

# **14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Commission Expert Group on electricity interconnection targets**

Brussels, 2 October 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 two topics discussed in the meeting were interconnectors with neighbouring countries and public acceptance. The Chair informed that the sector coupling, the topic on the agenda of the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting would not be discussed at the moment by the Expert Group as it is currently a subject of several studies and would be discussed in the forthcoming Madrid Forum.

### **2. Session on electricity interconnectors with third countries**

Mr Tomasz Jerzyniak summarised the main comments received on the first draft of the report on electricity interconnection with third countries. Then, the Chair opened the discussion and invited the Experts to present their individual contributions and opinions.

The Expert raised a number of issues, notably on the differing roles that the interconnectors with neighbouring countries play in the EU electricity system such as ensuring adequacy, stability of the system, exchange of renewables etc. The experts also discussed and assessed the different cooperation schemes that are in place between the EU and its neighbours, including how these schemes could enhance other policy objectives such as setting environmental standards or promoting inclusive governance and economic stability in the third countries.

The Expert concluded that the interconnectors with third countries should not be included in the calculation of the Member States' electricity interconnection levels as the interconnection targets have been defined only at the EU level and having in mind electricity trade between the Member States. At the same time, the Experts came to the conclusion that interconnectors with neighbouring countries play an important role and in well justified cases should be prioritised, especially if they help achieve the European energy and climate policy goals.

### **3. Session on public acceptance**

The Chair recalled the questions that the Experts were invited to reflect on, ahead of the meeting. Firstly, the Experts were asked about the importance and usefulness to develop a dedicated, interactive and collaborative tool for the public to be better informed and have the possibility to engage in the design and planning of grid infrastructure projects. Such tool could include detailed parameters regarding the planning and implementation of grid projects. Secondly, the Experts were asked to identify the various issues, which might cause citizens'

concerns when faced with the construction of new large-scale grid infrastructure. Ms Oana Langa presented the summary of the Experts' opinions.

Overall, the Experts were positive about developing a tool for stakeholder engagement but at the same time raised a number of issues that should be taken into account in order for the tool to be useful for the citizens.

The Experts noted that it is a challenge to involve every stakeholder in the process, thus such tool could be developed by the Commission but be driven by the relevant municipalities and outside a regulatory framework. The process should be run in a voluntary way and present the possibility of involvement to all those affected by infrastructure development. Further, the Experts noted that existing schemes at national levels where there are pre-defined corridors and existing allocation plans should be represented in the possible tool.

The access to data has been emphasised as critical including the need to develop protocols for an easy collection and process of data. The platform could be used for both electricity and grid, therefore the tool should be technology neutral. While attention should be given to the subsidiarity principle in the process, the EU added value should be clearly explained and justified.

The Experts agreed that further work would focus on framing the activity including explanatory statements on the rationale of having such a tool, the characteristics and the caveats. In the meantime, members will participate to a webinar organized by RGI with the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) on their existing "environmental viewer tool" in order to exchange best practices and learn from their experience.

#### **4. Next steps**

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

A draft of the structure of the report on public acceptance will be also sent to the Expert for their comments.

The next, 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Expert Group will take place on 22 November 2018, subject of final confirmation.

## Present

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

Expert Group members:

Héloïse Tixier, Gkizas G. Apostolo (ACER),

Robert Schroeder, Concha Sanchez Perez, Maria Chiara Cavarretta (ENTSO-E),

Anne Boorsma, Malcolm Arthur (ENTSOG),

Maciej Jakubik (CEEP),

Charlotte Renaud (Eurelectric),

Nikolaos Vasilakos (EREF),

Pierre Bernard (FoSG),

Daivis Virbickas (Litgrid),

Michał Smyk (PKEE)

Morris Bray (National Grid),

Antonella Battaglini (RGI),

Tor Eigil Hodne (Statnett),

Jochen Kreusel (T&D Europe).