

## First German TV on the Fight about the Wind Turbines

On 1 August 2016, the First German TV (ARD) broadcasted a programme on the massive economic interests behind the German expansion of wind power.

The programme may be biased, but if it can initiate a debate, also moderating views could be known.



Usual journalistic methods are used to catch the attention of the viewers. We meet the plagued neighbours and the single mother, who cannot afford to pay the increasing electricity rates. We also meet the mayor, who is happy for the yearly rent from hosting a wind turbine on his private land.

### Fight about subsidies

The real confrontation is between the wind power lobby and the national parliamentarians. The annual € 8 billion subsidy for wind power is at the core of the conflict.

The subsidies have increased beyond budget. The federal government wanted to control the wind power expansion by adjusting the law on renewable energy (Erneuerbare Energie Gesetz, EEG).

Subsidies are vital, not only to the wind power industries, but also to city council members, who have a strong personal interest in locating wind turbines on their own land. The annual rent for hosting one wind turbine can be € 10,000.

A comprehensive campaign was prepared and launched by the wind power lobby.



*"Your money our job"*

The purpose of the campaign was to defend the subsidy level and to maintain jobs in the renewable sector.

Participants in a large-scale demonstration at Brandenburger Tor in Berlin tell that they are employees from leading wind turbine manufacturers. Bus or train transport to Berlin was organized by the employers, who also paid all expenses including wages and salaries for the participants.

### The dilemma of BUND, the German nature conservancy association

BUND (Friends of the Earth Germany)<sup>1</sup> is a federal grassroots NGO working for nature conservation and environmental protection.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.bund.net/ueber\\_uns/bund\\_in\\_english/](http://www.bund.net/ueber_uns/bund_in_english/)

BUND works for immediate stop for nuclear power and for phasing out the use of coal, lignite, oil and gas as soon as possible. The logical consequence is that BUND is strongly in favour of increased use of wind and solar energy.

The large wind turbines have a considerable impact on landscapes and on residents in the neighbourhood. On the top of that come the large transmission facilities, which must be installed in order to move electricity from north to south in Germany. There is a long tradition in Germany for bitter resistance against new overhead lines.



Therefore, BUND must argue that they have obtained necessary improvements to make large wind turbines acceptable to the landscapes and to the people concerned. BUND must claim its independence of the wind industry though its active participation in the demonstration in Berlin and joint positions with the Industry and with the Federal Union of Wind Energy.

This extreme and clearly unreasonable position underlines the fact that there is no common solution for all interests.

### The compromise

A strong pressure was put on the federal parliament members during the preparation of the new law on renewable energy (EEG). This included an orchestrated mail campaign.

The massive campaign paid off. The remuneration for producers of wind energy will not be reduced as much as planned and the changes will be postponed. The result will be more wind power than in the government's proposal.



*"I never experienced any other lobby acting so brutally to persuade delegates in order to promote personal interests."*



Temporary link to video: <http://www.ardmediathek.de/tv/Reportage-Dokumentation/Der-Kampf-um-die-Windr%C3%A4der/Das-Erste/Video?bcastId=799280&documentId=36905676>