



# **Governing energy transitions in post-communist countries. The case of Polish Nuclear Energy Programme**

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**PACITA, 13-15 March 2013**

# Research on the Polish Nuclear Energy Programme

- Research in action: Regional Forum on Dialogue and Cooperation „Energy and Self-Government” in the Pomerania province
- Created by the regional authorities of Pomerania in 2011
- Goal: to organize and conduct dialogue on energy controversies in Pomerania with various stakeholders
- Involvement of representatives of all levels authorities (commune, district, region and state)



# Who should be responsible for governing the energy transition (in a participatory manner)?

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Key problem:

Readiness and willingness of public authorities to:

- give support
- participate
- acknowledge results
- take the lead: organize and facilitate participatory activities

# Current situation of participatory approach in Poland

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Participation getting more and more popular, but:

- promoted mainly by NGO's
- perceived as a threat to government's plans
- promoted mainly by opponents and critics of nuclear energy
- bottom-up approach

# Polish Nuclear Power Programme

- Started 2009
- November 2011: indication of three potential locations for the first Polish nuclear power plant.







# Polish Nuclear Power Program

- Started 2009
- November 2011: indication of three potential locations for the first Polish nuclear power plant.
- April 2012: beginning of government's information campaign
- since 2011: parallel campaigning led by the investor (PGE)
- 2015: selection of the final NPP's location place





# Local self-government administration

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## „We are the local community”

- expectations of regional and state government „to do something”
- lack of information and contact with central government
- ready to take part in organized activities
- avoid pro/contra-declarations

# Regional self-government

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- Energy issues are too „serious” to be decided by the public

*„Why should people decide on matters, which are crucial for not only the development of the province, but also for the development of the whole country? Isn't it contradictory?”*

- dialogue as a chance to get public acceptance and attract the investment („necessary evil”)

*„[After study visit in Sweden] we realized that such consultations are necessary”*

# Regional state government (Voivodship)

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- Dependent from the central government, waiting for their decisions and instructions.
- Lack of resources and competencies
- Distance

# Central government (Ministry of Economy)

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# Information campaign

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- Run by a consortium of private PR companies, chosen by a tender organized by the Ministry of Economy
- cost: 18 mio PLN
- start: April 2012
- a textbook case of an expert-based approach/deficit model of communication
- similar campaign led by the investor in local communities



# Information campaign

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## Functions:

- informative
- educational
- consultative
- persuasive

# Information campaign

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*„Persuasion is very important, because we want to convince the society to nuclear power”*

*„- It must not be propaganda...  
- or at least it must not be perceived as such...”*

# Information campaign

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## Functions:

- informative
- educational
- consultative
- persuasive

## Goals:

- improving the knowledge of the Polish people about nuclear energy and its benefits
- gaining public support for development of nuclear power
- gaining public acceptance for the construction of NPP in the districts, where the localisation of NPP is considered.



# Consultations

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*„The decision was made in 2009 and we can't tell that we are going now to consult, if it's worth to construct a NPP in Poland.”*

*„Our goals are not to modify or resign from the construction of NPP in result of public consultations.”*

*„Decision regarding energy sector are strategic decisions and must not be taken by people without addequate knowledge and competencies.”*

*„We understand consultations as including local communities into dialogue on the need to build a NPP.”*

# Activities of Ministry of Economy

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- delegating the responsibility to private PR companies
- lack of cooperation with local and regional authorities
- manipulation

*We are not going to publish the results of the last public opinion survey, since it has shown the decrease of public support for NPP by 4 percent. The Ministry does not want to give the opponents of NPP the argument, that „society does not want NPP”.*

# Obstacles for PTA development in Poland: possible hypotheses

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- Theoretical interest exist, but there is no practical interests for participation.
- Informal power relations, clientelism and patronage: participation would open up and put a light on the actual relations of power.
- privatization of strategic competencies of the state
- conflict of interest of experts and scientists

Thank you for  
your attention!

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