

# Reality Weighs In Against the EU's Green Deal

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Nov. 15—As the man-made de-industrialization of Europe is advancing in leaps and bounds, the tide is turning on Ursula von der Leyen's insane "Green Deal" policy. While the political earthquake in Germany's key state of Hesse may be a harbinger of things to come in Berlin (cf. below), other pieces of the EU green agenda are also falling apart.

- On Nov. 9, the European Parliament approved postponement of the stringent "Euro 7" emission guidelines—by two years for cars and four years for trucks. Along with the regulation, the "Ursula majority" in the European Parliament, i.e., the coalition that had elected von der Leyen as European Commission President, broke apart. The decision to postpone Euro 7 was voted up by a majority of the People's Party and the Liberals, as well as one-third of the Socialist factions, joining in with the opposition conservatives and nationalists.

- Another defeat for the von der Leyen agenda is expected on Nov. 21, when the European Parliament is expected to vote on the "Re-use" new packaging regulation, which would ban, among other things, paper cups for drinks consumed inside bars and restaurants, sugar packets, plastic bottles for hotel shampoos and shower gels, and certain packaging in which fruit and vegetables are sold. They are supposed to be replaced with washable and reusable packaging.

The Italian packaging industry and several farmers' associations that have entirely converted to the previous standard of a single-use recycling system over the past years, have mobilized to stop that regulation. A group of 40 Italian members of the European Parliament from all political parties has joined the mobilization and committed to build a nonpartisan majority to block the new regulation proposal in the European Parliament.

- The third development does not, strictly speaking, concern the EU agenda, but it does by implication.

Switzerland has decided to prolong the life of its four nuclear power plants for as long as their safety can be maintained. Those four plants currently produce 40% of the country's electricity. While a referendum held in 2017 voted for phasing out nuclear power, the current energy insecurity has prompted a rethinking, to avoid a huge black hole in the national energy supply. Furthermore, it is said that the potential for expanding so-called renewables has been exhausted.

Belgium and Finland are also planning to extend the lifespan of their nuclear power plants. Finland recently completed a new one and is planning another, as are Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovenia.

- Last but not least, one of the pillars of the European Union system, the so-called single energy market, has started to crumble, spreading panic among hedge funds and the entire financial industry, which has milked it for big profits in the past years. The German government has announced a five-year plan to subsidize energy costs for industry, designed to set the price for manufacturers at €70 per Megawatt-hour, costing the government €28 billion until 2028. Apparently, the Commission has given a green light (or not yet given a red light), so that Italian producers now demand the same treatment. According to the Milan daily *La*

*Verità*, the Commission is rejecting an Italian request to postpone a total liberalization of the energy market in Italy.

## Greens Face Shaky Future in German Coalition

In Germany, ever since the drastic losses for the Greens, Social Democrats (SPD) and Free Democrats (FDP) in the state parliament elections of Bavaria and Hesse Oct. 8, analysts have been speculating about the inevitable consequences for the federal government—a coalition of the same three parties. Talk has been rife of a cabinet reshuffle, and even a replacement of the coalition is not being ruled out. Indeed, momentum is growing in the FDP party base to quit the government entirely, which is blamed for the electoral debacle in Bavaria (cf., *Strategic Alert Service* 45/23).

Another scenario for replacing the ruling coalition



*Ursula von der Leyen*

has emerged in the discussion: a “Grand Coalition” between the Christian Democrats (CDU-CSU) and the SPD, perhaps enhanced by the FDP. This became public when the Acting CDU Minister-President of Hesse, Boris Rhein, stated Nov. 10, that he would not continue his coalition with the Greens, but seek to partner with the SPD. That means that the Greens are out, together with some of their pet projects, such as unrestricted migration, radical ecologism harming the farmers’ interests, gender policies, and preference for climate policies. The latter is at the bottom of the 10-point list of policy agreements between the CDU and SPD in Hesse, while the other three rank much higher. This, of course, only concerns the State of Hesse, but it could be a prelude to forming a new government without the Greens at the federal level as well—possibly well before the next scheduled national elections in the Autumn of 2025.

A growing number of citizens favor a change of government, as confirmed by an opinion poll published past week by the “Deutschlandtrend” special of the television channel ARD: 41% of those polled, are for early elections, while only 32% want the current government to remain in power. Although 62% of SPD supporters now say they are against a change, that per-

centage is expected to shrink in the coming weeks.

After all, the chairwoman of the SPD in Hesse, Nancy Faeser, is Interior Minister of the federal government, and she approved the establishment of a coalition with the CDU there. It is hard to imagine that she could have okayed the expulsion of the Greens without at least the tacit consent of SPD Chancellor Olaf Scholz, as both of them are well aware of the political repercussions for the Greens in the Scholz cabinet.

Just a few days before the Oct. 8 election, Minister-President Boris Rhein had stated that his political agenda included a return to nuclear power and to the development of thermonuclear fusion—an absolute red flag for the Greens! To what extent the SPD in the future Hesse cabinet would be willing to reverse its long-standing opposition to nuclear power remains to be seen, but it would undoubtedly influence a possible “grand coalition” in Berlin.

There have been several closed-door meetings between SPD Chancellor Olaf Scholz and CDU chairman Friedrich Merz, the real contents of which have not been made public. In the present Bundestag, CDU-CSU and SPD have a clear majority, with 403 seats against 331 for all other parties combined.

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