

13th meeting of the Commission Expert Group on electricity interconnection targets

Brussels, 18 July 2018

Summary minutes

1. Welcome and the presentation of the agenda

The Chair of the Expert Group, Ms Catharina Sikow-Magny, Head of unit for networks and regional initiatives in the Commission's Directorate-General for Energy, opened the morning session and presented the agenda. The Chair also presented the latest developments in the energy policy related to energy interconnectors, the Commission proposal on the Connecting Europe Facility post-2020.

2. Session on electricity interconnectors with third countries

The session built on the discussions and conclusions reached in the previous meeting ([Minutes](#) of the 12th meeting). Mr Tomasz Jerzyniak presented the draft structure and the main content points for the report on electricity interconnectors with the EU neighbouring countries, which was shared with the Experts ahead of the meeting. In addition, ENTSO-E gave an overview of the role and use of the existing interconnectors as reported by its members. The Experts discussed and agreed on the overall structure and the key elements of the report. More specifically, the text will review the current role and benefits of the existing and planned interconnectors with neighbouring countries as well as political and technical conditions based on which such interconnectors are operational. Further, it will develop an assessment framework to determine how and to what extent such interconnectors can help meet Europe's overall energy and climate actions' objectives. As concluded by the Chair, the existing and future electricity interconnectors to be relevant for the EU cooperation with neighbouring countries should help meet the three fundamental pillars of the EU energy policy, i.e. sustainability, market integration (competitiveness and affordability) and security of supply. An updated draft will be shared with the Experts ahead of the next meeting.

3. Session on public acceptance

The Chair opened the session and invited Ms Oana Langa, Policy officer, to present the current status of Commission actions to enhance public participation in the implementation of Projects of Common Interest. Subsequently, Ms Antonella Battaglini made a presentation about why and how TSO's costs related to stakeholder engagement activities be recognized by the regulators. She postulated the need for more adequate regulatory approaches to intensify activities for public inclusions by project promoters.

Further, she also pointed out that the current cost-benefit analysis for large infrastructure projects as the basis for investment decisions, is limited to economic drivers and therefore insufficient to quantify or monetise important societal aspects such as health, wellbeing,

tourism industry, landscape etc. As a consequence, such analysis fails to respond to public concerns and secure support for infrastructure projects.

The Experts raised a number of arguments in the discussion highlighting most notably the need for a better explanation of the causal relationship between decarbonisation, more renewable energy in the electricity system and the development of grid infrastructure. The Experts also noted that delays caused by the lack of public acceptance generate real costs and slow down the energy transition. Therefore, costs of delays and costs of alternative solutions should be better addressed and explained.

The Chair concluded that the Experts' advice would be most useful by developing a more elaborated approach to the current infrastructure needs assessment, while taking into account the costs of no grids, costs of existing bottlenecks and possible alternative solutions to grid development. Moreover, further advice on the design and development of a collaborative open data interactive tool with detailed parameters of planned projects would be necessary. Finally, advice at project level will be also necessary to address project-specific issues.

4. Next steps

A draft report on interconnections with neighbouring countries will be sent to Experts for their comments ahead of the next meeting.

The next, 14th meeting of the Expert Group will take place on 28 September or 2 October 2018. The exact date will be confirmed in due time.

Present

Commission: Catharina Sikow-Magny (Chair), Tomasz Jerzyniak (Policy officer), Oana Langa (Policy officer, in the afternoon session)

Expert Group members:

Robert Schroeder (ENTSO-E),

Anne Boorsma (ENTSOG),

Paulina Beato,

Yannick Phulpin (Eurelectric),

Liutauras Varanavicius (Litgrid),

Morris Bray (National Grid),

Tor Eigil Hodne (Statnett),

Antonella Battaglini (RGI),

Jochen Kreusel (T&D Europe).