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I have progressively realised, as an observer of the world energy scene, that energy policies both in OECD countries and other parts of the world are very often inconsistent or even contradictory, and this should be a starting point. Why is this the case? The first reason is that energy has many characteristics; it is a private good that you can buy, whether a tonne of fuel oil or a kilowatt of electricity; it is a common good because it has to be transported through networks, which cannot be multiplied; it is a geopolitical good, since from time to time there is a possibility of either buyers or sellers having an impact on the prices or the supply and demand; it is also a redistributive good, because it is very easy to subsidise the consumption of poor people through energy commodities.

The second reason is that we are confronted at the same time by the scarcity of world resources and a major risk concerning the climate. The last years have shown that scarcity is probably less important than climate but in the public debate the two are very often mixed. For instance for energy efficiency nobody says that investing in it is interesting if the costs are less than the value of the savings. Governments have difficulty in defining energy policies because different aspects of this policy are in fact more or less spread among many departments, social, external affairs, industrial policy, energy policy itself in the stricter meaning of the words, and so on. Among the various objectives they have, it is difficult to make consistent choices.

A first tendency is to follow public opinion in an age where democracy is dominated by the media. A second is to stimulate growth in a time of near-recession in the OECD. A third is to fight unemployment and poverty, for instance the idea of using energy as a commodity to fight poverty (which is going back to the ideas of the Swedish economists of the welfare state after the First World War, with tickets for bread). Finally, the last objective is to contribute to the stability of the climate.

It is not very useful to take the OECD countries one by one: for instance the European Union has 27 energy policies and, in addition, a policy at the level of the Union; the United States cannot reach a decision at the Federal level between the divergent views of the President and the Congress. On the international level after the long list of conferences on climate change, from Copenhagen to Cancun, from Cancun to Durban, from Durban to Doha, the results are disappointing.

Therefore, I shall make just one recommendation, which might be a dream, that a neutral agency, which for the OECD might be the IEA, with a mandate from the G20 for a broader set of countries could audit energy policy, but in the following sense, which is not the most common. It could consider the future costs incurred by these policies, adding the cost of the damage to the climate and the environment, but also taking into account the effect of learning curves for new technologies and also the economic and social profits. I think we would learn a lot from comparative audits of this kind about the reality facing governments, and understand better where we are in view of the policies which have been adopted, the announcements that have been made, and what could be done in order to improve the appropriateness of the fight to preserve the climate.