



# The Right Livelihood Award

*for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people*

## Hermann Scheer (Germany)†

### Honorary Award (1999)



*...for his indefatigable work for the promotion of solar energy worldwide.*

Hermann Scheer

Hermann Scheer was born in 1944. He held a Ph.D. in economics and social sciences.

In 1988 Scheer founded EUROSOLAR, the European Association for Solar Energy, which "has as its goal the replacement of nuclear and fossil fuels and their sources with environmentally sound energy sources, using both direct and indirect sources of solar energy." This goal springs primarily from the perception that solar energy is "the most important necessity for upholding the natural foundations of life, as well as for new lasting economic and development politics." EUROSOLAR now has more than 20,000 members and offices in 12 of the EU member states.

Scheer believed that the continuation of current patterns of energy use will be environmentally catastrophic and the end of human civilisation. The only realistic alternative energy source is solar energy. Scheer concluded that it is technically and environmentally feasible to harness enough solar radiation to achieve a total replacement of the fossil/nuclear energy system by a global renewable energy economy. The main obstacle to such a change is political. That is why EUROSOLAR conferences, organised since 1990 in New Delhi, Harare, Shanghai, St. Petersburg, Cairo and Havana, are described as "political solar energy conferences" and Scheer's book, the English version of which was published in 1994, is entitled *A Solar Manifesto*. More than 70,000 copies of this book have been sold in several languages.

After considerable lobbying from Scheer and EUROSOLAR, the European Commission published a 'White Book' on renewable energy in November 1997. This included a number of EUROSOLAR's ideas, including the proposal for a one-million-unit programme for photovoltaics (half for Europe, half for Third World villages), and a call to double the market share of renewable energies by 2010.

Scheer also initiated a EUROSUN Intergroup of the European Parliament and became chairman of its Advisory Board. In 1997 and 1998, EUROSOLAR organised international conferences on 'Financial Renewable Energies' and the European conference on "Solar Energy in Architecture and Urban Planning", which attracted hundreds of participants. In 2002, Scheer was named 'Hero for the Green Century' by the TIME Magazine. He received the World Solar Prize at the 1998 World Conference on Photovoltaics in Vienna, the World Prize on Bioenergy in 2000, the Global Leadership Award by the American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE) and the World Wind Energy Award in 2004 and, in 2009, the Karl Böer Solar Energy Medal of Merit.

Scheer played a unique role in inspiring the public and decision-makers in many countries about the possibilities of a global transition to a solar-energy based economy. He insisted on this was not a

distant dream, but a realistic and urgently needed possibility today, which would overcome global economic disparities and the ongoing ecological crisis.

Hermann Scheer passed away October 14, 2010.

### Quotation

*"Renewable energies are inexhaustible. They do not destroy the environment. They are available everywhere. Their use facilitates solidarity with future generations. They secure the future of humankind."*

Hermann Scheer

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