ENERGY CHARTER CONFERENCE AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES

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Strategy Group and Implementation Group Meetings held in Brussels

On 22 March 2018, the Energy Charter Secretariat hosted its first meeting of the Strategy Group for 2018. There was active participation by several delegations regarding topics such as procedural aspects for the ongoing modernisation discussions and some issues regarding the daily functioning of the organisation. During the meeting, the Energy Charter Conference Chairmanship, Romania, presented its priorities and agenda for the year 2018. Delegates were also briefed by the Islamic Republic of Iran on energy investment opportunities in Iran and the upcoming Tehran International Energy Conference, co-organised by the Secretariat and Iran’s Ministry of Energy on 19-20 June 2018.

The same day, the Implementation Group met to discuss the question of sustainable energy resources in the Energy Charter Treaty Modernisation Process and to bring the attention of the Sub-Group of Modernisation to this point.

SECRETARY GENERAL’S ACTIVITIES

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Azerbaijan officials host the Energy Charter Secretariat

On 15 March 2018, during his visit to Baku, Energy Charter Secretary-General Dr Urban Rusnák conducted a number of bilateral meetings with high-level representatives from the Azerbaijan Government and ADA University. Azerbaijan Minister of Energy Mr Parviz Shahbazov and Dr Rusnák jointly opened the EU4Energy High-level roundtable on energy efficiency. During the bilateral meeting which followed, they discussed priorities for the EU4Energy technical assistance as well as the planned consultations on modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty. Minister Shahbazov expressed his appreciation of the ongoing cooperation with the Energy Charter Secretariat, including the support to drafting the Law on Efficiency use of Energy Resources and Energy Efficiency within the EU4Energy implementation. He confirmed his determination to pursue with the planned reforms in Azerbaijan’s energy sector, including the adoption of the draft Law.

The 2018 Global Energy Interconnection Conference begins in Beijing

The Global Energy Interconnection Conference is taking place in Beijing from the 28-29 March 2018. The event is hosted by the Global Energy Interconnection
Development and Cooperation Organization (GEIDCO) and the theme is on Global Energy Interconnection: from China's initiative to Global Action. The Global Energy Interconnection Conference is taking place in Beijing from the 28-29 March 2018. The event is hosted by the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization (GEIDCO) and the theme is on Global Energy Interconnection: from China’s initiative to Global Action.

Energy Charter Secretary-General, Dr. Urban Rusnák delivered a Keynote speech during the event to elaborate on the contributions of the Energy Charter Treaty to cross-border energy cooperation in the field of investment and transit of energy.

**Chinese Institutions and cooperation with the International Energy Charter**

On 29-30 March 2018 during his visit to Beijing, Energy Charter Secretary-General, Dr. Urban Rusnák conducted a number of bilateral meetings with representatives from the National Energy Administration (NEA), China Electricity Council (CEC), Electric Power Planning & Engineering Institute (EPPEI) and Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization (GEI).

On the 29 of March, the Secretary-General met with the Vice President of CEC, Mr. Wei Zhaofeng and discussed the implementation status of the Annual Work Programme of the China Electricity Council-International Energy Charter Joint Research Centre.

The next day Dr. Rusnák met with the President of EPPEI Mr. Xie Qiuye to go over plans regarding a visit to the Energy Charter Secretariat on the 20th of April this year. In the afternoon, Dr. Rusnák introduced the procedures for China’s accession to the Energy Charter Treaty and the ongoing modernisation process during a meeting with the Deputy Director General of the International Cooperation Department of NEA, Mr. An Fengquan.

