

Stefanie Aufderhaar from Munster and Rebecca Hartje from Hannover, both cities are located in Germany, worked on this contribution. Stefanie's research was focused on the political parties in Germany. She presents the attitudes of all those parties, who are represented in the German parliament. Rebecca presents the attitudes of the Lutheran and Catholic Churches.

Most important German parties covering the topic „nuclear energy“ and „energy supply“:

Die Linke (left-wing party):

- campaigns for abandonment of nuclear energy („**Wir setzen uns für die unverzügliche und unumkehrbare Stilllegung aller Atomanlagen ein**“)
- is of the opinion that nuclear energy isn't cheap, but unpayable („**Atomstrom ist nicht billig, sondern unbezahlbar.**“) as it is subsidized and terminal storage is expensive
- criticizes that using nuclear energy impedes the development of alternative energy supply („**Atomkraft verhindert zudem den Ausbau erneuerbarer Energien**“)
- criticizes the search for possible terminal storage: In „Asse“ there is a radioactive liquor. Besides the salt dome is close to collapse. The possible terminal storage „Gorleben“ was illegally built. In fact one should have only explored if the salt dome is convenient in order to store their nuclear waste. („**Schwarzbau Gorleben**“, „**Heute sind die Lagerkammern einsturzgefährdet, die Atommüllfässer ersaufen in verstrahlter Salzlauge**“)

Die Grünen (environmental party):

- criticizes that using nuclear energy impedes the development of alternative energy supply („**Die Stromnetze in Deutschland sind verstopft mit Kohle- und Atomstrom**“)
- wants 100% renewable energy and therefore the power network should be extended („**Die Netze in Deutschland und Europa sollen fit gemacht werden, für eine Versorgung mit 100 Prozent erneuerbaren Energien.**“)
- demands the people to go to demonstrations for a nuclear phaseout („**Atomausstieg in die Hand nehmen! Komm zur Menschenkette!**“) and to change the supplier of electric energy („**Steig aus der Atomkraft aus und werde Stromwechsler**“)

FDP (liberal party):

- regards nuclear energy as a safe bridging technology until we can produce enough renewable energy („**Wir brauchen die Kernenergie als Übergangstechnologie, bis regenerative Energiequellen in ausreichendem Umfang grundlastfähigen Strom erzeugen können**“)
- at the moment it is not possible to abandon nuclear energy as we would have to import expensive energy from abroad („**Würden wir jetzt einfach die Kernkraftwerke abstellen,**

müssten wir die entstehende Stromerzeugungslücke auch durch teure Importe aus dem Ausland decken“)

- wants to support the renewable energies by imposing higher taxes for operators of nuclear power plants („**Die Kernbrennstoffsteuer entzieht den Unternehmen einen großen Teil der Zusatzgewinne. (...) Diese Abgabe fließt in einen neu geschaffenen Fonds für Erneuerbare Energien.**“)
- nuclear energy is cheap („**Ein Gutachten von EWI/Prognos geht davon aus, dass die Haushaltsstrompreise bis 2020 bei einem Atomausstieg sogar um zehn Prozent steigen**“)
- German nuclear power plants are safe („**Alle in Betrieb befindlichen Kernkraftwerke besitzen gültige Betriebsgenehmigungen und entsprechen somit den in Deutschland geltenden und international vorbildlichen Sicherheitsstandards**“)

CDU (Christian Democratic Party)

- prolonged the runtime of German nuclear power plants
- wants to reduce dependency on other countries (oil, gas), use energy more efficiently and advance renewable energies („**Wir müssen Abhängigkeiten verringern, Energie effizienter nutzen und erneuerbare Energien weiter fördern.**“)
- at the moment nuclear power plants are still necessary to avoid using fossil fuels and high costs due to import („**Der Ausstieg aus der Kernenergie würde bedeuten, dass wir fossile Energieträger mit einem erheblichen zusätzlichen Kohlendioxidausstoß einsetzen müssten. Zudem wäre ein steigender Import von Erdgas mit damit verbundenen Importabhängigkeiten und möglicherweise steigenden Energiekosten notwendig.**“)
- do not want to build new power plants („**Einen Neubau von Kernkraftwerken lehnen wir ab.**“)
- wants to check if „Gorleben“ is a good terminal storage and deal with the problems of „Asse“ and „Morsleben“ (another place where waste is stored)
- wants to enforce the competition in the energy sector

SPD (social party):

- decided the nuclear phaseout in 2000/2002
- criticizes the CDU/FDP for prolonging the runtime of nuclear power plants and takes legal actions against this decision
- regard older nuclear power plants as dangerous as operators do not have to upgrade their power plants completely
- wants to extend the use of renewable energy sources

German churches and their attitude towards energy

In Germany a majority of people belongs to either the Catholic Church or the Lutheran Church. In eastern Germany there are less members in churches than in the west and in the north there are, generally spoken, by large more protestants while in the south there are more catholic people. Overall, even though there are many members, the churches have less impact on the people's mindset than they used to 50 years ago. Nevertheless, the churches do not only have moral impact on the people but also some political power in the sense that they can mobilize millions of members

regardless of their political attitudes or party memberships for their cause. Thus, the attitude of the church towards a certain subject is of much importance in Germany, but people are also critical towards its attitudes.

