



ALPINE DIALOGUE
ENERGY TRANSITION
NATIONAL
AND REGIONAL DATA
SWITZERLAND



Country considered: Switzerland	Submitted by CIPRA Switzerland
<p>1) A) How important is the topic “energy transition” in the current political discussions/discourse of your country? B) What are political decisions and actions in this context? (legal regulations, funding programs, incentives, projects and other initiatives....)</p> <p>a) Very important - regarding to media attention it almost evolved to “daily business”. The term is used by all kind of people for all type of justification up to weighing of interests.</p> <p>b) The Swiss parliament decided two years ago the nuclear phase-out. Based on this decision the “Energy strategy 2050” was elaborated which is now going into review. The parliament will treat it in 2014 and the results (including legal adaptations and implementation) will probably not be available before 2016. As an environmental tax reform could fail (regarding political realities) there are two options presented for incentive taxes on energy (one including a CO2-tax for diesel/gasoline). The actual revenues from the existing CO2-tax are partly used for a funding program to reduce energy consumption of buildings.</p>	
<p>2) A) What topics are in the focus of the discussions? B) What are the biggest conflicts? (e.g. hydropower, wind energy, solar energy, biofuel, wood, energy savings, pumped-storage plants, power lines, oil prices, non-conventional oil and gas like fracking etc. ...) What are considered to be the greatest opportunities?</p> <p>a) A lot of discussions refer to a possible nuclear phase-out and the need of more Renewables to replace the dropped energy. Hydropower, wind and solar are coming up regularly, mostly linked to specific projects.</p> <p>b) Especially hydropower causes a big conflict because it seems to be a well known way to produce energy, and the impacts as well as the amount of concerned stakeholders are often big. Due to higher media attention on some big outstanding projects we risk to “forget” that energy transition is going on daily. In some cases with almost no problems caused by negative impacts, but sometimes also with (definitive) loss of natural resources.</p> <p>Fracking is also a recurring topic in the media, mostly linked to decisions taken in other countries. It is neither forbidden in whole Switzerland, nor in the Cantons (regions). The Green Party claims for a national legal prohibition. Actually recommendations concerning the use of the “underground” are in review. A more Swiss topic is geothermy because there are several projects and also research going on.</p>	
<p>3) What key data and hard facts are available in your country and especially for the alpine region (inside the perimeter of the Alpine convention – if data available)? e.g. number of realized and planned projects on different energy sources, data for future energy needs and future energy production, data relating to the share of different energy sources, data on energy savings.</p> <p>Statistical data is available on all kind of questions, but it is not linked to the perimeter of the Alpine Convention.</p>	
<p>4) A) Who are the key actors in the national discussions? B) Are there national associations/NGOs active with this topic?</p> <p>a) Regarding media the key actors can be found in politics (the topic is well adapted to make a name for oneself). But along with parties there are a lot of organizations (broad variety; from economy as e.g. Economie Suisse to foundations as e.g. SES or AEE). Regarding to more efficiency and decentralized energy production in the future, the key actor will become more and more the population.</p> <p>b) They are - in different ways. Some deal more with one (e.g. aquaviva) or several specific aspects (e.g. SL) of the energy topic, others with the topic as a whole (e.g. WWF Switzerland).</p>	
<p>5) What are the most urgent needs of action in your country from your point of view and why?</p> <p>There have to clarified some very important questions. The energy strategy shows a direction, but is not sufficient. First of all we need to know in detail, at which time nuclear power plants shall be switched off definitively. Actually we leave this decision open - probably by political opportunity to maintain all options (inclusively gas power stations) - and facilitate in the same time an expansion of</p>	

Renewables! By claiming that "Renewables are nature protection" we are even lifting them to national interest and going into a weighing of interests (landscapes and natural values versus production of green energy) - without defining a deadline for energy transition and nuclear phase-out and without any incentive tax and not having fully exploited the potential of efficiency measures. With no deadline there is in addition lack of security on investment which prevents more and adapted investments in a changed and well adapted energy supply service for the future.

Unfortunately at the same time efficient measures are in a lot of fields not sufficient (housing) or almost not existing (transport). One third of the Swiss energy consumption is caused by the mobility sector which has been treated as a holy cow until now. New ideas have been presented, but it will probably be a tough act to follow. In the housing sector 1,64 Mio. of buildings use 49% of the fossile energy and 37% of the electric energy.

Switzerland is highly dependent on imports, as 80% of the needed energy is based on oil, gas and uranium. Regarding the diminution of these resources and increasing prices the necessity to switch to decentralised and renewable energy production is obvious. But first of all efficiency has to be higher, as 40% of our energy consumption is "waste" of energy. Therefore we need a dynamic incentive tax for all fuels.

In the same time we have to discuss in detail which are the aims of the strategy for electricity grids, which have to be designed for security of supply but not for commercial issues. Smart grids and storage possibilities will assure stability even if energy production varies due to natural conditions.

6) How can the national CIPRAs (at local and national level) and CIPRA International (supporting the national level and at international level) get more involved and be active?

It is very difficult to stick out of a very big circle of actors. To be recognized as a competent and valuable player we have to focus on the points of intersection to our main business and to process support. Focussing at Alpine specificities and giving an overall alpine view can also be a good option, because this is often lacking. But we have to be aware, that the energy topic unfortunately seems to be mostly treated only as a national one.

7) Any other thoughts, ideas, proposals?

As the "real" key players will be / have to be the citizens, we have to try to address to them. Unfortunately their knowledge about complex circumstances is sometimes not sufficient and they can have distorted perceptions (e.g. about the impacts of water accumulation on rivers).