Albania assumes the Chairmanship of the Energy Charter Conference in 2019

As of 1 January 2019, Albania has assumed the Chairmanship of the Energy Charter Conference. Albania aims to promote a global vision on the role the Energy Charter Conference in advancing the development of a low-carbon society. Specific priorities of Albania in 2019 will be improving governance for energy efficiency, promoting deployment of renewable energies and facilitating regional connectivity, transit as well as integrating energy markets. These topics will highlight the 30th Ministerial Meeting of the Energy Charter Conference to be held in Tirana on 10-11 December 2019. Under the Chairmanship, Albania will also host International Energy Charter Forum on Energy Efficiency and Renewables in April 2019.

Yemen became a Contracting Party to the Energy Charter Treaty on 29 January 2019

The Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) entered into force for the Republic of Yemen on 29 January 2019. Yemen has been formally involved in the Energy Charter Process since December 2013, when it undertook the step of requesting Observership by Invitation during the Energy Charter Conference in Nicosia. The country then became observer in November 2014, signing the European Energy Charter. It also signed the International Energy Charter in 2015. Yemen subsequently went through the procedural stages of the ECT accession shortly thereafter, which involved completing the necessary technical reports stipulated under the existing ECT accession process. Following completion and adoption of the reports, and having been invited by the Energy Charter Conference to formally accede to the Treaty, Yemen ratified the ECT on July 19, 2018.
The Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) Remains the Most Frequently Invoked IIA

Information about the dispute resolution claims has been compiled on the basis of public sources, including specialised reporting services. Since 2001, when the first case invoking ECT was registered, the Energy Charter Secretariat tracked 121 publicly known investment arbitration cases where the ECT was invoked (sometimes together with a BIT). As arbitrations can be kept confidential, the actual number of disputes is likely to be higher. The Secretariat welcomes any additional information or clarification on specific cases (legalaffairs@encharter.org).

**SECRETARY GENERAL’S ACTIVITIES***

The Ninth General Assembly of International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) convenes in Abu Dhabi

The 9th General Assembly of IRENA took place in Abu Dhabi from the 10–13 January 2019. It was an opportunity for Energy Charter Secretary-General Dr Urban Rusnák, to discuss the modernisation of the ECT with high-level representatives from the Member countries, including HE Claude Turmes, the Minister of Energy of Luxembourg, HE Mohammed Al-Anani, the Minister of Electricity and Energy of Yemen, HE Gantulga Tudevkhuu, the Vice-Minister of Energy of Mongolia, HE Mohammad Gul Khalmi, the acting Minister of Energy and Water in Afghanistan, Ambassador Stefan Larus Stefansson, the Permanent Representative of Iceland to IRENA and Mr Pekka Grönlund, the Deputy Director General at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland.

The IRENA event also provided an opportunity to address the accession process of certain Observer countries. The Secretary-General met with high-level representatives including HE Bachir Ismael Ouedraogo, the Minister of Energy of Burkina Faso, HE Boukar Michel, the Minister of Oil and Energy of Chad, HE Senator Peter Bhembe, the Minister of Natural Resources and Energy of Eswatini, HE Sambou Wague, the Minister of Energy and Water in Mali, HE Aziz Rabbah, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Sustainable Development of Morocco, HE Irene Muloni, the Minister of Energy and Mineral development in Uganda, HE Victor Urrutia, the Energy Secretary of State in Panama as well as Mr Hasan Al-Shami, the Legal Advisor to the Ministry of Energy and Water in Lebanon, Mr Fanrong Li, Deputy Administrator at the China National Energy Administration and Mr Eli Jidere Bala, the Director General of the Energy Commission of Nigeria.
The Energy Charter Treaty highlighted at the Atlantic Council Global Energy Forum

The Energy Charter Secretariat contributed to the high-level 3rd Atlantic Council Global Energy Forum, The Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation, which took place in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 11-13 January 2019. The Forum is widely recognised as a signature event for the discussion of topics such as digital transformation of the global energy markets, energy innovation and new energy technologies, geopolitics as well as renewable energy and the onward evolution of the global energy transformation. The event is strongly supported by the Ministry of Energy of the UAE, an Observer country of the Energy Charter Conference.

Many significant influencers shaping the global energy environment addressed the Forum, including the likes of Khalid al-Falih, Ministry of Energy Industry and Mineral Resources of Saudi Arabia, Dr Sultan Al Jaber, Chief Executive of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, Ernest Moniz, former Secretary of the US Department of Energy, and OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo.

Energy Charter Secretariat Conducts Meetings in Ashgabat

Officials from the Energy Charter Secretariat visited Ashgabat on 22 January 2019, to conduct important meetings with Turkmen counterparts. The first meeting was devoted to the possible modernisation of the ECT and was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan. It was attended by representatives of key ministries and state bodies, including the Parliament and those dealing with energy issues. The meeting was interactive. The officials of the Secretariat gave an overview of the legal background and current situation related to the modernisation of the ECT and the review. The participants enjoyed the opportunity to ask questions and share their understanding of the subject matter. The meeting had a practical impact and was the first of its kind to be organised jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat.
In the context of the EU4Energy Governance project, the Energy Charter Secretariat has organised a Capacity-building Workshop on the promotion of activities of energy service companies (ESCO) and the implementation of energy performance contracts (EPC) in the Republic of Belarus on 30-31 January 2019 in Minsk. The meeting was officially opened by the representatives of the Department of Energy Efficiency of the Republic of Belarus and the EU Delegation in Minsk. All parties highlighted the importance of facilitating new and innovative tools for improving energy efficiency.

During the Workshop, the team of invited experts from Armenia, Czech Republic, Moldova and Ukraine shared their practical experience on the promotion of EPCs and institutional and legislative frameworks in their respective countries. The participants of the workshop exchanged views on the ways for promoting ESCO business in the Republic of Belarus. This was based on the presented examples from the EU and Eastern Partnership countries and the experience of EPC implementation in the Russian Federation that was additionally shared by a representative of the Inter-regional Energy Company (IEC).

The Workshop was attended by the local experts from the Department for Energy Efficiency, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade, Belarus Heat and Power Institute, industrial enterprises and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The Workshop participants have compared realities and conditions of different countries, discussed incentives to motivate governments and business for the implementation of ESCO/EPC, reviewed the main obstacles for these activities and analysed possibilities to efficiently overcome existing difficulties.

This technical assistance activity is part of the EU4Energy, an EU-supported initiative providing technical assistance to countries of the Eastern Partnership that seek to approximate areas of their energy sectors with best practices in the European Union. In addition to Belarus, the Energy Charter Secretariat also collaborates with Armenia and Azerbaijan.

*Funded under the EU4Energy Initiative of the European Union*