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Social Capital for Energy Efficiency: The Need of Partnership for Policy Integration and Implementation in the case of Bulgaria

The energy intensity in Bulgaria is much higher than the EU average. This has heavy economic and environmental implications that could not be tackled by policymakers alone. Therefore, integration of energy efficiency policy at different societal levels is undeniably necessary. The State, municipalities, entrepreneurs, citizens, academia and NGOs have the common interest in promoting and implementing energy efficiency measures. Thus, there is little doubt that they could and should work in close co-operation for this cause. However, there is no such partnership at present in Bulgaria. In order to test this hypothesis, the authors conducted a survey on the role of Bulgarian environmental NGOs in the promotion of energy efficiency measures. The results show that ties between actors barely exist and thus levels of trust and social capital seem to be very low. This leads to high costs and poor results in the implementation of energy efficiency policy. Based on the survey, the paper aims to answer the question why this co-operation is actually avoided by the different actors. It further provides some recommendations for the strengthening of social networks and the induction of communication and trust to assist fruitful partnership.