**ENERGY CHARTER SECRETARIAT’S ACTIVITIES & EVENTS**

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**First Energy Investment Risk Assessment fact-finding mission in 2018**

On 5-6 March 2018, a team from the Energy Charter Secretariat visited Zagreb, Croatia to conduct a fact-finding mission for its flagship report, the Energy Investment Risk Assessment (EIRA) 2018. The mission was hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Croatia. Significant issues related to the country’s energy sector were discussed with various governmental agencies and ministries such as the Croatian Energy Regulatory Agency (HERA), the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The meetings were organised in the form of question and answer sessions centred around the main risks in the country’s regulatory and legal environment which may impede inward investment flows.
The EIRA fact-finding mission continues in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The second fact-finding mission of 2018 for the Energy Investment Risk Assessment (EIRA) report took place on 7-8 March in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. The mission was co-organised and hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, which took the lead in the kick-off meeting. The meeting was attended by representatives of other state agencies, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and international organisations working in the country. Detailed follow-up meetings were held with the regulatory commissions of both autonomous entities (Federation and Republika Srpska), chambers of foreign trade and economy, legal professionals and Public Enterprise Electric Utility Company of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Energy poverty in the context of international Law

London Centre of International Law Practice (LCILP) held its 3rd annual conference on Energy Arbitration and Dispute Resolution in the Middle East and Africa on the 6 March 2018. Energy Charter Secretariat energy efficiency expert, Sarah Keay-Bright, was an invited speaker for the panel discussion on “Energy poverty in energy rich countries: a driver of disputes?”. The Secretariat’s contribution set out the role of the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) in helping Governments provide their citizens with access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy services.

Azerbaijan signs the International Energy Charter

On 15 March 2018, H.E. Parviz Shahbazov Minister of Energy of Azerbaijan signed the International Energy Charter. Azerbaijan becomes the 88th country or international organisation to sign the International Energy Charter, which is a declaration of political intention aiming at strengthening energy cooperation.

The International Energy Charter invited to the first African Union energy meeting in Mauritania

The International Energy Charter contributed to the First Session of the African Union (AU) Sub-Committee on Energy held in Nouakchott in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on 21-23 March 2018. The meeting gathered the numerous AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the African Development Bank, international organisations and the private sector. On the margins of the meeting, bilateral talks with the Ministry of Petroleum, Energy and Mines took stock of Mauritania’s accession process to the Energy Charter Treaty.

Energy Investment Risk Assessment Fact-Finding Mission to Nigeria

The third fact-finding mission of the Energy Charter Secretariat’s Energy Investment Risk Assessment (EIRA) project took place in Abuja, Nigeria from 26 to 29 March 2018. In line with the scope of EIRA, the mission’s goals was to find out in greater detail about the energy sector of Nigeria, gather information on its regulatory and legal regime, and to understand the functioning of various state and non-state bodies, agencies and institutions in the context of the country’s political structure. The findings of the mission will be elaborated in an extended country profile for Nigeria which intends to assist the government in monitoring the performance of its energy sector and take necessary measure to lower the assessed risks.
EU4Energy organized a high-level roundtable on energy efficiency in Azerbaijan

On the 15 March 2018, under the auspices of the EU-funded EU4Energy Programme, the Energy Charter Secretariat, the EU delegation in Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, presented the draft Law on the Efficient Use of Energy Resources and Energy Efficiency. The draft legal text, developed in close cooperation between Azerbaijani and international experts, is based on best EU and international practices. It includes modern policy instruments targeting the improvement of energy efficiency in all economic areas to unlock the multiple benefits in Azerbaijan’s real economy.

During the high-level opening ceremony, the Energy Charter Secretary-General Dr Urban Rusnák noted “With implementation, this law will bring about the creation of new jobs, increased competitiveness of industry, lower energy bills for households, healthier houses and environmental protection in Azerbaijan”.

Head of Cooperation in the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan, Mr Jeroen Willems noted: “Energy efficiency is a crucial element for Europe’s and Azerbaijan’s successful clean energy transition. The Draft Law presented today – once implemented – constitutes a real step forward in this ambitious direction. The EU is proud to continue to bring best European practice and experience in Azerbaijan, including through the EU4Energy programme”.

The draft law has been thoroughly discussed by the members of the inter-ministerial working group, comprising representatives of the relevant government authorities in Azerbaijan, during meetings held in May and October 2017 followed by a written consultation process involving relevant stakeholders.

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