Second meeting of the Strategy Group this year
17 June 2016

The second meeting of the Energy Charter Strategy Group of 2016 took place on 15 June 2016 chaired by Ms. Carmen Sofia Sanz Estébanez. Delegates dealt with different issues among which how to improve access to information and improved transparency, the Japanese Chairmanship (who at the same time Chairs the G-7), the G-7 objectives regarding energy and the role of the Energy Charter in implementing such objectives.

Energy Charter Industry Advisory Panel meets in Baden
28 June 2016

On 28 June 2016, the Energy Charter Industry Advisory Panel (IAP) held its second meeting of 2016 in Baden, Switzerland. The meeting was hosted by AXPO (shareholder in Trans Adriatic Pipeline and an IAP member). The main theme of the meeting was: Private Sector engagement in gas infrastructure in the context of diversification of corridors and sources in Europe - The case of the Southern Gas Corridor.

Secretary General’s Activities

Secretary General meets with Amb. Keiichi Katakami
3 June 2016

On 2 June 2016, the Energy Charter Secretary General, Dr Urban Rusnák, paid a visit to Amb. Keiichi Katakami (Ambassador of Japan to the European Union and Vice-Chair of the Energy Charter Conference). They discussed the successful expansion process of the Energy Charter as well as the preparations for the Annual meeting in Tokyo in November under the Japanese Chairmanship.

Embassy of Afghanistan visits Energy Charter Secretariat
9 June 2016

On 9 June 2016, a delegation from the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the Kingdom of Belgium paid a courtesy visit to the Energy Charter Secretariat. The delegation led by the Chargé d’Affaires Mr Ahmad Seyar Maaliji met with the Energy Charter Secretary General, Dr Rusnák. They discussed bilateral cooperation issues, including deeper involvement in the Energy Charter Process, and the implementation of infrastructure projects such as TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline) and CASA-1000.
Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák meets with Amb. Vladimir Norov
9 June 2016

On 9 June 2016, the Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák met with Amb. Vladimir Norov, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Kingdom of Belgium. They discussed perspectives of bilateral cooperation between Uzbekistan and the Energy Charter.

Secretary General meets Minister of Natural Resources and Energy of Swaziland
24 June 2016

The Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák met with H.E. Honourable Senator Jabulile Mashwama, the Minister of Natural Resources and Energy of the Kingdom of Swaziland. The Southern African country is determined to move forward in the Energy Charter Process and the Energy Charter Secretariat in Brussels is currently hosting a senior official from Mbabane working on accession reports.

Secretary General’s trip to China
27-30 June 2016

On 27 June 2016, the Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák attended the 2016 Asia Energy Cooperation Forum in Chongqing, China. On 28 June 2016, he attended the second day of the 2016 Asia Energy Cooperation Forum in Chongqing, where he delivered a speech on the relevance of the Energy Charter and its principles, particularly within the context of China’s "One Belt One Road Initiative". On 29 and 30 June 2016, the Dr Rusnák attended the second G20 Energy Ministerial Meeting in Beijing and delivered a speech echoing other participants’ call for universal access to affordable, sustainable and secured energy. He highlighted the Energy Charter as an essential part of the policy toolkit to answer energy challenges identified by COP21.

Energy Charter Secretariat’s Other Activities & Events

Energy Charter holds specialised Information Training in Tehran
2 June 2016

The Energy Charter Secretariat Knowledge Centre held a highly specialised training information session at the Ministry of Energy of Iran on 1 June 2016. The topic of the event was "Driving energy investments and cooperation in a changing world: benefits and opportunities for deeper engagement with the Energy Charter."

Energy Charter delivers a panel on energy efficiency policies
16 June 2016

On 16 June 2016, the Energy Charter Secretariat jointly organised a panel session attended by approximately fifty participants titled 'Energy Efficiency Policies:
Challenges, Data, Results, and Lessons Learnt’ with the Association Technique Energie Environment (ATEE) during the EU Sustainable Energy Week in Brussels.

Predictable rules to mobilise sustainable energy investments towards universal access and energy transition discussed 17 June 2016

On Tuesday, 14 June 2016, the Energy Charter Secretariat hosted the first of a series of Expert Meetings on “Removing pre-investment barriers in energy” in Brussels. The meeting was attended by 32 representatives of governments from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, the Caucasus, Europe and Latin America, as well as of regional and international organisations.

