

Energy in Europe

Editorial

The New Year has started at a pace with the future of Europe's energy sector on top of the agenda. At the same time, we are confronted with profound evolutions of the energy and geopolitical landscape: oil prices have dropped by 60% since June last year; Iran negotiations, if successful, might lead to a progressive reopening of Iranian oil and gas markets towards Europe; and the

Russia/Ukraine gas story will continue to keep us busy for the months to come. A strong EU reply to these changes is more needed than ever.

Last year's announcement of a new Energy Union – one of President Juncker's political priorities – comes as a timely rally to unite European decision-makers behind this ambitious project. On 6 February, the Latvian Presidency of the EU and the European Union are organising a joint event to kick-off discussions on Energy



Dominique Ristori
Director-General
for Energy

Union with Vice-President Šefčovič and Commissioner [Arias Cañete](#).

Commissioner Arias Cañete has also been taking part in the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi highlighting European leadership in energy transformation. And, an agreement was reached on a common strategy for the development of electricity interconnections between the Transmission System Operators of France, Spain and Portugal. We are furthermore pleased to announce a new consultation – open until mid-March – that seeks your views on the security of European gas supplies.

The beginning of this year also saw new energy efficiency rules go live. The measures affect coffee-making, networked devices like printers, cooking appliances and internet surfing – find out how with our new infographic highlighting the changes.

Lastly, I'd like to introduce our new website. Our aim is to ensure that you, our readers, can easily navigate your way around European energy policy accessing clearly-written information via a well-designed and mobile-friendly website.

Dominique Ristori

Press room - Recent highlights

World Economic forum, 21-24 January 2015, Davos



Nine Members of the European Commission participated in the 2015 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, which took place from 21 to 24 January under the motto "The new global context". Vice-President for Energy Union, Maroš Šefčovič, attended different working sessions, among others, on the future of electricity, energy geopolitics and geoeconomics. He also held bilateral meetings, among others, with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dvorkovich and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Klimkin, in the margins of the Forum. [Watch Maroš Šefčovič in Davos](#)

Public consultation on boosting security of gas supplies, 15 January-18 March, Brussels



On 15 January, the European Commission opened a [public consultation](#) seeking views on EU rules to guarantee the security of gas supplies, in a bid to further improve Europe's resilience to gas supply disruptions. The consultation is open until 18 March 2015. The Commission will then analyse the contributions and consider which additional measures are needed to tighten the security of Europe's gas supply. [Read more](#)

Energy security in South East Europe - a priority, 12 January, Brussels



The Vice-President for Energy Union, Maros Šefčovič and Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Miguel Arias Cañete, met with Prime Minister of Bulgaria Boyko Borissov and Deputy Prime Minister Tomislav Dontchev in Brussels on Monday 12 January. Key points of the discussions were the current energy challenges in Bulgaria, gas infrastructure development priorities for Central and South Eastern Europe and their potential impact for European Union security of energy supplies.

[Read more](#)

First step towards ending isolation of the Iberian Peninsula, 5 January, Brussels



On 5 January, the Transmission System Operators of Spain, France and Portugal signed a common strategy paper for the development of interconnection of the Iberian Peninsula with the internal electricity market. The common strategy paper lists common goals and indicates which options for projects can increase the current interconnection capacity. This strategy will be fundamental to reach the minimum interconnection level of 10% agreed by the European Council last October.

[Read the internal Market Progress Report](#)

Guest Corner

Innovation on islands: a real opportunity for renewable energies



Eric Scotto
CEO Akuo Energy

Thus far, Europe has been a pioneer in its support for renewable energies, in terms of both building a less carbon-based future for its citizens and achieving energy independence and security. Member states, having set a target of 20% of alternative energy sources by 2020, have, in order to accomplish this, defined regulatory frameworks that have successfully enabled renewable energies to account for a growing portion of the European Energy mix.

We cannot relent in our efforts; climate change is no longer in doubt and is creating, more than ever, a real obligation to work in favour of renewable energies. We shouldn't be fooled by the "smokescreen" that is the recent fall in oil prices; this does not call into question the competitiveness of alternative energy sources, as oil

only represents a tiny portion of the resources used to produce electricity around the world.

The example of the development of overseas European territories is a source of inspiration for many countries seeking access to energy. Island territories represent a real opportunity to imagine new models for accessing, managing and distributing energy. The substantial constraints facing islands have driven European companies to excel themselves in terms of creativity. In Réunion island, Akuo Energy was able to organise the concerted and intelligent sharing of farmland, with solar power facilities and solar-powered agricultural greenhouses. Our company has also proven the pertinence of using high-capacity energy storage to enhance the predictability and stability of the solar power produced and thus help the operator anticipate the management and stability of its network.

