



## PRESS RELEASE

# New Foundation Initiative to Tackle Climate Protection in the Transport Sector

Agora Verkehrswende will deliver debates, scenarios and strategies for decarbonising the German transport sector by 2050. The initiative was officially launched on 1 July.

Berlin, 1 July 2016. In order to achieve the German climate protection goals following the Paris Climate Change Agreement, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from vehicles, vessels and aircrafts must be reduced to almost zero by 2050. Currently, the transport sector is responsible for about 20 percent of Germany's greenhouse gas emissions. Agora Verkehrswende will develop the foundations for a comprehensive climate change strategy for the transport sector in dialogue with key stakeholders. Agora Verkehrswende, which is a joint initiative established by the Stiftung Mercator and the European Climate Foundation, has now officially begun its work. The foundations established the think tank at the beginning of this year and foresee a budget of five million euros until the end of 2018.

The initiative will focus on societal discourse. In Agora Verkehrswende's high-level Council, select representatives from politics, business, academia and civil society will discuss promising paths towards a successful transformation of the transport sector. The Agora Verkehrswende Council will be chaired by Achim Steiner, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director. The scientific basis for the discourse and the development of strategies in the form of analyses and studies will be developed by a ten-member interdisciplinary team with Christian Hochfeld as Executive Director.

"When we consider that about a quarter of the world's greenhouse gases come from the transport sector, it is clear that the turnaround heralded in Paris cannot be achieved without fundamental changes to the transport sector. That means transforming mobility in the 21st century," says Achim Steiner, Chairman of the Agora Verkehrswende Council. "I'm

convinced that major changes in society need a dialogue platform like Agora Verkehrswende."

A focal point of Agora Verkehrswende will be the conversion of the entire transport system for people and goods to electric vehicles and fuels from renewable energy sources. This implies that the transport system needs to be as efficient as possible by preventing unnecessary traffic, shifting traffic to more environmentally friendly modes of transport and by improving the individual transport modes at technology level. The climate-friendly development of urban transport is seen as a key component in this transformation.

"Agora Verkehrswende is calling on the German government, industry and society to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the transformation of the transport sector as part of a constructive dialogue. We want to create an understanding for and confidence in the transport system's ability to change. It is therefore important that we demonstrate that Germany as a centre for mobility and business will benefit from the transformation of the transport sector," says Agora Verkehrswende's Executive Director, Christian Hochfeld.

"The decarbonisation of transport is a new focus area in the Mercator Foundation's Climate Change cluster. The success of Agora Energiewende has encouraged us to provide a service with Agora Verkehrswende that works on the same principle. We therefore hope to contribute to a structured and goal-oriented debate for providing effective climate protection through the transport sector," says Dr Lars Grotewold, Head of Climate Change at the Mercator Foundation.



## PRESSEMITTEILUNG

"We're convinced that a German transformation of the transport sector will act as a beacon for European and global climate protection," says Dr Christoph Wolff, Managing Director of the European Climate Foundation in explaining the commitment of his foundation. "It's not just humans who will benefit from less pollution and noise. The transport evolution also offers enormous opportunities for the European economy."

Agora Verkehrswende was officially launched on 1 July with an event held in the Mercator Foundation's ProjektZentrum Berlin. Around 100 invited guests discussed the dimensions and challenges of the transport evolution with high-level experts. In addition to Council Chairman Achim Steiner, presentations were also given by Professor Klaus Töpfer (Chairman of the Agora Energiewende Council), Thomas Becker (Vice President of the BMW Group),

Jochen Flasbarth (State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety), Andreas Gehlhaar (Head of Environmental Affairs at Deutsche Bahn AG), Dr Patrick Graichen (Executive Director of Agora Energiewende), Winfried Hermann (Minister of Transport and Infrastructure in Baden-Württemberg), Helge Pols (Head of Division at Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure), Oliver Wolff (CEO of the Association of German Transport Companies VDV) and Dr Wiebke Zimmer (Deputy Head of Resources and Mobility at the Institute for Applied Ecology). The event was recorded on video, a compilation is available shortly at [www.agora-verkehrswende.de](http://www.agora-verkehrswende.de)

Further information is available at  
[www.agora-verkehrswende.de](http://www.agora-verkehrswende.de)