

*Committee: Environment*

*Country: Germany*

*School: Runnymede College*

The German delegation is deeply concerned with the environment; which is a key facet of government legislation and spending; especially with the Renewable Energy Act (EEG) amended in 2014 to facilitate an energetic transition in the nation. This is why Germany feels it has a lot to offer this committee.

On the question of Preventing Natural Disasters and Reducing their Effects, Germany feels it can play an important role, despite the relatively low number of Natural disasters that occur within the country itself (excluding hydrological disasters such as the 2018 floods). Germany would be interested in continuing aid and relief efforts as it previously has done, especially regarding supplying food and remedying water contamination in affected countries. While reducing the casualties post-disaster and helping victims has always been the German priority, the German delegation feels a lot of work can still be done on improving and developing preventive measures, so as not to wait for the disaster to strike to begin taking action. This would come in the form of alarm systems, but mainly plans to improve infrastructure in seism prone zones and the introduction of coastal barriers; for both of which Germany can set an example. Additionally, another way disasters could be avoided would be with the dismantling of nuclear power plants, whose fragile balance between safety and catastrophe can easily be disrupted with the advent of an uncontrollable natural force: making them near impossible to fully secure, as seen in 2011 with the Fukushima nuclear crisis following the Japan earthquake and tsunami.

Germany is greatly concerned with the question of the Protection of the Dark Sky and the Starred Sky, not just because of the evident indicator of a deeper issue that light pollution poses to the environment, but also due to the great cultural and scientific richness that the starred sky holds. The German government has recently begun efforts to create protected areas; Dark-sky preserves (DSP), to safeguard the visibility of the stars and the darkness of the night. Currently, there are two DSP areas in Germany, both established in 2014; one in Westhavelland and another in Rhön. There is also a Dark-sky Park (a different denomination that is less rigorous in its efforts) in Winklmoosalm. The German delegation strongly believes that there should be a minimum amount of preserves every member state should have in order to protect valuable sections of territory. More importantly, however, should be the reduction (and eventual elimination) of usage of incandescent light bulbs, which are not only extremely energy inefficient, but often of a much higher wattage than is necessary for small rooms, contributing excessively to the photo-pollution phenomenon. In this case, Germany feels the EU policy adopted in 2009 of banning incandescent light bulbs should be taken as an example for nations still using halogen bulbs, with a gradual removal of their use.

Germany feels deeply troubled by the question of the seventh continent; and believes that efforts must be made to clean up the oceans, however, the German government does not claim responsibility for the bulk of the offshore plastic accumulation because of the strict recycling legislations the country has. In Germany, 65% of total waste is recycled, the highest numbers any country worldwide has. This is largely due to the Green Dot system imposed by the government, something which the German delegation feels would be a positive addition to many countries' environmental policies. This is a government tax imposed per unit volume of packaging, the higher the volume of packaging a manufacturer has on their product, the higher the tax per unit; what this creates is companies which strive to reduce the amount of packaging used in their product; and thus less waste to be disposed of; if this is combined with extensive education about the woes of single use plastics, it will seriously reduce the volume of plastics introduced into the oceans. In regards to the Seventh Continent, it is evident something must be done to remove the waste from the oceans, but it is unclear what nation or nations should be responsible for the bulk of the cleanup; arguably, it should be the largest contributors who should dispose and recycle the majority of the waste.