




Siting of nuclear waste repositories in Switzerland and Sweden

Stakeholder preferences for the interplay
between technical expertise and societal input

Presentation and discussion of results

Prof. Dr. Roland W. Scholz, Pius Krütli, Yann Blumer, Salome Schori



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ETH-NSSI Case Study 2008

The ETH-NSSI Case Study is a teaching course for students in Environmental Sciences at the ETH Zurich (Switzerland). The course is organized by the chair of Natural and Social Science Interface (NSSI) of Prof. Roland W. Scholz. In 2008 the ETH-NSSI Case Study addressed the issue of nuclear waste disposal; more specifically the focus lay on the decision-making process (DMP) for the site selection and construction of nuclear waste repositories. We aimed at gaining a better understanding of the two cases Sweden and Switzerland, and wanted to investigate country specific preferences of different stakeholders with respect to different aspects of the DMP. Special emphasis was given to the following questions: why, how, when should the public be involved in the siting and construction process?

A postal screening questionnaire assessing person's worldview was designed to select stakeholders. Questionnaire respondents were recruited from the implementer, the regulator (technical/political) and representatives of the public (in Sweden 51, in Switzerland 96 respondents; response rate: >50%). Stakeholders for the subsequent 'Exploration Parcours' (a semi-quantitative procedure integrating a questionnaire and a guided personal interview) were then sampled with contrasting worldviews based on their answers in the screening questionnaire (in S: 31; in CH: 39). Results show areas of agreement and disagreements both between stakeholder groups and countries.

Considering that Sweden and Switzerland are currently at different points with respect to the site selection process (Sweden is close to a decision on a final site for a deep geological repository for high level waste, while Switzerland is about to start a new site selection process for both the disposal of low and intermediate and high level waste) we conclude that there are country specific contexts that do not allow for conclusions by analogy. However, findings indicate a potential for mutual learning from each other.