

Manuscript
EU – Environment
BRT, Germany

Presenter:

When you think of the EU, then you think, first and foremost, of topics like the new constitution and the enlargement to the East or maybe of the fact that the EU promotes economic cooperation. A fact that is often forgotten is that the EU is also very active in environmental questions. No wonder that this is often forgotten for this is a topic that is rather neglected by the public. And therefore, people here, in the pedestrian zone of Nuremberg, have a lot of questions about this topic:

Team:

Reporter: Katharina Altemeier

Camera: G. Müller

Editor: Roggi

Duration: 5'06

Translation

EU and the environment

BR, Germany

Question 1: I would like to know what EU environmental policy is, by whom it is determined, whether there is a common EU environmental policy and whether EU environmental policy stands above the national environmental policies and other questions like that. That's what really interests me.

Answer: Eberhard Sinner, Bayerischer Staatsminister for European and regional connections:
The Swedish commissioner Ms. Wallström is responsible for EU environmental policy as well as Parliament and the Council of Ministers. The European Union implements the measures that were agreed on in Rio, called the agenda 21, in a variety of different fields. They are binding for all member countries and are more important than the environmental policy of each country.

Question 2: What is emissions quota trading all about? Do we also take part in such senseless measures?

Question 3: There is such a lot of talk about the emissions quota trading that will come into effect next year. I would like to know what that entails for Germany and what Germany has to expect in that respect?

Answer: Eberhard Sinner, Bayerischer Staatsminister for European and regional connections:
Emissions quota trading will remain an issue, but it is often about the current government implementing European haphazardly. We demand full implementation, because otherwise the domestic market cannot work. Due to self discriminatory measures the German and Bavarian economy always faces stricter requirements than the rest of the domestic market that has different regulations, which causes problems.

Question 4: How can you achieve common regulation throughout Europe and at the same time get everybody in the same boat?

Question 5: Firstly, when will we finally implement common environmental policy throughout all member countries that is on top of that effective, I mean really effective. Up until now there have only been some tentative attempts and it is high time that something changes in Europe...

Question 6: What is Brussels' plan when the ten applicant countries will finally join the EU? I mean, do they have to fulfil certain requirements as far as environmental standards are concerned?

Answer: Eberhard Sinner, Bayerischer Staatsminister for European and regional connections:

Domestic markets are not the problem, but the solution to a problem, namely that of globalization. And by introducing emission quotas we have, of course, achieved a lot in terms of environmental standards. This also improves our economic competitiveness as everyone meets the same requirements, and at the same time we have created new jobs. In this respect, the 25 countries, or possibly even 27 with Rumania and Bulgaria are in the same boat. And the same goes for water standards and topics like drinking water. There are already European standards that are implemented in each member state. Of course, this is a framework that all member countries have to meet.

Question 7: Well, what does the EU in terms of waste management? How does the EU make sure that people learn how to recycle and that our children will be able to live in a decent environment?

Answer: Eberhard Sinner, Bayerischer Staatsminister for European and regional connections:

We are in favour of the principle of subsidiarity. And we do have sensible regulations when it comes to waste management in Germany and Bavaria. The European Union, of course, does not deal with such details. Our dual system just has to be compatible with European law. European law will deal with questions, such as competitiveness and will act if problems occur in this area. So, the European Union does intervene in certain areas, however, we think that not every problem that occurs in Europe has to be solved by the European Union. We need a framework that will finally determine and enable the functioning of domestic markets. We do not need regulations for details, which would cause too much red tape and thus would not reach citizens. Therefore, we would like to hand over the responsibility for everything that does not require a European framework, to each member country.

Duration: 5'06