



## PRESS INFORMATION

## **Ariadne project discusses energy transition with people from all over Germany**

### **Citizen participation starts with focus groups and extends to a major citizens' summit**

**February 26th, 2021 – What ideas and goals do people have for the energy transition and how can their perspectives be better taken into account in policy deliberations? Across Germany, almost 90 citizens discussed the deployment of renewable energies for electricity and the mobility of the future in the Kopernikus project Ariadne. From local public transport to grid expansion, from electricity costs to jobs: the results of these focus groups are now laying the foundation for an extraordinary learning process between science, politics and society, which aims at improving the translation of various value concepts into policy options.**

The energy transition affects everyone in their everyday lives. This is a challenge for policymakers, because every decision is an expression of values and priorities on the issues. The new Ariadne Report summarizes the extend to which these were discussed by the randomly selected citizens in focus groups on electricity and transport in particular, and also what problems and needs they have on the topics of the energy transition in general.

"People discussed who should feel responsible for ensuring that set climate targets are met, for example, and how burdens could be shared in a fair way," explains Arwen Colell, co-author of the report and policy analyst at the Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change (MCC Berlin), which is part of the Ariadne consortium. "Very different goals were expressed in the discussions concerning the role of the state, but also potential tensions between individual responsibility and personal freedom." Participants expected to have more of a say in the selection of new technologies and burden sharing, for example, when it came to the electricity transition. When it came to mobility, on the other hand, they felt that politicians were more responsible for creating infrastructures that would make it more attractive to switch from cars to public transportation.

#### **Citizens make recommendations? Ariadne follows a different approach**

In contrast to the recently launched Citizens' Council on Germany's Role in the World or the French Climate Citizens' Council and similar undertakings, the views of citizens and scientific research on the energy transition are gradually being brought together in the Kopernikus project Ariadne. The Ariadne experts have a completely new approach in mind: findings on citizens' values and goals are to be continuously integrated and analyzed in research and modeling of scenarios in order to provide the political decision-making level with a more comprehensive overview on the effects of different options and instruments.



To the researchers it is important to point out, that there might be more than one possible solution to a problem and some conflicts might remain unsolved. "Ariadne does not want to persuade anyone or convince anyone of a particular option, but rather wants to include a more comprehensive picture on the different perspectives of society," explains Martin Kowarsch, group leader at MCC Berlin, Ariadne's expert on civic deliberation and an author of the report. "If our research project succeeds in taking people from different backgrounds along this learning process, the deliberation can ultimately contribute to a factual, public-interest-oriented debate," says Kowarsch.

### Value maps help to navigate action paths

The focus group work was organized and evaluated together with colleagues from the strategy consultancy ifok and conducted in video conferences because of the Corona pandemic. The results provide important and indicative information for further scientific debate. Arranged according to values, arguments and contexts, people's statements are allocated in various maps. The resulting cartographic paths of action are meant to assist the development of possible climate protection instruments in the future.

At the same time, the Ariadne Report marks just the beginning of the deliberation process that will continue throughout the project period. In addition to workshops and citizens' conferences, a highlight will be a major summit at which findings from the project will be discussed by citizens in dialogue with politicians, business and science in about two years' time.

#### Further information:

Mareike Blum, Arwen Colell, Julia Hoffmann, Karoline Karohs, Martin Kowarsch, Maren Krude, Miriam Saur, Holger Thiel (2021): Was ist uns wichtig bei Verkehrs- und Stromwende? Bürgerinnen und Bürger sprechen über Herausforderungen und Ziele. Ariadne-Report.

**Weblink to the Ariadne Dossier (in German):** [https://ariadneprojekt.de/media/2021/02/2021\\_Februar\\_Ariadne-Report\\_Fokusgruppen.pdf](https://ariadneprojekt.de/media/2021/02/2021_Februar_Ariadne-Report_Fokusgruppen.pdf)

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**Weblink to project:** <https://ariadneprojekt.de/>

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**In Greek mythology, Ariadne's thread enabled Theseus to safely navigate the labyrinth of the Minotaur. This is the guiding principle of the Ariadne energy transition project. In a consortium of more than 25 scientific partners, Ariadne moderates a joint learning process between politics, business and society in order to provide guidance and orientation for decision makers. We are Ariadne:**

adelphi | Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus – Senftenberg (BTU) | Deutsche Energie-Agentur (dena) | Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW) | Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt (DLR) | Ecologic Institute | Fraunhofer Cluster of Excellence Integrated Energy Systems (CINES) | Guidehouse Germany | Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht | Hertie School | Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Umwelt Nürtingen-Geislingen (HfWU) | ifok | Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln | Institut für Klimaschutz, Energie und Mobilität | Institute For Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) | Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change (MCC) | Öko-Institut | Potsdam-Institut für Klimafolgenforschung (PIK) | RWI – Leibniz-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung | Stiftung 2° - Deutsche Unternehmer für Klimaschutz | Stiftung Umweltenergierecht | Technische Universität Darmstadt | Technische Universität München | Universität Hamburg | Universität Münster | Universität Potsdam | Universität Stuttgart – Institut für Energiewirtschaft und Rationelle Energieanwendung (IER) | ZEW - Leibniz-Zentrum für Europäische Wirtschaftsforschung

### About the Kopernikus projects

The Kopernikus projects form one of the largest German research initiatives on the energy transition. Their aim is to help make Germany climate-neutral by 2050, with a clean, secure and affordable electricity supply. Funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), they develop holistic solutions to achieve the climate targets: Representatives from industry, science and civil society work together in all projects. Over a period of ten years, the Kopernikus projects will work on climate-friendly solutions, from technical applications on an industrial scale to the implementation of policy instruments.

Further information on the Kopernikus projects: <https://www.kopernikus-projekte.de/en/home>