

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)
DIJ Social Science Study Group



March 5, 2014, 18:30

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A Swallow Does Not Make a Summer, Or Why Japan May Not Quite Be Germany When It Comes to Renewables

When the Japanese government started implementing a feed-in tariff (FIT) for electricity from renewable energy in July 2012, one might have believed that non-conventional energy sources had finally gained acceptance in Japan. This could not be further from the truth: Skepticism about the role of renewables in Japan's energy mix remains as high as ever. This presentation will show how Japan is different from European examples such as Germany or Denmark and why one can probably not expect similar developments.

Japan is part of a set of countries where a policy instrument supporting renewables that had been introduced earlier ended up being replaced entirely at a later stage. Research shows a remarkable difference between countries that have kept a single instrument and ones that traded one instrument for another. While the former have established a virtuous cycle in policy-making, striving pro-actively for a steadily increasing share of renewables, the latter drag their feet, with growth in the share of renewables still restricted – even after the introduction of the new instrument. Japan is no exception.

Presenting part of his PhD research, our speaker will show the exact stages when the policy process froze up, identify the shocks that have led to the replacement of the policy instruments, and analyze what this might mean for the future of renewable energy in Japan. He draws on primary documents and direct interviews with stakeholders involved in the policy process at hand.

Alex Luta is currently finalizing his PhD thesis on comparative renewable energy policy at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. From 2008 to 2010 he conducted research on the topic of Japanese climate policy at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. He also writes as a freelancer about the development of Japanese and European electricity and renewable energy policy.

The DIJ Social Science Study Group is organized by P. Holdgrün and C. Hommerich.
All are welcome to attend, but registration (holdgruen@dijtokyo.org) is appreciated.

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