

FRIEDBERT PFLÜGER

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I would now like to ask Friedbert Pflüger to sum up what you have heard. I am never sure whether it is a European cluster or the European center, both terms seem to be used on the Internet. Is it the Cluster for Climate Energy and Resource Security or the Centre? Either way, you are the expert.

Friedbert Pflüger

That does not matter. Thank you, John. In your introduction you referred to this little argument I had yesterday evening with Prime Minister Fabius.

John Andrews

It was a very polite argument.

Friedbert Pflüger

I believe that in one basic line he was entirely right and that is when he said there is a huge gap between our pronouncements on more and more ambitious energy or CO2 reduction goals and our ability to concretely deliver. I believe this is the most difficult thing we have to resolve in the near future. I would even go further and say the loudness of our proclamations of ambitious goals is inversely proportional to our ability to really reduce carbon emissions. That is a situation where you will soon see a tipping point that people either do not take these aims seriously any more or they become radicalized, as we have seen in some of our countries, because they say that the politicians are not able to live up to their own goals.

What can we do in this situation? I think we have embarked on the wrong path and that path is goals and government micromanagement, which forbids certain technologies and interferes in markets and that will not go anywhere. What we have to do is to unleash technologies, and there we are. Unleash technologies, bring them to the market and trust that humans are able to live up to dangers, threats, and challenges, not by forbidding or fleeing, but by grabbing the chances. Here we saw wonderful, revolutionary models. I do not know if you really got Frank Obrist's basic message, he says climate neutral is not enough, we have to become climate negative in our thinking. We have to get the carbon out of the atmosphere, and he showed with his prototype of this a-fuel car. This is already possible with the existing technologies and



countries like Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, or Australia are perfect to create carbon sinks, and I think that is a great message. It is not a message for 500 years, I would never say that, it is a message for the next 50 years where we can really make a huge difference to the planet.

John Andrews

Friedbert, you are from Germany, which famously decided to end its nuclear industry after Fukushima. What was the message of that? In the end, you are living in the reality of a political world as well.

Friedbert Pflüger

I must admit, I was never a fan of nuclear because I never trusted the ability of mankind to store high-radiation used nuclear fuels for millions of years. However, that is the next technological revolution. I know that it is possible to reuse these fuels, work with them in terms of transmutation and partition, reducing the radiation so that in the end, if you have to store something it will only be for 200 or 300 years instead of a million. I think we should take a second look at nuclear, especially when it comes to a new generation of secure nuclear reactors. I believe the German policy made a lot of sense 10, 15, 20 years ago, but it does not make sense today when we have new technologies. For example, my government in Germany says final storage in Germany will be possible and we will find a place between 2045 and 2069. Then it will take 20 years before the storage is built and another 20 until all the used fuels are stored there, so we will end this work on our nuclear heritage at the beginning of the next century. This is crazy, it is hubris. Mankind cannot make decisions today for 100 years and we should be more realistic with this 2030 or 2032 and want to those things, rather than forbid them as governments do in Europe, especially my own. We have so many chances and let me add one more, which could also be based here, which is synthetic fuels for airplanes, ships, but also individual traffic with e-fuels and a-fuels. That is a huge chance, and we should not say today that there should be no combustion engines from 2035, we should say no combustion engines based on fossil fuels from 2035. If you have them with synthetic fuels, green fuels, why not use a combustion engine? It is not the engine that is bad, it is the fuel that is bad for the climate. From my point of view, we have to unleash this technological revolution, as the US does with the IRA. Finally, I believe that we have had a lot of competition on energy sources in the past around who has the oil or the gas. In the future we will have competition on climate technologies, who is best in producing, distributing or has the best logistics or storage system for hydrogen. The competition for today and tomorrow is on technology and the moment that we understand that these are the solutions, not the politicians in Sharm El Sheikh, which is not the solution, then I think we have a great chance to fight climate change.