The Lutheran Church (Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands):

Translated interview with Bishop Huber in Lausitzer Rundschau from August 25th 2008, in my opinion this gives a broad overview over the churches' attitude:

“Few movements have asked for abandoning nuclear energy as much as the Lutheran Church has. Even when nuclear energy was still seen as a bright future technology by a majority of the German society, abolishing the use of nuclear power was widely preached by the Lutheran church. Now Bishop Wolfgang Huber, head of the council of the Lutheran church in Germany, has visited the nuclear waste-dump- to-be in Gorleben. The Rundschau now talked to him about this.

Bishop Huber, why would a bishop visit a nuclear waste-dump to-be?

In Gorleben all the problems nuclear power brings with itself are collected in one place and become visible in a way in which they are rarely visible elsewhere. This applies not only for nuclear waste but the whole question of how we can deal with the impact and leftovers of nuclear energy. As a church we carry responsibility for keeping the livelihood for future generations. This is why we care about the future of the German energy policy.

In German politics the voices of those wanting to stop abolishing nuclear energy in Germany (as it was decided by the government in recent years) grow louder. What does the Lutheran church think about this?

The synod of the Lutheran Church in Germany has clearly voted for abolishing nuclear energy. After talks I had with people in the region of Gorleben I would like to underline: The problem of nuclear waste still has no solution. And by continuing to use nuclear energy the amount of radioactive waste we have to store somewhere grows. At the moment we are talking about an increase of about 40 to 70 percent while we are not able to cope with the situation.

Do see alternatives for nuclear power?

The problem of generating energy may only be solved by a bundle of measures. For the Lutheran church the predominant aim is a more efficient use of the energy available. Where renewable energy has potential for growth – go for it! Here, in Lower Saxony I just saw how biomass becomes an important source of energy.

What role do fossil sources of energy, like brown coal, play while the church views mining these sources of energy critically?

Here in Gorleben I pointed out that not only the use of nuclear power but also the use of brown coal brings along problems. In our church we agree that the mining of brown coal may only continue if it comes along with persuasive answers to the resulting climate change. Only if the technology of CO₂-separation really worked could we agree to a further use of brown coal. And even then this would not change the impact the mining has for the people whose villages are destroyed through the mining process.

Does abolishing nuclear energy possibly prevent abolishing the use of coal?

A reduction of the debate to these two sources of energy leads nowhere. But for abolishing the use of nuclear energy there are other deadlines set than for a possible abolishment of the use of coal – I am convinced that this is for good reasons. “

The Catholic Church

Some recent citations of members of the Catholic Church from www.katolisch.de, the official website of the Catholic Church:

02.03.2010, Bishop Hanke

“There is no official position of the Catholic Church in this matter. Due to my ecologic and environmental engagement I speak up for a fast and complete abolishment of this high risk technology. [...] It is part of my Christian belief that we need to oppose infinite and uncontrolled growth. [...] Nuclear energy helps the fatal belief in this kind of growth as it suggests we would not have to change for saving and using energy more efficiently.”

No date, Interview with Benedikt Schalk:

“Keeping the Lord’s creation is the official goal of the Christian churches. Many institutions, organizations, dioceses and congregations have made saving the environment one of their duties. The dioceses of Freiburg even has an office for “energy and environment”. [...] Until 2014, our diocese wants to save more than 38 percent of the CO2 emissions of its buildings.[...] We look at economic use of renewable energy sources. [...] Saving the climate is a priority of the church, but measures taken by the church and importance of the subject varies greatly between the regions.”

14.03.2011, leaders of the Catholic and Lutheran Churches in Germany, Robert Zollitsch and Nikolaus Schneider:

“After the natural catastrophe in Japan abolishing the use of nuclear energy is called for. Zollitsch said that nuclear energy is not the energy of the future. [...] His Lutheran colleague said “A technology like nuclear energy which requires 100 percent safety does not get along with being human [and thus making mistakes].”