The Energy Charter Secretariat hosted the inaugural meeting of the Implementation Group.

On 26 January 2017, the Energy Charter Secretariat hosted the inaugural meeting of the Implementation Group, which resulted from the recent merging of the Investment Group, the Trade and Transit Group and the Energy Efficiency Group. During the meeting, the Energy Charter Secretariat presented the progress of projects that could have a beneficial impact on the investment decision and policy-making process, such as eliminating barriers to the entry and establishment of energy investments and an Investment Facilitation toolbox in the energy sector. The delegates also discussed the main findings of the first phase of the pilot project on Energy Investment Risk Assessment. The attendants had the opportunity to learn more about the United Nations Convention on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration by a representative from the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), who presented the significance and the impact of this new legal instrument on the international investment protection regime. The meeting was concluded with presentations on the Energy Charter Secretariat’s involvement in and contribution to the EU4Energy Programme and on the status of the energy efficiency reviews of Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. The inaugural meeting constitutes only the first of a series of Implementation Group meetings that are scheduled for the rest of the year with the next one taking place in March 2017.

SECRETARY GENERAL’S ACTIVITIES

The International Energy Charter delivers a lecture at the International Energy Forum (IEF) headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

On the 12 January 2017, the Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák delivered an informative lecture at the International Energy Forum (IEF) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and met with IEF Secretary General Dr Sun Xiansheng to discuss knowledge exchange and technical cooperation between both organisations. The lecture highlighted the importance of the rule of law on energy
issues and mitigating the risks of energy related investment and trade. The Secretary General also highlighted the crucial importance of “The 4 Pillars of Energy Security” in the ever evolving global energy landscape.

International energy Charter joins global energy leaders at IRENA’s annual Assembly in Abu Dhabi

On the 14-15 January 2017, Global leaders of the international energy community met in Abu Dhabi for the seventh session of the Assembly of IRENA, in which the International Energy Charter - represented by Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák and expert Sarah Keay-Bright - took part under observer status. The event brought together ministers, government advisors and officials and representatives from international organizations, the private sector and civil society. The Assembly, as IRENA’s ultimate decision-making authority, sets the direction for IRENA’s future work programme. Central to this is scale-up of investment in renewable energy to enable a sustainable energy transition that will result in timely achievement of international commitments relating to sustainable development and climate change mitigation. Alongside the Assembly discussions, a number of strategic discussions took place including a high-level meeting on renewable energy in South East Europe on 13 January, which Sarah Keay-Bright contributed to. The event followed up on high-level discussions hosted by Romania in Bucharest in October last year. The event continued discussions on how to exploit opportunities and overcome challenges in expanding the share of renewable energy in the region’s energy mix and provided a platform for the launch of IRENA’s new publication Cost-competitive renewable power generation: Potential across South East Europe that identifies 740GW of potential renewable energy potential in the region. Also this month, prior to the Assembly, heads of delegation from across the region confirmed the intention to scale up renewables in line with the EU’s 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework in the Abu Dhabi Communiqué on Accelerating the Uptake of Renewables in South East Europe.

International Energy Charter Secretary General and OPEC Secretary General meet at the Global Energy Forum in Abu Dhabi

OPEC Secretary General, Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo and Energy Charter Secretary General Urban Rusnák recently met at the Global Energy Forum in Abu Dhabi - organized by the Atlantic Council, on 14-15 January. The event, a high-level policy gathering, provided an occasion for valuable exchanges among oil and energy ministers, major oil companies, leading international organizations in the field of energy, as well as prominent policy-making officials. The Secretary Generals from both OPEC and the IEC briefly exchanged comments on ways to
explore possible cooperation in the future.

**The International Energy Charter aims to enhance energy cooperation in Africa**

Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák met with Ambassador of South Africa to the Kingdom of Belgium, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Mission to the European Union, Baso Sangqu, on 17 January in Brussels Belgium. The meeting was a great opportunity to discuss the International Energy Charter, at a time when an increasing number of new signatories are coming from African countries and regional organisations.

**International Energy Charter receives Pál Ságvári, Ambassador-at-Large for Energy Security from Hungary**

Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák met with Pál Ságvári, Ambassador-at-Large for Energy Security, Hungary, on 24 January 2017 at the Energy Charter Secretariat in Brussels. The topic of discussion, was the importance of the Energy Charter Treaty in European Union (EU) external energy diplomacy. Other highlights from the discussion was the potential of the International Energy Charter and the European External Action Service (EEAS) working together to develop an energy discussion between the EU and other countries. The platform would discuss the role of the Energy Charter in energy diplomacy and energy governance within the EU and the broader energy world.

**International Energy Charter receives Director of International Regulatory Affairs of Enagas**

The Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák met Mr Francisco de la Flor, the Director of International Regulatory Affairs of Enagas, Spain, to discuss natural gas issues at national, regional and global levels on 24 January 2017. Mr De la Flor’s underlined the importance of having stable investment frameworks such as the 1994 Energy Charter Treaty and the 2015 International Energy Charter at a time when the natural gas industry is undergoing an open-ended sustainable energy transition.

**Energy Charter Secretary General meets the President of Turkmenistan and high-level officials in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan**

On 31 January 2017, Turkmenistan President Mr Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov met with Energy Charter Secretary General Dr. Urban Rusnák to discuss international energy cooperation and the joint activities within the Chairmanship of Turkmenistan in the Energy Charter Conference for 2017. The President stressed the importance
of the international energy partnership as a determining factor for strengthening sustainable development, peace, and stability. Transit of energy resources as well as energy saving and energy efficiency were identified as main priorities for joint activities under the Chairmanship of Turkmenistan. In the conclusion, the interlocutors agreed to continue long-term cooperation in order to promote energy dialogue on global energy security.

Dr. Rusnák also held a number of meetings with high-level Government officials of Turkmenistan to discuss the priorities of the Turkmenistan Chairmanship of the Energy Charter Conference for 2017. The Secretary General met with the Chairman of the Energy Charter Conference, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, Mr Yagshigeldy Kakayev, and First Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Rashid Meredov, as well as the Deputy Chairman of the Conference, Minister of Energy, Mr Dovran Rejepov. The Secretary General also delivered a lecture to students of the International University for the Humanities and Development and the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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ENERGY CHARTER SECRETARIAT’S OTHER ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

The International Energy Charter is discussed at the Parliamentary Forum on Climate Change (PFCC) in Uganda

The International Energy Charter was discussed at the latest meeting of the Parliamentary Forum on Climate Change (PFCC) at the Uganda Parliament on 11 January 2017, in Kampala. The meeting was organised by Hon. David Ebong of Clean Energy Partnership Africa (CEPA), and it presented a great opportunity for the Members of Parliament to learn more about the International Energy Charter and its impact to Uganda. During the meeting the role of Parliamentarians in the development of the energy sector was emphasised. A Ugandan consultant to the Energy Charter Secretariat, Ms Victoria Nalule, participated in the discussions.