In Martinique island, the NEMO Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion project that we are carrying out in collaboration with DCNS has already been rewarded by the European NER 300 programme in 2014. This technology has now become a reality thanks to the progress made in our knowledge of materials. With Europe's support, NEMO is about to provide concrete proof that totally carbon-free and continuous electricity can be supplied at a competitive price to more than 600 million inhabitants of islands around the world.

On 11 February, Akuo Energy will sign a historic agreement with an Indonesian State company regarding the deployment of all its island-based electrical devices and know-how across this huge archipelago.

Is this not concrete proof of the merits of the European Energy policy? We must continue to inspire the world.

Event in the spotlight

CONFERENCE: Leading Global Technology and Innovation in the Renewable Sector, 19 January, Abu Dhabi

On 19 January 2015, in the framework of the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi, the European Commission Directorate General for Energy organized a high-level event aimed at showcasing how the





EU can lead Global Technology and Innovation in the Renewable Sector, on the world stage. A panel of high-level speakers discussed Europe's leading role as promoter of effective policies and solutions, and the opportunities offered by its industries as providers of advanced technologies for a global low carbon economy.

The event, gathering key Energy Ministers and European CEOs, created a momentum for the renewable energy companies at worldwide level.

This event was the first of a set of international gatherings at the European Commission's initiative on renewable energy, in the run up to the COP21 (Paris, December 2015). The European Commission, alongside its international partners, is dedicated to create a new momentum and showcase the solutions steaming from the renewable sector to climate change challenges.

[Read more on the conference website](#)

[Read more on our website](#)

Featured posts from Social Media



Maroš Šefčovič @MarosSefcovic

19/01/2014: "Discussing [#EnergyUnion](#) w/ UK Energy&Climate Sec E.Davey: more energy security thru better EU+ wide interconnections. pic.twitter.com/H1jPDuJZiU"



Miguel Arias Cañete @MAC_europa

18/01/2015: "[#CCS](#) is a reality, also in the Emirates. Visiting the first commercial CCS project in the Gulf region [@Masdar](#)"

Question from a Member of the European Parliament

Question by MEP Siegfried Mureşan (PPE) to the Commission.

Subject: Progress on Iasi-Ungheni pipeline

On 24 August 2014, the new Iasi-Ungheni pipeline, the purpose of which is to diversify Moldova's gas supply sources, was inaugurated in the presence of Günther Oettinger, the Commissioner for energy, by the prime ministers of Romania and Moldova. However, although the pipeline has been completed, no gas is yet being supplied through it. When work commenced in 2013, both prime ministers quoted ambitious deadlines for finalisation thereof: the end of 2013, the spring of 2014 and, most recently, August 2014.

Contradictory reasons have been advanced by Romania and Moldova for the delays. The Commissioner for energy then indicated at the end of October that he had received assurances from both that gas supply would commence in mid-November.

What information does the Commission have regarding the delays? Does it consider that the project has been implemented in full, given that no gas has yet been supplied?

Furthermore, what view does the Commission take of plans to extend the pipeline to Chisinau, for which funding of EUR 10 million has been approved and a feasibility study is being carried out? What is the total estimated cost and where will the necessary funding be obtained?

Answer given by Commissioner Arias Cañete:

The new Iasi-Ungheni interconnector plays a crucial role in reducing Moldova's energy dependence. Therefore, the Commission supports this project as well as other interconnection projects aiming at connecting Moldova to the European energy market.

In August 2014, the major works were finally completed and the interconnector inaugurated. While in principle gas can flow through the interconnector, the interconnector still needs to be formally certified and a gas supply contract signed. Recently, the Moldovan government assured the Commission that these issues are being addressed and would be resolved shortly, including the signature of a supply contract that would provide gas supplies for the Ungheni region.

The Commission welcomes Romania's and Moldova's efforts to overcome all remaining obstacles and is confident that gas will be flowing as of January 2015, as both parties have assured. Once this is done, the interconnector will be considered implemented in full.

The second step of the interconnection project is to construct a 130 km pipeline from Ungheni to Chisinau, which would make a major contribution for Moldova's diversification of gas supply. The estimated cost for this pipeline is EUR 70 million. The Commission has approved a EUR 10 million Sector Budget Support the disbursement of which is linked amongst other things to the advancement of this project. The Government intends to use these funds in support of this project. Other funds could come from the European financial institutions (EIB, EBRD) and the EU Neighbourhood Investment Facility. The results of the pre-feasibility study will be presented in December 2014 to the Government and stakeholders, following which

the timeline and financing of the project can be further elaborated.