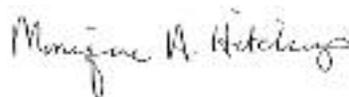
During a recent interview about the need to move forward with clean technology, one of the women I interviewed had this to say:

"I grew up in Europe, and I was 10 years old when the German forests started dying. I was taking trips through those dying forests, and I would say that stayed with me for life.

So here's to hoping discussions and negotiations go well in Copenhagen and leaders of nations are able to come together and set biases and preconceptions aside and put plans forth to take care of the only planet we have.

As my earlier source also said: "This is where public policy comes in. This is why the Copenhagen meeting is so critical. If we are able to help facilitate to citizens of the world some clarity in the legislation, the legislation will happen, because the technology is here, people want to do it and there's plenty of capital at this point."

Until next time have a safe journey, where ever it may take you.



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Top photo: The Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center, which was one of the stops during the Maryland Climate Change Meeting event, is committed to education, restoration, conservation, research, endowment and sustainability.