



The German Site Selection Procedure for a Final Repository for High-level Waste – Characteristics of a Participatory, Self-reflecting and Learning Procedure

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The German Site Selection Act (StandAG) from 2013 and the revised version from 2017 is an example of the modification process of governing the management of high-radioactive waste, since it is an attempt to pay more attention to participatory elements. Formal participation is extended in that sense, that the StandAG stipulates other forms of participation beyond hearings and expert judgements, e.g. continuing formal information and consultation in regional conferences in which citizens of possible regions will be engaged. In addition, the StandAG strengthens the possibility of including informal elements of participation. The German Federal Office for the Safety of Nuclear Waste Management is the designing and regulating body of this participatory procedure. Therefore, this federal authority needs to find ways to implement such a procedure and at the same time ensure its own reflection and learning ability. Based on this, our research question is what kind of characteristics a participatory, self-reflecting and learning procedure needs. Our methodological approach is an analysis of both the legal requirements and the scope for participatory elements (see e.g. Haug & Zeccola 2018; Smeddinck 2017). This analysis is combined with empirical social research on organizational learning processes. Concluding from this and drawing from additional participation literature (e.g. Krohn et al. 2017), we argue for a co-designed participatory procedure to generate and guarantee learning processes over time. This includes critical remarks about possible particular break-downs of authorities after installing a final disposal site and innovative institutional ensembles for long-term stewardship (Kuppler & Hocke 2018). Our aim is to develop recommendations for action which describe characteristics of such a participatory, self-reflecting and learning procedure.