Energy Charter participates in SADC energy meetings in Botswana 21 June 2016

The Energy Charter Secretariat was invited by the Secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to participate in the meeting of the SADC Senior Officials responsible for energy in Gaborone, Botswana. This was an important opportunity to present the International Energy Charter and its relevance to SADC. Tanzania and Swaziland who are already observer countries to the Energy Charter Conference, were invited to share their experiences with other Member States on the benefits and challenges associated with the Energy Charter.

Secretariat participates in the Tokyo International Conference for Africa Development in Banjul, Gambia 23 June 2016

The Deputy Secretary General Amb. Selim Kuneralp and Patrice Dreiski, Senior Expert for Outreach and Expansion, attended the Tokyo International Conference for Africa Development (TICAD) meeting in Banjul, Gambia on 15-17 June 2016.

A New Dawn for the Energy Charter Treaty by Scott Sutherland, Knowledge Centre

The sun is reshaping the way the world produces electricity. Today, solar photovoltaic (PV) makes up around 3.5% of the world’s installed electricity capacity, and the industry is growing at a blazing speed. Solar energy is no fad, that much is clear, even to the most diehard fossilite. The world’s entire installed capacity of solar PV was a minor 5 gigawatts (GW) a decade ago, and today that number has risen to over 227 GW, with 50 GW installed in 2015 alone. This explosive growth rate is due to technological advancements and, most importantly, cost. In the last 5 years, the price of solar panels has dropped by an astounding 80%. This, along with China’s insatiable appetite for energy, is helping the industry reach new heights.

However, in the developing world, the glowing potential of solar energy has yet to hit its stride. Solar power production requires substantial foreign direct investment (FDI). For instance, India’s ambitious plan to go from 5 GW to 100 GW of installed capacity by 2022, will require approximately $100 billion of foreign investment, according to its government. In a country where recent
contract awards suggest solar can compete head on with coal in terms of price (although, not in terms of 24 hour availability), the financial incentives are evident. But attracting foreign investment, expertise and technology could prove to be the real challenge. This FDI is also critical for other components of a modern, green-compatible energy system, including transit and trade infrastructure.

For developing countries, the ability to attract this level of FDI is dependent upon two essential criteria: investment protection and a stable regulatory environment. Investors must have confidence that foreign governments are committed to honouring their commitments. Companies need to be able to count on non-discrimination and have protection from various political risks and uncertainties. Investing in renewable energy projects involves high upfront capital costs and low operating costs, making the long term aspect of the investment essential. For that, governments must display a commitment to regulatory stability and trustworthiness in order to attract companies and investment flows.

One option available to help governments attract this crucial investment comes in the form of a treaty. The Energy Charter Treaty is designed to attract investment by providing protection and cooperation under a common legal framework. Originally signed in 1994, the Treaty connected Europe’s hungry energy demand and the former Soviet Union’s vast hydrocarbon supply. It focused on providing investment protection and fair rules on trade and transit of energy, thereby unlocking huge amounts of FDI. Today, it remains the only multi-lateral investment treaty designed precisely for energy and energy related issues. The inherent added value of the Treaty is to strengthen the rule of law in the energy sector by promoting stable regulation and market confidence. For new signatory countries, the Treaty sends positive investment signals abroad and enhances their global standing as attractive places for energy development.

Today, the same logic that unleashed investment and technology in the former USSR can be applied to many sun rich, cash strapped nations. One of the shining aspects of the Energy Charter Treaty is that the architects constructed a legal text broadly enough to include modern energy issues such as renewables. Going back to its core, the Treaty can once again be harnessed to unlock vast energy potential, but this time from the light above, rather than the liquid below.

Finally, solar, forward-looking infrastructure development, and energy access was recently highlighted at the G20 Energy Ministerial Meeting in China, in which China’s Vice Premier, Zhang Gaoli, noted that energy must be sustainable, shareable and affordable. The Energy Charter Treaty, with its established provisions on energy transit, trade, and the investment needed to meet the challenges of the 21st century, is well positioned to help make these goals a reality.

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iii) The Economist, April 16th 2016. The new sunbathers

iv) Reuters, January 2nd 2015. India’s Modi raises solar investment target to $100bln by 2022

v) Financial Times, January 4th 2016. Investors look to India as the next solar power

vi) https://twitter.com/SecGenEnCharter/status/748031474402746373