ENERGY CHARTER CONFERENCE AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES

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Energy Charter Treaty modernisation discussed in the Kyrgyz Republic

On 14–15 May 2019, a delegation from the Energy Charter Secretariat had a working visit to the Kyrgyz Republic to discuss the ECT modernisation, the EIRA project, the Model Instrument on Management of Investment Disputes and regional energy cooperation in Central Asia.

Energy Charter Secretary-General Dr Urban Rusnák met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Chingiz Aidarbekov and the Deputy Chairman of the State Committee on Industry, Energy and Subsoil Use Mr Aytmat Kadyrbaev. The parties discussed the role of Kyrgyzstan in the modernisation process, the review under Art. ECT 34(7) and the EIRA publication. The Secretary-General was also invited to present the Treaty and activities of the Secretariat at the meeting of the fuel and energy committee of the Zhogorku Kenesh (the Kyrgyz Parliament).

Treaty Modernisation discussed in Iceland

On 21 May 2019 Energy Charter Secretary-General Dr Urban Rusnák was in Reykjavik, Iceland, to meet with federal government officials. Dr Rusnák met with Þórdís Kolbrún Reykfjörð Gylfadóttir, the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Innovation. He also met with the Energy Ambassador from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As an outcome of these meetings, Iceland agreed to take a more active role in the Modernisation of the ECT and deeper engagement in the ECT review process. Other topics discussed included Iceland’s possible ratification of the PEEREA Protocol and signature of the International Energy Charter declaration. Government officials were also encouraged to have Iceland join the Energy Investment Risk Assessment project in the near future.

SECRETATARY GENERAL’S ACTIVITIES

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The International Energy Charter participates at the Power Uzbekistan 2019 conference

Upon the invitation of the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Secretariat participated in the international conference Power Uzbekistan 2019 on 16 May 2019 in Tashkent.

The focus of the conference was on the development of nuclear power in Uzbekistan. Energy Charter Secretary-General Dr Urban Rusnák contributed to the session on Future Energy by highlighted the role of the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT)
in facilitating investment and the transfer of technology to upgrade current electricity generation facilities in Uzbekistan.

The Secretary-General had a bilateral meeting with the Minister of Energy of Uzbekistan, Advisor to the Prime Minister, Mr Alisher Sultanov. The Minister briefed the delegation of the Secretariat on recent developments in the energy sector of Uzbekistan such as re-establishment of the Ministry, unbundling of the vertically integrated monopoly JSC Uzbekenergo, and existing challenges and development plans. Dr Rusnák updated the Minister on the activities of the Energy Charter, including the ECT modernisation, Review under Art. 34(7) ECT, the EIRA project and regional energy cooperation in Central Asia. The parties agreed on further steps to promote cooperation between Uzbekistan and the Secretariat.

ENERGY CHARTER SECRETARIAT’S ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Energy Investment to alleviate Energy Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa

On 2-3 May 2019, the International Energy Forum and the OPEC Fund for International Development organised their 4th Symposium on Energy Poverty, focused on Sub-Saharan Africa. The Symposium, held in Cape Town, was opened by the Minister of Energy of the Republic of South Africa HE Mr Jeff Radebe. He underlined the country’s ambition to raise US$ 100 Billion in Foreign Direct Investment by 2023 and urged to keep access to energy on the agenda of the worldwide consumer-producer dialogue.

The International Energy Charter participates in Africa-Europe Sustainable Energy Investment

A new Africa-Europe Alliance for sustainable investment and jobs was announced by President Jean-Claude Juncker in his State of the Union Address in September 2018. Then, a high-level platform for sustainable energy investment (SEI Platform) was launched in November 2018 to provide recommendations on how to leverage public and private investments to help accelerate access to electricity and clean cooking for human development and sustainable growth. The next step has been the establishment of three stakeholder working groups to underpin the technical and analytical work of the SEI Platform. The International Energy Charter is invited to take part in Working Group 2 focusing on the improvement needed to enhance sustainable investment. Working Group 1 deals with business models for investment in sustainable energy, while Working Group 3 addresses business to business dialogue in support of investment.
On 27 and 28 May 2019, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) organised the second preparatory meeting of the 27th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. The meeting took place under Slovakia’s 2019 OSCE Chairmanship and primarily focused on economic progress and energy cooperation in the digital era. Ambassador František Ružička, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, opened the meeting and outlined three priorities: multilateral cooperation, energy efficiency & renewable energy resources and protection of energy networks. The OSCE Secretary General, Ambassador Thomas Greminger highlighted the importance of inter-institutional cooperation on energy security, protection of critical energy infrastructure and reduction of environmental footprint by the energy industry.

The International Energy Charter visits Benin

A delegation of officials from the Energy Charter Secretariat (Expansion and Investment Units) conducted a working visit to Benin on 9-10 May 2019 at the invitation of Benin’s Ministry of Energy. Benin recently decided to accede to the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) by embarking on the accession reports phase. Productive meetings were held in Cotonou with government officials from different agencies and Ministerial bodies to elaborate on Benin’s participation to the Energy Investment Risk Assessment (EIRA) project and to brief the Ministry on the accession procedure to the ECT. The Embassies of France and Turkey were also briefed on Benin’s recent accession steps to the ECT. This important mission allowed the Secretariat’s delegation to gather information relevant to the EIRA Report (#EIRA2019) and to confirm the initiation of Benin’s first accession report to the ECT on Energy Efficiency.

Energy transit issues highlighted in Turkey

The Istanbul Arbitration Centre (ISTAC), in association with several prominent Turkish law firms and companies, organised its first conference in Istanbul on 23 May 2019. The event was dedicated to international energy issues and transit disputes. The participants of the meeting discussed the current state of affairs and the future of energy-related investment arbitration. Also discussed was legal issues in energy trade, supply contracts, and energy transit.
On 14 May 2019, the Ministry of Energy of Azerbaijan and the EU4Energy Governance project conducted a kick-off meeting on the development of the first National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) of Azerbaijan. The meeting was devoted to the planned activities, timetable and creation of the inter-ministerial working group for the development of the NEEAP. The meeting included the update and follow-up activities related to the adoption of the draft law on energy efficiency, developed with the assistance of EU4Energy in 2018, and the continued support of the development of a long-term energy strategy for Azerbaijan.

According to the Ministry, the draft law on energy efficiency passed the inter-ministerial consultation process and was officially submitted to the executive office of the president of Azerbaijan at the end of April this year. The counselor of the EU delegation to Azerbaijan, Mr Erik Somelar, welcomed the Ministry with this vital step toward developing a comprehensive framework on energy efficiency.

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 enhance their energy sectors with best practices of the European Union. In addition to Belarus, the Energy Charter Secretariat also collaborates with Armenia and Azerbaijan.

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