“Today the Energy Charter Treaty is a unique legally binding instrument regulating energy transit, as reflected in the 2014 report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled “Reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation (A/69/309)”.

Signing the International Energy Charter that currently unites over 80 countries worldwide is the first step towards acceding to the Treaty, which aims to strengthen legal norms in the energy sector by applying uniform and binding rules for all participants and minimizing the risks associated with investments and the energy trade.”

On 28 August 2017, Belgium’s Director-General for Energy, Ms Nancy Mahieu at the Federal Public Service for Economy, received Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák. The Secretary General informed Ms Mahieu on the relocation of the Secretariat’s premises, the current developments in the Expansion of the Energy Charter Process and the modernization of the Energy Charter Treaty, including its transit and investment protection provisions. In this context particular attention was given to the governance and pathway for the modernization process, especially as the Energy Charter constituency is strongly globalizing. Also non-legal instruments to enhance the business climate for energy were discussed, such as the active participation of countries in a new publication of the Energy Charter Secretariat, the Energy Investment Risk Assessment.

Energy Charter Secretary General meets Dutch Director-General for Energy, Sandor Gaastra

On 22 August 2017, in the run-up to the formation of a new Dutch government, Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák visited the Netherlands. A high-level meeting was held with Sandor Gaastra, Director-General for Energy, Telecommunications and Competition, and representatives of the Dutch Ministries of Economic Affairs and Foreign Affairs.

DG Gaastra expressed his support for the Energy Charter Process. The main topics addressed during this meeting were the ongoing modernisation process of the Energy Charter Treaty, bilateral investment agreements, the historical role of the Netherlands as the founding father of the Energy Charter Process, and depository country of the International Energy Charter Declaration. Other topics addressed were the preparation of a new publication – the Energy Investment Risk Assessment –, the progress of the Energy Charter Secretary-General’s Vision Plan, including the recent restructuring of the Energy Charter Secretariat. Moreover, in the context of the current energy transition of the country and its international position, the role of the Energy Charter Treaty and its related instruments were addressed. It was concluded that further cooperation and modernisation will be discussed at Ministerial level once the new government coalition is established.

Extract of the outcome document of the Ashgabat International Energy Charter Forum, annexed to the letter from Chargé d’affaires of the Permanent mission of Turkmenistan to the United Nations to the UN Secretary General, United Nations General Assembly, 71st session, A/71/934
Secretary General welcomes the contribution of the former seconded expert

The Energy Charter Secretary General welcomed the contribution of Ms Margarita Nieves Zárate from Colombia, a former seconded expert, for reproducing the article published in “Clean Energy - Law and Regulation - Climate Change, Energy Union, and International Governance” edited by Vicente Lopez-Ibor Mayor in 2017. The article “The relevance of the Energy Charter to develop renewable energies in Latin America” reflects the realities of interactions between the Energy Charter Process and Latin America, as well as the relevance of the Energy Charter Treaty to promote renewable energy source worldwide. Energy Charter Process is an important instrument to foster investments, trade and transit, cooperation and energy efficiency worldwide.

Ms Margarita Nieves Zárate was seconded at the Energy Charter Secretariat from the Agencia Nacional de Hidrocarburos (Republic of Colombia) in 2016. Today, Margarita Nieves Zárate conducts researches at the university of Groningen on the “Legal framework for Offshore Hydrocarbon Exploration and Production: Challenges and Opportunities for Colombia”. The university of Groningen and Energy Academy Europe concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Energy Charter Secretariat in 2013 to strengthen cooperation and to promote knowledge related to all energy matters.

ENERGY CHARTER SECRETARIAT’S ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

Concluding Document of the Ashgabat International Energy Charter Forum released at UN General Assembly

At the request of the Government of Turkmenistan, the Concluding Document of the Ashgabat International Energy Charter Forum “Towards a Multilateral Framework Agreement on Transit of Energy Resources” was released in the official languages of the United Nations as an official document of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly and thereby circulated among all UN Member States.

