
STYRIAN ACADEMY for Sustainable Energies
International Summer School 2012

Societal Energy

The global society is quickly approaching a stage where key fossil resources like crude oil and natural gas are reaching their production limits. At the same time global warming requires a dramatic reduction in climate gas emissions, most of them linked to energetic use of fossil resources. There is no doubt about the long term necessity to fundamentally change the global energy system, putting increased emphasis on renewable energy sources.

While academia is full of courses and lectures discussing technological, environmental and economic aspects of this change the discourse about societal implications of such a profound change is less developed. However, it is clear that a stronger reliance on renewable resources is accompanied with an equally profound societal transformation. A change in the resource base of society requires a “re-wiring” of its technological, economical and industrial fundament, creating new power structures, new relations between sectors, new chances but also winners and losers. The high speed of change required by the double pressures of resource scarcity and global environmental problems will only be manageable when society mobilises all disposable capacities, from innovation power to grass roots activity to change in behaviour to long term planning.

The capacity to understand the societal forces at work in the change from fossil to renewable energy systems will become crucial for future leaders in business, politics and academia. For post graduate students it is therefore crucial to include these social aspects of change seamlessly in their projects and research efforts, learning to integrate interdisciplinary knowledge in their solutions.

The STYRIAN ACADEMY International Summer School on Societal Energy 2012 will specifically address this aspect of the change towards sustainable energy systems. It will bring together internationally renowned lecturers from academia, business and public administration and will offer top quality international Master and PhD students a possibility to discuss their particular projects related to societal aspects of the "Energie Wende" with these international experts.

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