

**Christian Schmidt, the German Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture has taken over the patronage of the IEA Bioenergy Conference 2015**



**A message from Christian Schmidt**

Ladies and gentlemen, dear visitors!

I am sincerely pleased that the Bioenergy Implementing Agreement of the International Energy Agency strongly supports the substantial contribution of bioenergy to the recent and future global energy demands. It has been doing so for over 35 years now. This international forum of experienced specialists aims at accelerating the production and use of environmentally sound, socially accepted and cost-competitive bioenergy. As such it seeks to achieve security of supply while reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy use.

Bioenergy has a significant impact on societies throughout the world in the past and continues to do so today. Unquestionably, bioenergy is used on all scales, from household heating and cooking to transport, industrial combustion and anaerobic digestion. Its constant availability makes it unique as a flexible energy source which complements other, fluctuating renewable energies. Regarding fossil fuels bioenergy is currently the only alternative for heavy road transport, aviation and agricultural machinery. Furthermore, current global geopolitical crises underline the need for autonomous, stable and storable energy sources like bioenergy, not only for Europe.

The bioenergy sector is an impetus for prosperous rural development, both in Germany and throughout the world. I am glad to see that IEA Bioenergy addresses the numerous related challenges and strives to develop appropriate and sustainable solutions. A great deal of attention needs to be paid to the issue of environmental sustainability and to finding a sustainable balance between building our energy future and ensuring global food security. IEA Bioenergy directs its work towards these aims and supports sustainable bioenergy for us on a global scale.

Germany is considered as one of the leading countries in the field of renewable energy. With its Energy Concept of September 2010 and the follow-up in June 2011, the Federal Government decided to solidly implement the "*Energiewende*". We have the ability to look back on 12 years of experience in extensive promotion of all renewable energies through the Renewable Energies Act (EEG). Thirteen percent of Germany's energy consumption is covered by renewables, three quarters of which is accounted for by bioenergy. Over 7000 biogas plants have been built and 130,000 bioenergy jobs have been created, especially in rural areas. My ministry supports research with 60 million Euros per year, which has resulted in compelling technologies and products. An annual turnover and investment of 13 billion Euros gives proof of the maturity of the German bioenergy market and its entrepreneurs, many of whom are from rural areas.

I am very proud to host this international IEA conference on behalf of the Federal ministry of Food and Agriculture. I hope all participants will have a fruitful exchange regarding German and international bioenergy experiences and also great success in facing the global challenges of the bioenergy sector.

Christian Schmidt  
Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture