



24 February 2019



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Beyond Energiewende – An existential challenge for the German gas industry
Publication date: 06 February 2017

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Beyond Energiewende – An existential challenge for the German gas industry

THE HEATING SECTOR IS THE CORE MARKET FOR GAS DEMAND IN GERMANY. UNTIL 2015, THIS SECTOR WAS ALMOST UNTOUCHED BY 'ENERGIEWENDE' CONCEPTS – THE ANTI-NUCLEAR INSPIRED TRANSITION TO CLEANER (PRIMARILY RENEWABLE) ENERGY. BUT IN NOVEMBER 2016, THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT FINALLY PRESENTED ITS CONTROVERSIAL CLIMATE PROTECTION PLAN 2050, WHICH SETS OUT A PATH TO A DECARBONISED WORLD. ALTHOUGH PROPOSALS, INCLUDING A BAN ON FOSSIL-FUELLED HEATING APPLIANCES FROM 2030, WERE ERASED, THE MAIN ROUTE IN MIND IS A MARKET DOMINATED BY ELECTRIC HEAT PUMPS. POWER TO GAS (PTG) IS ONLY MENTIONED AS A KIND OF FALL-BACK POSITION. THE GAS INDUSTRY HAS INTENSIFIED LOBBYING, ARGUING THAT GAS IS A LOW-HANGING CARBON-REDUCTION FRUIT IN THE SHORT TERM, AND CAN LATER (AFTER 2030) BE REPLACED BY "GREEN GAS" FROM PTG OR BIOMETHANE PLANTS. GAS MATTERS EXAMINES THESE DEVELOPMENTS AND EXPLORES THE FEASIBILITY OF THE DIFFERENT PATHS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT POLITICS AND ECONOMICS.



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