State of the Energy Union 2017 - Social Fairness and Civil Society Participation in Europe's Energy Transition

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EU energy


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EU energy policy context

- Transition to low-carbon energy-efficient economies.
- European integrated energy market.
- External dimension to EU energy policy.

EU energy landscapes

- Located between state and market
- Choices and trade-offs over:
  - Supply-side.
  - Demand-side.
  - Transmission and load-balancing infrastructure.

Diversity

- Energy Transition will vary for different publics and for different stakeholders.
- And from country to country.

Choices

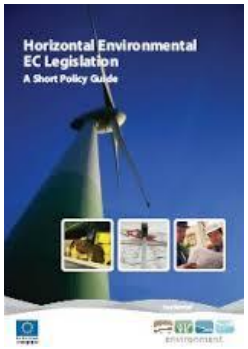
- We are faced with collective choices.
- Long-term decisions across the entire field of industrial strategy depend on this.

EC 2050 Low Carbon Road Map

- “Citizens need to be informed and engaged in the decision-making process, while technological choices need to take account of the local environment.”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

United Nations
Framework Convention on Climate Change



COP21

INFORMATION PARTICIPATION JUSTICE
AARHUS CONVENTION
for our environment

Strategic Environmental Assessment

IPPC

EU energy transition participation governance

- Differing levels of government, (local, regional, and national).
- Differing spheres of society (institutional, public, social media community).
- Differing localities (local, regional, state).

Multi-lateral participatory governance

- European: Convergence and integration at EU level.
- National: Differing cultural, regulatory, and energy landscapes.
- Metropolitan: Vital role and capacity for action at the city level.
- Local: Lived experience of communities.

EU participatory democracy

- Balancing expert knowledge with everyday knowledge to find a democratic ‘mean’.
- Drive for more accountable, transparent, and publicly acceptable decision-making - no longer seen as an optional ‘add-on’ to policy.
- To meet the needs of the public - needs to be socially, culturally and politically acceptable as well as technologically feasible.

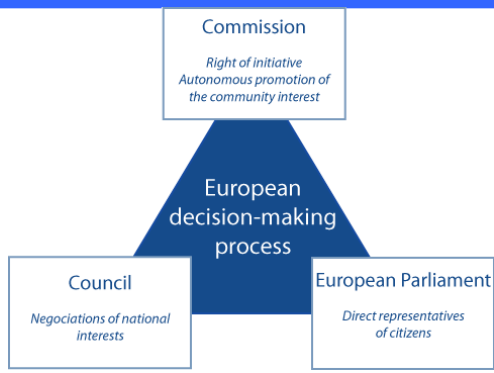
Complexity

- In the right circumstances, people can work with complex data and uncertainty.

Best value

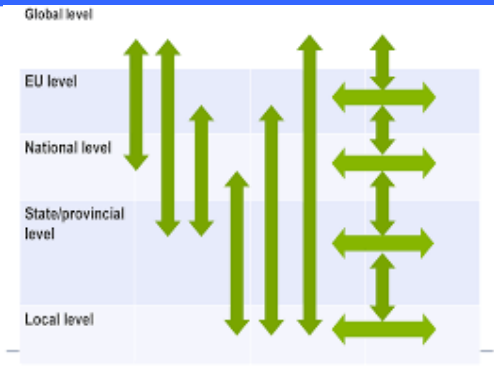
- Participation can agree and deliver national, regional, city, and local strategic objectives - at less cost to the public purse and with less bureaucracy than traditional processes.

Purpose



- Arrive at considered collective conclusions to inform decision-making.
- Participation must ‘make a difference’ to decision-making.
- Need for transparency in the assessment and decision-making process - including publication of assessment criteria and decision-support methods.

Linking ‘bottom-up’ with ‘top-down’



- Formal measures for linking low-carbon energy participation to policy and governance structures are not yet in place.

How to build this ‘negotiation space’?

Trust-building is key

- Open negotiation - respect different views and knowledge.
- Clarity about purpose, objectives and scope.
- Inclusion of diverse stakeholders.
- Accurate and balanced information.
- Independent expertise.
- Oversight and evaluation.

‘Upstream’ engagement

- ‘Upstream’ engagement aims to find out how people, stakeholders and local communities want to be engaged.
- Inclusive ‘outreach’.
- ‘Out’ problems that will arise anyway.
- Take time to get there quicker.

Who will participate?

- Statutory and non-statutory policymakers, government departments, devolved administrations, local government and local authorities, energy regulators, transmission system operators, industrial corporations and businesses, investment banks, trade associations, non-governmental organizations, local community based organisations, independent energy sector experts, and research institutes.

Methods

- Stakeholder dialogues.
- Public meetings.
- Citizens' panels, events, forums, workshops.
- 'Kitchen round-tables', 'Test-beds'.
- Mentoring, Peer exchange.
- Interactive web-sites.
- Communication through press and media.

Tools

- Scenario building and modeling.
- Participatory multi-criteria analysis (PMCA).
- Virtual reality techniques - including 3D visualization and geographic information systems (GIS) mapping.
- Life Cycle Analysis (LCA).
- Quantitative environmental assessment.

No ‘free lunch’

- It takes resources to ask and work through a range of ‘what if’ questions.

Not always ‘plain sailing’

- Not a simple task to encourage citizens, NGOs, government departments and industry to participate co-operatively.
- Can be complicated to combine several different tools for decision-making into a single coherent process.

Tensions can arise

- Over framing ‘boundary conditions’ for dialogues.
- Whether all main stakeholders are included in discussion.
- The acceptance of all stakeholders as equal contributors.
- Levels of planning options offered.
- Perceived openness to serious policy influence.

So

- Concentrate on the process, not the outcome.

Channel and focus

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WHERE ACTION & VISION MEET

ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability

Energy for Mayors

Regions 202020

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- Sheer weight of statutory, citizen, and stakeholder civil society involvement in energy - at local, city, regional, national, and pan-EU levels.

Public attitudes to energy are rooted in values

- At a human individual level: Safety, energy poverty and the access of vulnerable groups to affordable supply.
- At a national level: Energy dependency and exposure to external influence.

Strategic goal for complex issues with uncertain futures

- Not be to find the single ‘right technical answer’ to the problem.
- But to bring people together - and keep them talking to each other to make sure that better decisions are made in future.


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Thank You
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