2019 Year of the Albanian Chairmanship of the Energy Charter Conference

ENERGY CHARTER CONFERENCE AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES

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International Energy Charter Forum highlights the Energy Transition

30th Energy Charter Conference moves to Brussels

Due to the devastating earthquake that struck Albania on the 26 of November, and the continuing aftershocks, Albania’s Prime Minister Edi Rama has declared a state of emergency. As a result, the 30th Energy Charter Conference has been relocated to Brussels, Belgium. The Meetings will take place on 10-11 December 2019.

At this time, on behalf of the Energy Charter Secretariat, our thoughts go out to our Albanian colleagues and the Albanian people who have been affected by this disaster.

Energy Charter Treaty Forum 2019 in Singapore

On 20 November 2019, the Singapore office of the Permanent Court of Arbitration hosted an international event promoting awareness about the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) in South East Asia. The event was held in cooperation with the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), Arbitration Institute of the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce, Singapore International Arbitration Centre and the Ministry of Law of Singapore.

On the margin of the Forum, Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák and PCA Secretary General H. Siblesz signed a Memorandum of Understanding on mutual cooperation between both institutions. During the visit to Singapore Dr Rusnák discussed with Mr Edwin Tong S.C., Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Law and Ministry of Health, potential involvement of Singapore into the Energy Charter Process.

Energy Charter Conference gives Green Light for Negotiations on Modernisation of the ECT


According to the Decision, the Conference establishes and mandates the Modernisation Group to start negotiations on the modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty, with a view to conclude negotiations expeditiously. The negotiations will take into account the identified list of topics (CCDEC2018 18) and suggested policy options (CCDEC2019 08) and will follow the procedure and timeline attached to the Conference decision.

“Both GEIDCO and the International Energy Charter are working to promote solutions especially in places on the African continent. African countries have a history of cooperation in the field of energy integration. In 2003, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) created the ECOWAS Energy Protocol which aimed to enhance energy cooperation across national borders. This Protocol was based solely on the Energy Charter Treaty. According to ECOWAS experts, the Energy Charter Treaty represented the leading internationally accepted basis for the promotion, cooperation, integration and development of energy investment projects and energy trade among sovereign nations. Promoting green, low-carbon and sustainable development and facilitating innovative development in Africa remains a priority for us.

From the address of Dr Urban Rusnák, International Energy Charter Secretary General at the 2019 Global Energy Interconnection Conference
ENERGY CHARTER SECRETARIAT’S ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

The International Energy Charter approaches Bangladesh and Nepal

A delegation from the Energy Charter Secretariat travelled to Nepal and Bangladesh to support the ECT accession process. On 18-24 November 2019, Secretariat officials contributed to a seminar on Resource Integration in Central Asia and its Impact on South Asia, which was organised by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Kathmandu, Nepal. The seminar included the participation of over 30 experts and aimed to evaluate prospects for greater levels of energy sector cooperation between the Central and South Asian regions.

Following the meetings in Kathmandu, the Head of the Secretariat’s Expansion Unit conducted a working visit to Bangladesh to meet with parties relevant to the accession process of Bangladesh to the ECT. Multiple stakeholders met included officials from the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs; The Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority; The Power Cell Division of the Ministry of Power; local energy companies, legal and accounting firms and the media. Bangladesh became an Observer to the Energy Charter Conference in 2015 when it signed the International Energy Charter declaration. It embarked upon the accession process to the ECT shortly thereafter and has currently completed a substantial part of the procedures necessary to become an contacting party to the Treaty.

Eswatini considers closer collaboration with the International Energy Charter

On 14-15 November 2019, a delegation from the Energy Charter Secretariat conducted a working visit to the Kingdom of Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) in support of the country’s accession process to the ECT. Eswatini became an Observer to the Energy Charter Conference in December 2015, following its signature of the International Energy Charter declaration, and was invited by the Conference to accede to the Treaty in November 2018. It is currently in the ratification stage of Treaty accession. The Head of the Secretariat’s Expansion Unit conducted meetings with Eswatini government officials from the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, as well as the Office of the Attorney General, for talks on the remaining steps that the Kingdom still needs to take to finalise its ratification processes.

