Francis McGowan (Ed.)

European Energy Policies in a Changing Environment

With 28 Tables

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Preface

Across the European Union, energy policy remains a highly controversial issue, despite the relative stability of energy markets and the lack of concern of energy availabilities and prices which marked previous debates on the issue. The debates on nuclear power in Germany, on the coal industry in the UK indicate the continuing resonance of energy policy as a source of dispute at the national level. Moreover, while the urgency which the 1970s energy crises brought to policy discussions may no longer exist, the emergence of new issues, such as the environment and economic liberalisation, have offered new challenges for energy policy.

These issues also arise in a European setting. Early in 1995 the European Commission published a Green Paper on Energy Policy - indeed, as the manuscript was completed the Commission was finalising a White Paper - and the issue will be on the agenda of the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference. The outcome of these discussions is far from clear, but there is no doubt that, in one way or another the European Union will help to shape national energy policies for many years to come.

This book aims to review the development of energy policy at both the national and the European levels. On the basis of a series of country studies, the book aims to show how policies have evolved in the post war period (especially the last twenty years). It outlines how governments' roles have changed in the energy sector and assesses the impact of new policy challenges. The interaction between national and European authorities is also considered, along with a more detailed consideration of the problems which European energy policy encounters.

The book has been written by a team of energy policy experts drawn from the European Network for Energy Research (ENER). This network, established for over a decade and funded by the European Commission, brings together energy policy analysis groups from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. The chapters here have been written by members of the longest established institutes: the Fraunhofer Institute for Innovation and Research, Karlsruhe; the Institute for Energy Economics and Policy, Grenoble; the Institute for Energy Research, Milan; and the Science Policy Research Unit, Sussex. This book is intended as the first in a series of ENER publications.

Although the contributors have debated these issues over many years, there is no common view on how energy policy should develop at the national or the European level. For example, amongst the contributions it is possible to identify those concerned about the absence of a Common European Energy Policy and those who are happy to see such an absence persist. Yet all the contributions strive to inform the debate on energy policy in Europe at both a national and an EU level.

The authors would like to thank their colleagues, both in the ENER network as a whole and in their individual research institutes, for providing a stimulating intellectual environment in which to develop these ideas. The editor would like to thank the authors and colleagues for their support throughout the preparation of this volume. In particular, he would like to thank Catherine Mitchell from the Science Policy Research Unit and Eberhard Jochem from the Fraunhofer Institute for their patient persistence and encouragement.

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