

Paper title: Encouraging citizen participation in energy transition

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Abstract:

Energy transition is defined as a way toward transformation of the global energy sector from fossil-based to zero-carbon based. Key goal of transition is to reduce energy-related CO₂ emissions and to mitigate the effects of climate change. One of the most important actors in energy transition are civil sector, NGOs and citizens. Citizen participation refers to the process of providing civil associations or individuals an opportunity to influence public decisions. Public participation can help in decreasing tension and conflict over public policy decisions. According to the new European Union (EU) '*Clean Energy for all Europeans*' package, one of objectives is to strengthen the rights and ability of citizens to produce, sell, store and consume renewable energy. Engaging local community represent a key approach to success of energy transition. The aim of this paper is to discuss why citizen participation is crucial for energy transition focusing on the examples from Europe. Methodology used in this paper is based on in-depth analysis of relevant research in this topic, and examples from local communities implementing participation in energy transition. Throughout the paper, good examples from European countries which included citizen participation into achieving successful energy transition are mentioned. Increasing citizens' awareness of energy transition, encouraging citizens to connect acting as one stakeholder and increasing implementation tools and mechanisms represent essential benefits for success of energy transition.

Points for Practitioners:

This article provides an overview of important strategic documents of the European Union aimed at achieving the energy transition. The European Green Deal represent a main strategic tool for achieving energy transition in European Union as a response to major global challenges such as climate change and environmental degradation. The focus is on the importance of involving the local community in achieving the energy transition. Citizen participation in the decision-making process represent the foundation of the sustainability of future development. Active involvement of citizens enables the adaptation of energy transition to specific local and regional needs, which is why their impact in the green transition is of great importance. A key to a successful energy transition is increasing citizens' awareness of financial opportunities and encouraging citizens to unite and act as a single unit. Paper also provides the examples of citizen involvement in energy transition from Denmark, Germany and Croatia.

Keywords: Energy Transition, Citizen Participation, Local Governance, Participative Planning