

IRENA agrees on a three-way solution to the headquarters question

Gabriel: Bonn will accommodate the technology centre for renewable energies

A joint solution has been found to the competition between Germany, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Austria to host the headquarters of the new International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Abu Dhabi will host the IRENA headquarters, Bonn will accommodate the centre of technology and innovation, and a liaison office in Vienna will facilitate contacts in the field of energy to UN bodies and other international institutions. Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel welcomed the three-way solution as "a fair and appropriate compromise". He went on to say: "I'm delighted with this agreement. A battle for votes among the applicant cities would have given the fatal impression of an exaggerated rift between North and South. The compromise ideally combines the strengths of all applicants and sends the right signal: solidarity rather than division - unity is strength."

Minister Gabriel, who worked intensively for a solution acceptable to all parties, said "IRENA is already a great triumph for Germany. In the past 60 years there has not been such a successful initiative from Germany, for in just five months more than 130 countries worldwide have joined. We did not want to jeopardise this accomplishment of Germany with a battle for votes and the divisions this would entail. In the start-up phase especially, we need all our strength. For this reason, the desire to avoid such a split and find a joint solution was apparent among all the delegations."

After the United Arab Emirates had rejected Gabriel's compromise proposal the previous evening, the German Federal Environment Minister was able to win the US and Egypt, the host of the conference, as mediators. Their efforts were ultimately successful, enabling the German compromise proposal to be adopted: the headquarters of the new International Renewable Energy Agency will be located in Abu Dhabi. Bonn will be home to a centre of technology and innovation, while a liaison office to other UN energy organisations will be established in Vienna, where many are already located.

Germany will make 4 million euros available in Bonn to set up the centre of technology and innovation and will provide between 2 and 3 million euros each year. "As a technological leader, Germany will thus maintain decisive influence on the international development of renewable energies," said Gabriel.

The proposal was welcomed by Bonn's Mayor Bärbel Dieckmann, who also spoke at the conference: "I am delighted for Bonn and would like to warmly thank Sigmar Gabriel for his huge support for our city. With the help of funding from the Federal Environment Ministry and in cooperation with the companies, institutions and research facilities which are at home in our region, we will massively advance the technological development of renewable energies at international level."