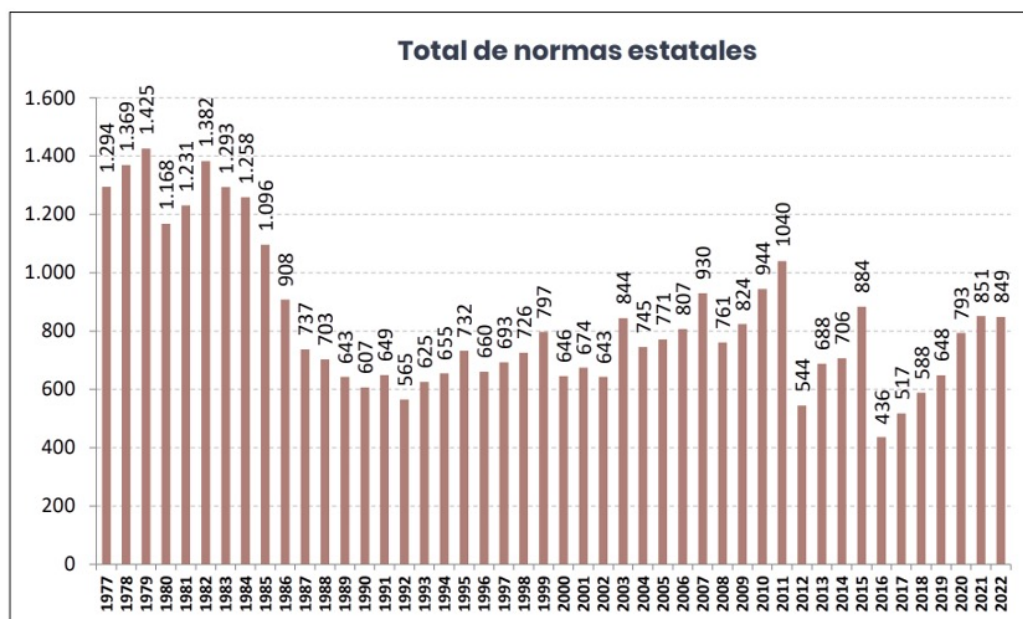


LAWS, THE MEANS TO ENERGY TRANSITION; SOCIAL CHANGE, THE SURE WAY FORWARD

Posted on 17/01/2024 by Naider

Laws and regulations are one of the main mechanisms that modern society has **to establish the frame of reference that regulates the behaviours** "accepted" by society, theoretically in favour of the common welfare and thus, guide our individual and collective actions towards the necessary path. **Western society firmly believes in its power**, almost as if in times past it were religion, defining the dividing line between Good and Evil.

One only has to look at the number of regulations that the Spanish state, both as a whole and at regional level, and in line with the European trend, publishes annually. According to the annual "Regulatory Production" report that CEOE has been publishing since 2015, in [2021](#) the number of state regulations published increased by 7.3%, consolidating the upward trend of the last 5 years. In [2022](#), however, there was a slight decrease, but it was still the third year with the highest number of regulations published in the last decade.



Source: BOE. Elaboration: Informe Producción normativa 2022.

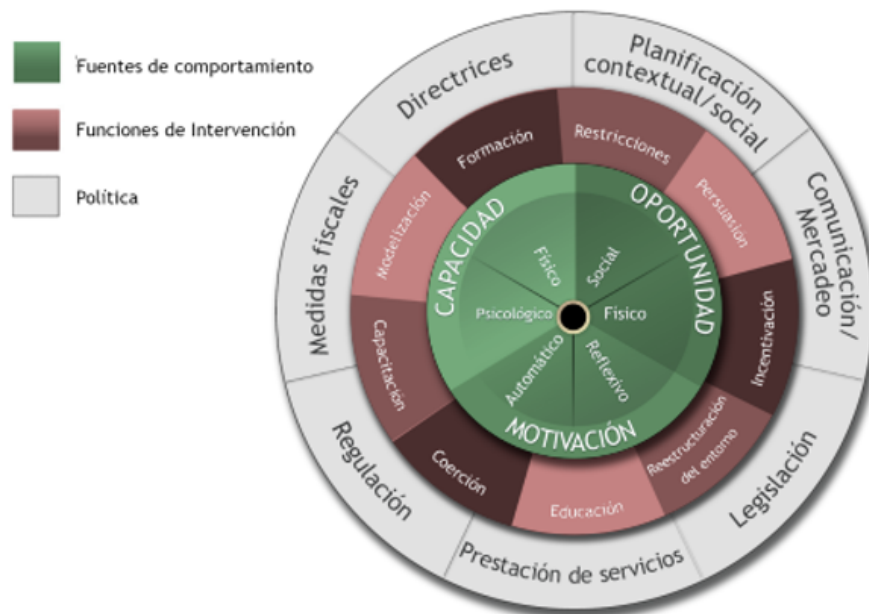
The drafting of these regulations has been **a reactive measure**, with the aim of **responding to the needs that society has been demanding** during their course and evolution in order to address certain problems that have arisen. A clear example of this is environmental legislation, which is increasingly present in regulations, linked to the climate emergency and the need to limit and regulate pollution and biodiversity loss at different levels. But are these tools effective on their own?

In climate and environmental matters, administrations are obliged to draw up a myriad of plans, responding to the different needs that arise: [energy plans](#), waste plans, mobility plans, etc. In response to the requirements of the law, usually later than the law itself indicates, they set objectives and limit certain actions, which help to reduce the environmental impacts we produce, but **generally without a basic sensitivity and awareness**. And this is reflected in the final results: we pass the problems from one side of the chain to the other, or we achieve the objectives, but much slower than necessary.

For example, an administration's fleet energy plan can comply with the law by switching from fossil combustion vehicles to alternative fuel vehicles (PHVE, HVE and electric). However, if this fleet is converted to plug-in hybrid vehicles (apart from the debate on whether they are really more environmentally friendly), but is not accompanied by an optimisation of routes and an automatic

habit of charging the vehicles by users for use in the electric version, it will be of little use for practical purposes. But it will have fulfilled the requirement imposed by [Law 4/2019 on Energy Sustainability of the Basque Autonomous Community](#).

Or in the midst of the [energy transition](#), it is imperative to switch from fossil fuel energy sources to clean and renewable sources. However, **this transition is taking place without promoting a change in the model of social consumerism and therefore of energy consumption**, with almost all responsibility for improvement falling on the energy efficiency that technology is providing. And, furthermore, **without a change in the business model** of the energy suppliers and distributors: the same fossil fuel macro-companies creating mega wind and solar farms, in many cases bordering on legality in terms of environmental impact assessment, as well as continuing to promote a dependent, delocalised and undemocratic energy model. **No just transition.**



Behavioural change wheel. Source: [EUFIC](#)

Laws are a means of change, but not the solution. However, as is the case with technology today, all hope for a possible solution to the problem rests on them, without **complementing it with the main tool for its success: the paradigm shift or change in social behaviour**. Without working on the basic pillar of awareness-raising and sensitisation in a coherent and holistic way, the change in social behaviour will not happen, neither in citizens, nor in the political class, nor in companies. And therefore, the efforts made will not be enough to achieve results that will provide solutions to our current problems. **Laws are a means, behavioural change is the solution.**

Main picture: Christian Lue in Unsplash