The visit also provided an opportunity for the Secretariat to be briefed on some of the Kingdom’s pending energy policy priorities, including energy efficiency, harnessing of investments into Eswatini’s renewable energy opportunities, as well as gas transit from Mozambique to South Africa. Whilst in the region, the Secretariat also participated in the Second Annual African Investment Forum hosted by the African Development Bank and the government of South Africa.

International
Energy Charter in
Global Media


The Secretariat regrets to announce the loss of a former colleague Ms Galina Romanova, who sadly passed away on 10 November 2019 in Moscow, the Russian Federation.

Ms Romanova who was involved in the Energy Charter Process since 1992, worked in the Energy Charter Secretariat from 1995 until 2015. She will be remembered for the services that she has rendered to the Organisation and its staff throughout the years, as well as for her kindness, collegiality and excellent cooperation with colleagues and delegates. The Secretariat presents its heartfelt condolences to Ms Romanova’s bereaved family and friends.

The Forum took place during 11-13 November in Johannesburg, and has become a major platform for private equity and institutional finance to engage in dialogue with the region’s key decision makers in joint evaluation of the Continent’s investment opportunities, as well as challenges.

**Investment Arbitration Masterclass 4-7 November 2019**

The 4th edition of the Investment Arbitration Masterclass organised in Brussels by the Legal Affairs unit of the Energy Charter Secretariat concluded after four intense days (4-7 November 2019). The interactive exercises were focused on providing 20 government officials (from 10 countries and the European Commission) and legal practitioners with hands on training (including mock exercises) about the practicalities and intricacies of the investment arbitration process, the assessment of damages and strategic communication.

The training modules were delivered by a fully fledged faculty from the Arbitration Institute of the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce (SCC), the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), Versant and FTI consulting. Their expertise was further complemented by practitioners viewpoints from leading international law and consulting firms, including Shearman & Sterling, Cooley, Lalive, Westerberg & partners, Baker Botts, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Latham & Watkins, Mannheimer Swartling and Arent Fox. The training included an innovative session on strategic communication: how to manage the reputational, communication, diplomatic and political ramifications of the dispute.

**1st Annual OPEC-ECS-OFID Legal Workshop takes place in Vienna**

OPEC, OPEC’s Fund for International Development (OFID) and the Energy Charter Secretariat (ECS) hosted a two-day workshop at the seat of OPEC, in Vienna Austria on 30-31 October 2019. It was opened by the OPEC Secretary General Mohammed Barkindo who emphasised the synergies and the importance of stronger collaboration among the institutions in light of the common challenges. In his speech Mr Barkindo thanked Energy Charter Secretary General Dr Urban Rusnák for his support for the event and emphasised that he is looking forward to further collaboration with the Energy Charter in the future.

From the Energy Charter Secretariat, there was an extensive presentation on the Energy Investment Risk Assessment project and the Secretariat (represented by the Knowledge Centre), participated in a panel of international organisations including the Energy Community, OFID and OPEC. In almost all of the sessions, there was a reference to the Energy Charter Treaty as the leading international law instrument on energy cooperation.
INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CHARTER FOR EU4ENERGY*

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Electricity grid connection rules for renewable energy

On 19 November 2019, the EU4Energy Governance Project held a Capacity-building Seminar on Electricity Grid Code Connection Rules for Renewable Energy Generators. The objective is to increase knowledge on EU and international practices for renewable energy grid connection. A guideline for setting up minimum standards and technical requirements for renewable energy connection was developed specifically for Belarus and presented during the seminar.

International experts and invited speakers from Hungary and Kazakhstan presented best practices and deliberated mechanisms of integrating such examples in Belarus. Participants discussed principles for grid connection rules for renewable energy generators, such as security, reliability, non-discrimination, optimisation (between efficiency and costs), emergency procedures, and institutional responsibilities for defining and adopting grid connection requirements for renewables.

Participants in the seminar included representatives of the Ministry of Energy, SUE “Belenergo”, RUE “ODU”, Energy Efficiency Department of the State Committee for Standardization, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade, Renewable Energy Association and RES investors. This technical assistance activity is part of the EU4Energy Project, 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 implements this Project in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

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