International Energy Charter welcomes new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Conference

The International Energy Charter would like to welcome the new Energy Charter Conference Chairperson, HE Ms Belinda Balluku who was nominated by the Albanian Government and approved by the Conference on 20 February 2019. Ms Balluku is the current Minister of Infrastructure and Energy of Albania. The Government also nominated the current Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and Energy, Mr Ilir Bejtja, to serve as Vice Chairperson. Mr Bejtja was approved on 2 March 2019 by the Conference.

In 2019, Albania assumed the role of Chair of the Conference which is the governing and decision-making body for the Energy Charter process. The government has expressed interest in advancing the development of a low-carbon society and is committed to accelerate the energy transition.

On 5 February 2019, the newly appointed Albanian Minister of Infrastructure and Energy, Ms Belinda Balluku, welcomed Energy Charter Secretary-General Dr Urban Rusnák in Tirana. This inaugural meeting was convened to focus on Albania’s Chairmanship of the Energy Charter Conference this year. In addition to that, the parties discussed a range of topics, including cooperation with the Energy Charter Secretariat, modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) and Review under Article 34(7).

Energy Investment Risk Assessment (EIRA) 2019 was also discussed, in which Albania is participating. The Secretary General introduced a dispute management instrument developed by the legal unit of the Secretariat and invited Albania as the Chair country to events to be organised by the Secretariat this year. Albanian high-level officials, including Mr Ilir Bejtja, the Deputy Minister responsible for Energy, were briefed on the modalities of the Chairmanship this year and on the ensuing division of responsibilities and expectations.

“Defining the roadmap for the regional energy cooperation is an important step in creating an interconnected Northeast Asian power system. I have seen from your researches that the economic relevance of this power super grid is extremely high. This regional power system interconnection offers the most innovative solution in terms of optimizing the electricity production resources, capacity, ultra-high-voltage transmission, and consumers. For example, Mongolia has the potential of producing electricity for 6 cents per kWh, which is three times cheaper than what some of the countries are paying in this region.”

Extract from the speech of HE Khaltmaa Battulga, President of Mongolia, at the conference on “Northeast Asia Regional Power System Interconnection”
Modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty discussed in Astana, Kazakhstan

At the initiative of the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák and his staff held a seminar and a meeting devoted to the modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty on 18 February 2019 in the capital of Kazakhstan.

The event was attended by representatives of relevant state bodies and entities of Kazakhstan, including the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, national oil and gas exploration, production and transportation companies, Kazakhstan Electricity Grid Operating Company, Samruk National Welfare Fund, and Kazenergy Association.

The Energy Charter Secretariat team presented an overview of the legal background of the modernisation process and explained the modalities of this year’s procedures related to this process. The presentation was followed by an interactive discussion as well as Q&A session.

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Eswatini visits the Energy Charter Secretariat

On 13 February 2019, the meeting took place between the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) to the EU H.E. Sibusisiwe Mngomezulu and the Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák. The Secretary-General updated Ambassador Mngomezulu on some of the recent developments in the Energy Charter process. Eswatini recently finalised the necessary technical requirements prescribed under the accession procedures to the ECT.

The Kingdom was formally invited to accede to the Treaty at the 29th meeting of the Energy Charter Conference in Bucharest, Romania in November 2018. Eswatini has now reached the ratification stage of the ECT accession process. The Kingdom of Eswatini now will need to complete its internal procedures to give full
endorsement to the Treaty. When this process is complete, Eswatini would be the first country in Southern Africa to accede to the ECT. The core strengths and benefits of the Treaty for member countries is the protection and promotion of critical investments in national energy sectors, as well as providing rules and guidance to member countries on energy trade, transit, competition and energy efficiency, while respecting national sovereignty over natural resources and the choice of the energy mix.

### Morocco hosts energy investment fact-finding mission

On 5-6 February 2019, the Moroccan Ministry of Energy, Mines and Sustainable Development hosted a fact-finding mission related to the country’s participation in the flagship publication—EIRA. The Head of the Secretariat’s Investment Unit Mr David Kramer and Expansion Unit Coordinator Mr Can Öğütçü conducted meetings with Mr Mohammed Ghazali, Secretary General, and Mr Mohamed Bernannou, Advisor to the Minister and Chief Staff of the Minister H.E. Mr Aziz Rabbah.

Moreover, under the guidance of Mrs Maya Aherdan, Director for International Cooperation and Communications, extensive discussions took place with the Ministry’s staff on the existing measures to reduce legal, regulatory and policy risk for investment in the energy sector. The Secretariat’s delegation also had a meeting with MASEN – Morocco’s agency for the development of the country’s high ambitions towards sustainable energy.

The mission concluded with a visit to the Embassy of the Netherlands in Rabat. The Embassy has been a Liaison Embassy for the Energy Charter Process since 2012, accompanying and supporting the Secretariat in its cooperation with the Kingdom of Morocco.


During the mission, different aspects of the Energy Charter Treaty were discussed, including recent developments such as the modernisation of the Treaty. Partners also discussed the next steps to be taken in the process of Morocco’s accession. It was agreed that Morocco will continue working with the Secretariat on examining different aspects of the Treaty.
Highlights from the Bucharest Conference are now available on YouTube

At the 29th meeting of the Energy Charter Conference, delegates, experts and Ministers from over 50 countries convened in Bucharest, Romania. The main themes of the conference included innovation, energy security, sustainability and prosperity in the energy sector. These issues are in line with the priorities highlighted by the Romanian Energy Minister Mr Anton Anton, which raised the difficult question on how to make the energy transition a reality for countries depending on energy production from coal.

For more highlights check out the 29th meeting of the Energy Charter Conference by visiting our YouTube channel.