

Energy transition: Development of Reporting on Renewable Energies

KIT Researchers Notice a Shift from Positive to Negative Media Reports - Public Support and Long-Term Goals Might Be at Risk

In order to advance renewable energies, political framework conditions must be created in addition to the technologies. Media coverage is an important factor in the decision-making process of politicians and connects them with the public. Researchers at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) have now evaluated the coverage of the Renewable Energy Sources Act (EEG), which was enacted in 2000. They want to understand how the energy policy goals and, accordingly, the media reports have developed.

For their study, the scientists analyzed 6645 articles about the EEG from five Germany-wide newspapers between the years 2000 and 2017. "We found that after the law was passed, the coverage of renewable energy was very positive," says Joris Dehler-Holland from KIT's Institute of Industrial Management and Production (IIP). "Then, in 2012, the reporting changed: From that point on, the EEG was more associated with its costs." This was due, on the one hand, to the fact that the government put these in its focus and, on the other hand, to the fact that the EEG levy had increased significantly in the previous years. "The perception of the EEG and the energy transition in general as primarily expensive emphasizes the negative aspects, with positive aspects taking a back seat. This could jeopardize public support and long-term goals," Dehler-Holland said. The government now needs to take action to maintain broad public support, he said.

Click here to read the paper:

Dehler-Holland, Joris; Schumacher, Kira; Fichtner, Wolf (2021): Topic Modeling Uncovers Shifts in Media Framing of the German Renewable Energy Act. *Patterns* 2. DOI: 10.1016/j.patter.2020.100169 or [cell.com/patterns/fulltext/S2666-3899\(20\)30233-6](https://cell.com/patterns/fulltext/S2666-3899(20)30233-6).