



Citizens, customers, consumers?

The role of users in sewerage services provision in Europe

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Agenda

1. Sewerage provision in Europe: one model?
2. Analysing the role of sewerage users in Europe
 1. Access to information
 2. Public participation
 3. Access to justice
3. Three governance regimes
4. Conclusions and future research

Sewerage services in Europe (I)



Sewerage services in Europe (II)



Sewerage services in Europe (III)

- Cross-national variation
- Private sector participation
 - Full divestiture (EN)
 - Partial participation: Concession, Lease, Management contracts (prevalent in FR, IT, SP)
 - No private sector involvement (SC, NL)
- Management
 - Direct management (NL, FR, SP)
 - Delegated management (EN, SC, SP, FR, IT)

The role of sewerage users

- What features?
 - Access to information
 - Public participation
 - Access to justice

The role of sewerage users

- What instances?
 - Tariff setting
 - Service standards setting (customer standards)
 - Investment decisions (capital investment)
 - Operations

Access to information

1. Regulatory documents are in the public domain
2. Tariff setting and the quality service procedure is regulated
3. Decisions are published
4. Reasoning behind decisions is published
5. Mechanisms exist for users to request information if it is unavailable

Public participation

6. The regulatory framework guarantees the right of consumers to participate in price and customer standards setting
7. The regulatory framework allows for participation of consumers in all spheres (pricing, and service quality)
8. Service users can participate in multilateral stakeholders meetings: for co-decision, consultation or opinion for sewerage price and sewerage standards setting
9. Service users have the right to receive feedback so that they can understand to what extent their views are taken into account

Access to Justice

10. Service users can initiate non-judicial proceedings against sewerage service provider if they fail to perform
11. Service users can initiate non-judicial proceedings against relevant authorities
12. Service users can initiate judicial proceedings against sewerage services providers if they fail to perform
13. Service users can initiate judicial proceedings against relevant authorities
14. Service users have to assume financial costs of bringing cases to court

Three “governance regimes” (I)

- **Regulatory agency approach**
 - England and Scotland
 - Role of “customer”
 - Regulatory framework includes provisions for access to information and participation.
 - Reliance on administrative measures for access to justice.

Three “governance regimes” (II)

- **Administrative contract approach**
 - In municipalities in Italy, Spain and France.
 - Significant changes in last few years for more access to information, participation and access to justice.
 - Role of “consumers”
 - Fewer opportunities for access to information and participation than in the regulatory agency approach.

Three “governance regimes” (III)

- **Self-regulatory approach**

- Netherlands, Spain and France
- Responsible bodies for sewerage services provision are considered to represent citizens’ interests.
- Role of citizens
- Fewer opportunities for consumers to access to information and participate than in the regulatory agency and administrative contract approach.

Conclusions

- Private sector participation and management of sewerage provision define:
 - Responsible bodies
 - Relevant authorities
 - Water operators
- BUT they do not determine the role of water users in sewerage provision.
- Test in other national jurisdictions
- Effective implementation??
- Impact on policy decision-making: prices, customer satisfaction, environmental protection...



THANKS!

(Comments welcome at monicagq@gmail.com)