The Ashgabat International Energy Charter Forum was held in close cooperation with the Government of Turkmenistan and the Energy Charter Secretariat on 30-31 May 2017. The Forum addressed operational, regulatory and legal aspects of energy transit, including natural gas, oil and electricity. More than 80 participants, including Ministers, high-level officials and leading experts from international energy and financial organisations, and energy companies attended the Forum. Organisation of this event was a positive step paving the way towards an effective mechanism on transit of energy sources, which took into account the interests of all countries including energy producers, consumers, and transit countries.

Gambia becomes the most recent Signatory in the Energy Charter Family

On 11 August 2017, the Republic of The Gambia joined as a signatory of the International Energy Charter and was granted observer status to the Energy Charter Conference. The political approval and confirmation by the Government
of The Gambia’s membership was received by Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák through the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, Mr M. O. Nije.

The Government of Gambia, by its decision to become signatory of the International Energy Charter, has shown its unparalleled commitment to developing and strengthening global energy cooperation and collaboration of mutual interest between The Gambia and the International Energy Charter. The Gambia has also expressed its determination to enhance its energy environment and policies in order to attract more investment in its energy sector.

International Energy Charter contributes to the EuroSchool in Azerbaijan

On 21–24 August 2017, the International Energy Charter contributed to the second edition of the summer EuroSchool organised by EU Neighbours East project responsible for the 5th component of the EU4Energy Programme. This dialogue-driven and interactive activity was initiated by the Delegation of the European Union to Azerbaijan in the framework of the Young European Neighbours network. The aim was to raise further awareness about the European Union with a special focus on energy.

Legal Coordinator for the Knowledge Centre, Vitali Hiarouski, contributed to the event by holding an interactive learning session on sustainable development, energy, and its international legal framework in coordination with officials of the EU4Energy programme. The Energy Charter Secretariat’s representative spoke about the International Energy Charter as an implementing partner of the EU4Energy programme. Particular emphasis was made on the first-year work programme in Azerbaijan.

The EU4Energy programme is an EU financed initiative that supports evidence-based energy policy making and energy efficiency in the region of the Eastern Partnership and Central Asia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan). The Energy Charter Secretariat provides technical assistance to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus to strengthen the legal framework and stimulate investment in the countries’ energy sector.

The International Energy Charter visits Mozambique

The International Energy Charter accepted the joint invitation by the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Japan and Mozambique Mr. Taro Kono and Mr. Oldemiro Júlio Marques Baloi respectively to attend the Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD) held on 24–25 August 2017 in Maputo. The Ministerial Meeting was formally opened by the President of Mozambique Mr Filipe Jacinto Nyusi. TICAD co-organisers were the African Union, the UN, the UNDP and the World Bank.
The meeting conclusions outlined that reform efforts by governments were indispensable to unlock private investment in Africa. Several policy priorities emerged from the discussion, including structural reforms, quality infrastructure and a stable legal system for business. In this regard it must be noted that the International Energy Charter provides a stable, transparent and fair framework for sustainable energy investment, trade and transit, with so far more than 85 signatories across the world.

Dr Ernesto Bonafé, Expert on Regulation and Coordinator for Expansion, representing the Energy Charter Secretariat in Maputo, met with senior officials at the Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy of Mozambique: Mr Pascoal Bacela, National Director for Energy, Ms Maria Marcelina Joel, Director of Legal Affairs, Mr Henrique Cossa, Minister’s Adviser, and Mr Anucencio Bouene, Head of Department for Policy and Pricing and former secondee to the Secretariat in Brussels. The meeting was an excellent opportunity to discuss about global investment trends and the increasing participation of African countries in the International Energy Charter, which is open to Mozambique’s future signature.

The International Energy Charter contributes to the regional energy cooperation in the Northeast Asia

The Energy Charter Secretariat took part in the Joint Conference on Northeast Asia Regional Power Interconnection which was held in Irkutsk, Russian Federation, on 29-31 August. The Conference was jointly organised by UN ESCAP, China Electricity Council and Melentiev Energy Systems Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The event brings together key stakeholders of the region, including China, Japan, Mongolia, South Korea and Russian Federation, as well as international organisations such as ADB, UN ECSAP and International Energy Charter.

The International Energy Charter contributed to the session on the Intergovernmental/multilateral arrangements for power interconnections. Mr Kanat Botbaev, Transit Expert, in his intervention, stressed the role of the International Energy Charter in facilitating regional energy cooperation in the Northeast Asia.