Beginning on the 1 January 2018, Romania will assume the Chairmanship of the Energy Charter Conference for the year. Mr. Robert TUDORACHE (State Secretary, Ministry of Energy Romania) has been appointed as the Chair of the Conference. Vice-Chairs will be Ms. Elena POPESCU (Romania), Mr. Vepa HAJIYEV (Turkmenistan), and Ms. Dorina CINARI (Albania).

Romania aims to contribute to the global energy dialogue in order to strengthen international energy cooperation on key issues pertinent to Romania and other Energy Charter Conference members. Special attention will be paid to the priorities of improving energy efficiency and combating energy poverty. These topics will highlight the 29th Ministerial Meeting of the Energy Charter Conference to be held in Bucharest on 27-28 November 2018.

SECRETARY GENERAL’S ACTIVITIES

Discussions on the Energy Charter Treaty Modernisation in Belarus

On Wednesday 13 December 2017, during his visit to Minsk, Energy Charter Secretary General Dr. Urban Rusnák held a meeting with Belorussian officials to discuss the potential need and/or usefulness of updating, clarifying or modernising the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT). From the Belorussian side, under the lead of Deputy Minister of Energy Mr Vadim Zakrevsky, officials from the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Justice, Department on Energy Efficiency and Belneftekhim state company, took part in the discussion.

Belarus, who currently applies the ECT provisionally, stressed the need to take into account its membership in the Eurasian Economic Union. Therefore, the involvement of the Eurasian Economic Union into modernisation exercise is desirable.
ENERGY CHARTER SECRETARIAT’S ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

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Secretariat thanks seconded expert for the contribution to the year of the Turkmenistan Chairmanship 2017

Mr. Berdimammet Esenmammedov was a seconded expert from Turkmenistan who worked at the Energy Charter Secretariat beginning in March till the end of November 2017. Secondees are government representatives working at the Secretariat and remain employed by their own national body.

The objective of the programme is to provide the relevant government experts with an opportunity for on-the-job training in an international environment and first-hand experience at the Secretariat. The Programme also aims at broadening the expertise of such professionals in fields covered by the Energy Charter Treaty and at strengthening their international experience by working on a concrete project.

Mr. Esenmammedov, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, was tasked with coordination and communication responsibilities with the government of Turkmenistan in preparation of the 28th Energy Charter Conference in Ashgabat. He was also actively engaged into the transit activities of the Secretariat in particular the Ashgabat International Energy Charter Forum in May.

Delegation of the World Petroleum Council Iranian National Chapter Youth Committee visits the Secretariat

In the light of growing cooperation between Iran and the International Energy Charter, representatives of the Iranian Oil Industry Youth Committee in the World Petroleum Council visited the Energy Charter Secretariat on December 13, 2017. The Iranian delegation participated in a specially organised workshop by the Secretariat’s Knowledge Centre in order to provided knowledge about the Energy Charter Process and the Energy Charter Treaty.

Austria’s Deputy Permanent Representative to the EU welcomes the International Energy Charter

On the 21 December 2017, Energy Charter Secretary General Dr. Urban Rusnák met with Austria’s Deputy Permanent Representative to the European Union, Ambassador Thomas Oberreiter, in Brussels.

The parties discussed upcoming activities of the International Energy Charter, particularly those that will take place during Austria’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union from July to December next year. Of significant importance will be coordination of the EU’s input for possible modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty. Dr. Oberreiter confirmed Austria’s commitment to working with Romania, Chair of the Energy Charter Conference for 2018, in order to facilitate coordination of the EU28’s input to these discussions.

Vacancies

Junior Legal Assistant

To take up duties at the beginning of 2018, the Energy Charter Secretariat is inviting applications for the position of Junior Legal Assistant.

In the office of the Secretary General and under the supervision of the General Counsel, the incumbent will be required to cover a wide range of legal work in International Administrative Law.

Detailed job description: http://www.energycharter.org/who-we-are/secretariat/jobsvacancies/junior-legal-assistant/

Applications (a letter of motivation and an updated Curriculum Vitae) should be submitted to the Assistant Secretary General of the Energy Charter Secretariat as soon as possible, to arrive no later than 2 January 2018: recruitment@encharter.org
INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CHARTER FOR EU4ENERGY*

High-level round table on the investment climate of Belarus

On 14 December 2017 in Minsk, Belarus, the Energy Charter Secretariat and the Ministry of Energy co-organised a high-level roundtable on investment in the energy sector of Belarus. The purpose of the event was to discuss ways to improve the investment climate of the country in order to increase the inflow of investment in the country’s energy sector as a whole. Overall, more than 25 representatives from government institutions, the energy industry, the business community and international organisations participated, offering their insights on the ways forward.

The Energy Charter Secretariat presented a tailored assessment of the policy, legal and regulatory risks that may deter investments in the energy sector of Belarus. According to the Energy Charter Secretary General, Dr. Urban Rusnák, Belarus provides a moderate policy, legal and regulatory environment for investment in the energy sector. The extensive country risk profile which was discussed during the high-level roundtable is based on the methodology developed under the Energy Charter Secretariat’s initiative called the Energy Investment Risk Assessment (EIRA).

On the basis of this assessment the Energy Charter Secretariat made recommendations for further improvement of Belarus’s investment climate. These recommendations include (1) setting up a permanent inter-ministerial body to better coordinate policy-making that pertains to energy investments, (2) establishing a permanent forum or mechanism for effective consultation with investors, (3) reinforcement of the independence and transparency of the regulatory body and (4) establishing an ombudsman and mediation practices to prevent and resolve potential disputes or grievances involving foreign investors.

Deputy Minister of Energy Mr Vadim Zakrevsky embraced the outcomes of the discussion and concluded that implementation of the recommendations and conclusions is to be considered for the EU4Energy 2018 Work Programme.

Belarus: A Roadmap Adopted for Scaling up Investments in Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

On 14 December 2017 in Minsk, Belarus, the third meeting of the “Task-Force for Scaling up Investments in Energy Efficiency” took place. The roundtable comprised representatives from the Ministry of Energy, state-owned energy companies, the private sector, international finance organisations and other relevant state agencies that cover the energy sector.
While the previous task-force meetings in 2017 sought to define and discuss the drivers and deterrents to investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy in Belarus, this cumulative final meeting presented and adopted a roadmap outlining specific steps that Belarus could take to move towards an environment that is more conducive to attracting investments.

With a timeframe up to 2030, the roadmap focuses specifically on the electricity and industry sectors. For industry and SMEs, this entails developing an energy services market and promoting ISO 50001 energy management standards. For the electricity sector and renewables, this involves preparing a standard investment contract, finalising the draft electricity market law, hammering out technical regulations creating distinct wholesale and retail markets, and proposing ways to efficiently regulate independent power generators. All of this will be accompanied by a series of expert consultations, sessions for sharing best practices and training workshops that are intended to steer Belarus towards solutions that have proven to work in EU countries.

These activities and discussions are part of EU4Energy Governance – a project funded by the European Union, which provides support to Eastern Partnership countries in strengthening their energy sectors’ legislative and regulatory frameworks. An EU4Energy implementing partner, the Energy Charter Secretariat works closely with the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus to provide technical assistance in promoting energy security, energy market reforms and sustainable energy.

*Funded under the EU4Energy Initiative of the European Union*