

Conference
**“The Role of Governments and International Organisations
in Promoting Energy Security”**
Brussels, 25 October 2006



Opening remarks by Mr Henning Christophersen,
Chairman of the Energy Charter Conference

Thank you, Minister De Gucht.

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests, it is a pleasure for me to say a few opening words at this Conference on behalf of the Energy Charter Conference.

We do face challenges to international energy security. During 2006 we have seen tight capacity in energy markets, consistently high prices, disruptions to supply, and further evidence of the urgent need to address the environmental impact of energy use.

Working individually and also collectively through international organisations, governments can meet these challenges, but they have to ensure that the right legal and regulatory framework is in place. From the perspective of the Energy Charter, the right framework is one that is open to investment, innovation and trade, and one that encourages energy efficiency.

It is for national governments to put such a framework in place, but international organisations also have an important role to play. The distinctive contribution of the Energy Charter Treaty is to provide an energy-specific binding instrument of international law that can support the relations between national governments, based on the common interests of producing, transit and consumer countries. I welcome the fact that this contribution was recognised by G8 leaders at their summit in St Petersburg.

The natural focus for the Energy Charter's work is on Eurasia, and I am very pleased to see so many member states participating here today. The role of the Charter is evolving. In the Western part of Eurasia, a feature of the last fifteen years has been the enlargement of the European Union, and convergence towards

the Union's economic model by countries seeking EU accession. The Energy Charter Treaty has played an important part in this process.

But I believe that a major challenge for the future will be a different one. It will be to find an accommodation between the rules of an enlarged European market and the positions of countries that are not in line for EU accession. This dialogue will be particularly important since the latter group includes major suppliers and transit countries of energy to the EU. In my view, the Energy Charter will be an important part of this dialogue, because it provides a forum in which all the countries concerned can meet on an equal footing.

In the Eastern part of Eurasia, there are relatively few cross-border pipelines so far, but international energy trade in this region is set to increase dramatically. The oil pipeline between Kazakhstan and China is the first new link of this kind, but I am sure that we will see more such projects in the years to come.

The Energy Charter Treaty provides a unique framework to mitigate risks for such projects, and this is one reason for the increasing interest of Asian countries in the Energy Charter. I am pleased to announce that the meeting of the Charter's Governing Body next month will consider a request from Pakistan for accession to the Treaty. Earlier this year, Afghanistan became the latest Asian country to join the Charter as observer, alongside existing observers, including China, Korea, Iran and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. As Chairman of the Charter Conference, I strongly support the growing Asian dimension of the Energy Charter process.

Finally, I would like to say a word regarding the public debate on the Energy Charter during this year. Of course, I welcome the growing attention to the Charter process and the debate about its contribution to energy security. Much of this debate is very well-informed, but, at the same time, there are some persistent misunderstandings about the Treaty that have appeared on all sides. That is why we in the Energy Charter are trying to provide all the necessary information about the Treaty and the work that the Charter is doing.

With this information at hand, I am convinced that you will find that the Treaty provides a balanced framework for investment, trade, transit and energy efficiency that is in the interest of all our member countries, consuming, transit and producer countries alike.

Thank you for your attention.