2019 Year of the Albanian Chairmanship of the Energy Charter Conference

ENERGY CHARTER CONFERENCE AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES

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Meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies of the Conference

On 13 March 2019, the Energy Charter Implementation Group convened for the first time in the year. The delegates focused on the further development of the flagship publication of the organisation, the Energy Investment Risk Assessment (EIRA). They also noted the progress made on #EIRA2019, which is expected to be launched in autumn. Furthermore, early findings were presented from a study comparing the approach towards smart grids in the EU and in China. Also, discussion took place on model clauses for standardisation of LNG sale and purchase agreements.

Very useful discussions took place during the Strategy Group meeting on 14 March. Albania, which chairs the Energy Charter Conference in 2019, updated delegates on its priorities for the coming year. Delegations from Jordan and Yemen delivered very useful presentations outlining the key factors motivating their recent accession to the ECT. A number of observer countries deeply engaged in the ECT accession process briefed delegations on their progress towards accession.

On 15 March, the Sub-Group on Modernisation held its third meeting in 2019. It was chaired by Ms. Sofia Sanz Estébanez (Chair) and Mr. Sunao Orii (Vice Chair).

SECRETATARY GENERAL’S ACTIVITIES

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The International Energy Charter Process Discussed in London

On 18 March 2019 Secretary General Urban Rusnak visited London to meet representatives of the UK Government and Academia.

At the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy he met with British Energy Diplomacy team lead by Ms Julia Nolan. The meeting discussion included current issues pertaining to the modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty, the enlargement of the organisation, its quinquennial review as well as post-Brexit expectations.

At the Centre for Commercial Law Studies at the Queen Mary University of London, Dr Rusnák met with faculty members and students of the Energy Law Institute.

Quote

I am happy to see our member and observer countries at the first meeting of the Implementation Group this year, under the 2019 Conference Chairmanship of Albania. I am delighted to welcome Jordan and Yemen as our newest Contracting Parties. In these countries the Energy Charter Treaty entered into force on 11 December 2018 and 29 January 2019 respectively. I also welcome Sierra Leone as the newest observer to the Energy Charter Conference. The country approved the International Energy Charter on 13 December 2018.

Ms. Klara Rakhmetova,
Chair of the Energy Charter Implementation Group
(Kazakhstan)
delivered a lecture about the ECT and future of power and renewable energy, which focused on the role and contribution of the Energy Charter Treaty to the energy transition. The lecture was followed by lively Q&A session.

The Government of Tajikistan hosts discussions on ECT modernisation

On 27-28 March 2019, a delegation from the Energy Charter Secretariat visited Dushanbe, Tajikistan to discuss the Energy Charter Process with Government officials. Energy Charter Secretary-General Dr Urban Rusnák met with the Deputy Prime-minister Mr Azim Ibrohim and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Zohidi Nizomiddin to update them on recent developments such as the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) modernisation, Review under Art. 34(7) ECT, the Energy Investment Risk Assessment project (EIRA), and the new EU Strategy for Central Asia were discussed. Mr Nizomiddin expressed his appreciation with the increasing cooperation of the International Energy Charter with the Teheran-based Economic Cooperation Organisation and sought some clarifications on the Chairmanship practice of the Conference.

Substantial discussions took place with the Minister of Energy and Water Resources Mr Usmonali Usmonzoda. The Minister briefed on the recent developments in Tajikistan and the region of Central Asia, including progress on infrastructure projects, anticipated reforms and regional cooperation. Roles and responsibilities in terms of Modernisation of the ECT and the Review, as the most important activities for 2019, had been discussed.

ENERGY CHARTER SECRETARIAT’S ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Students from the University of Groningen visit the Secretariat

On 18 March 2019, the Energy Charter Secretariat hosted a group of students from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. Young future energy leaders came to learn more about the Energy Charter Treaty and the activities of the Brussels-based international energy organisation.

In-house legal and policy experts gave broad overviews of their respective activities as well as their relation to the Energy Charter Treaty and within the general global energy environment.

Presentations touched upon a broad array of topics including dispute settlement, energy efficiency, energy investment and energy transit. Also discussed was the Energy Charter's growing international cooperation with observer and outreach countries in Africa and Asia.
Executive Training Programme in Jordan

Following accession of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the Energy Charter Treaty in 2018, the Knowledge Centre of the Energy Charter Secretariat delivered an Executive Training Programme for Energy Professionals in Amman, Jordan on 18-21 March 2019. The focus of the training was “Policies and Best Practices Intended to Help Achieve Energy Sustainability during an Era of Energy Transition”. During the sessions, there was also a dedicated Energy Investment Risk Assessment (EIRA) training highlighting the key strengths and areas of improvement for Jordan’s energy sector.

Speakers from the European Commission, European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity and the University of Dundee joined International Energy Charter delegation. The tailor-made sessions provided energy professionals with in-depth knowledge on designing forward looking renewable energy scenarios, illustrated examples of national energy policies adopted in response to the global challenge of climate change and explored optimal strategies in energy efficiency. The training also gave special emphasis on the lessons learned from the European Union in integrating energy markets and promoting regional energy cooperation.

RECA Taskforce meets in Ashgabat

The Regional Energy Cooperation in Central and South Asia (RECA) Taskforce held its 15 meeting in Ashgabat Turkmenistan on 26-28 March 2019. The meeting was organised by the Energy Charter Secretariat, with the principal support of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs Energy of Turkmenistan and in partnership with the Energy Links USAID Project for Central Asia.

The RECA Taskforce has been meeting regularly on an annual and semi-annual basis since 2007, in a rotating fashion in capitals of Central Asian states. The main purpose of RECA meetings is to promote energy cooperation in Central and South Asia through knowledge and information-sharing and capacity building. The 15th Meeting of the Taskforce, was devoted to an update by the countries regarding the
latest developments in the electricity sectors, markets, trade, transit, and tariffs. Deviating from the traditional agenda, one session of the Meeting was dedicated to renewables and associated matters such as feed-in tariffs, stimulation, power purchase agreements, energy auctions, new projects and potential in the region.

The International Energy Charter visits South East Asia

A delegation of officials from the Energy Charter Secretariat (Expansion and Investment Units) conducted a working visit to Vietnam and Cambodia in early March 2019. Productive meetings were held in Hanoi with Vietnamese officials between 4-8 March. This important mission allowed the Secretariat’s delegation to gather information relevant to the Energy Investment Risk Assessment Report (#EIRA2019) and conduct a provisional evaluation of Vietnam’s prospects for acceding to the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT).

During the mission, Secretariat officials, Dr Anna Pitaraki and Mr Can Öğütçü, held meetings with a number of Vietnamese ministry officials and private sector representatives. The role of the Embassy of Hungary as a Liaison Embassy in Hanoi was instrumental in promoting the ECT and the Secretariat’s work with regards to Vietnam. The Secretariat delegation then went on to visit Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in order to meet with officials from the Ministry of Energy and Mines. The focus of the discussions was on Cambodia’s Accession Report on Energy Efficiency and participation in future editions of EIRA.

EU4Energy Newsletter

“Sustainable Energy in Central Asia”, Brussels, Belgium