

Energy in Europe

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Editorial

The discussions of Heads of State or Government at the European Spring Council of 20-21 March were dominated by energy security and the situation in Ukraine.

Energy is a very important aspect in our relations both with Ukraine and Russia. The EU imports 27% of its natural gas from Russia and a large part of this gas flows via Ukraine. If Russia cuts off gas supplies to Ukraine, Europe will be affected in a way similar to what we experienced in 2009.

It is against this background that European leaders called on the European Commission to conduct an in-depth study of EU energy security and to present a comprehensive plan for the reduction of EU energy dependence by June 2014. The interconnection of networks, the Southern gas corridor, the diversification of supply, the exploitation of domestic energy sources, energy efficiency, and solidarity among the EU member states will be key elements of the strategy that will be presented to the June Council.

By developing and implementing such an action plan through common efforts of all Member States, the crisis could also offer opportunities. Most if not all elements of a strategy of energy independence – a European Energy Security Strategy – will also help to integrate more EU energy policies and develop interconnections. Its implementation would require the swift completion of the internal energy market which is a key instrument in delivering what EU citizens aspire to most: economic growth, jobs, secure coverage of their basic energy needs at affordable and competitive prices, and sustainable use of limited resources.

Dominique Ristori



Dominique Ristori
Director-General for
Energy

Press room – Highlight of the month

SPRING EUROPEAN COUNCIL, 20-21 MARCH 2014, BRUSSELS

Among the various issues on the agenda of the European Council meeting – Ukraine, the conclusions on the European Semester, the EU-Africa summit – the Council discussed the new 2030 framework on climate and energy, and its link with European industrial competitiveness and the Europe 2020 strategy. Heads of State or Government agreed on the way forward aiming at a joint approval of the framework no later than by October 2014. Moreover, they agreed that the coherence between greenhouse gas emissions reduction, energy efficiency and the use of renewables should be further improved to ensure cost-effectiveness. In this regard, a reformed Emissions Trading System will play a central role. Guaranteeing flexibility for Member States will also be crucial, to ensure national circumstances are respected. The European Council invited the Commission to provide further details on the proposed 2030 framework by June 2014, including an impact analysis for each Member State, a strategy for fair effort sharing and for boosting modernisation, measures to prevent carbon leakage and ensure long-term security for industrial investments, and the review of the Energy Efficiency Directive.

The European Council invited the Commission to conduct an in-depth study of EU energy security and to present by June 2014 a comprehensive plan for the reduction of EU energy dependence. The Commission is also invited to propose specific interconnection objectives to be attained until 2030.

View the EU Council conclusions: <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/council-meetings?meeting=3be22c85-075e-41a9-8e8d-717e8301ab6b&lang=en&type=EuropeanCouncil>



Guest corner



Markus J. Beyrer
Director General
BUSINESSEUROPE

The stakes for European companies are very high in the 2030 framework for energy and climate policy. On 20-21 March, Heads of State and governments had an important first *rendez-vous*. While the path is still long before the finalization of an agreement, some steps have been made towards a more coherent EU framework matching industrial, energy and climate needs as well as addressing the issue of high energy costs.

Yet, we must be careful in preventing the EU from being once again a lone frontrunner without followers. This is why BUSINESSEUROPE thinks that the 40% greenhouse gas reduction target proposed by the European Commission can only be seen as realistic if a binding international climate agreement with comparable and measurable contributions by our main global competitors can be concluded in 2015.

In the wake of the Ukrainian crisis, the European Council also addressed energy dependence issues by focusing on the need to increase the EU's bargaining power on energy supply and integrate neighboring countries within its own market. A reliable and affordable energy supply is essential for maintaining a competitive industrial sector and value chain in Europe. This is the reason why the reduction of EU external energy dependence is of strategic importance for business.

This is not new, this is something we have always said, but the developments of the last weeks in Ukraine clearly showed us that we must be more persistent in moving in this direction. We have to give a higher emphasis on our own possibilities to cover Europe's energy needs. More needs to be done to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy, in a less distortive and cost-effective way. But in order to meet future domestic demand, this will not be enough. We will have to have a more rational, less emotional debate on other possibilities, such as shale gas and other indigenous resources, but also on diversifying our supplies from third countries.

Event in the spotlight

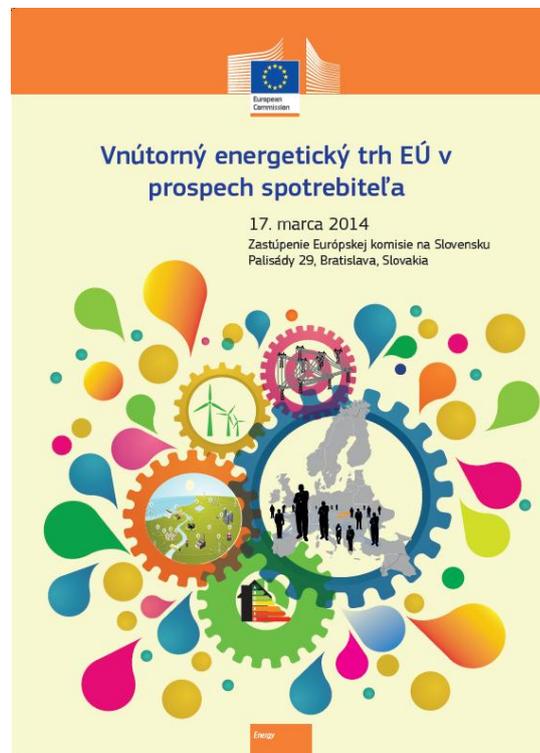
ENERGY CONSUMER DAY

17 MARCH 2014, SLOVAKIA

Market opening, increased cross-border trade, market integration and stronger competition are keeping energy prices in check, assuring security of supply and are a pre-condition to creating a low-carbon economy. However, an internal energy market can only function properly if consumers play an active part.

To make consumers aware of the benefits of their participation in the internal energy market, on 17 March the European Commission in cooperation with the Slovak Government, held an information day in Bratislava. Over 50 registered representatives of electricity and gas enterprises active in the Slovak market, energy services companies, government, National regulatory authorities, and consumer organizations received information on three specific themes: consumer rights and protection of vulnerable consumers in the internal energy market; energy efficiency improvements and possibilities for EU support; smart grid technologies and their integration in smart city concepts.

Participants at the Energy Consumer Day highlighted in particular the importance of the heating sector and emphasized the need for smart metering systems to optimize consumption on the basis of accurate and real-time data.



Featured posts from our Social Media / Audiovisual Corner



Günther Oettinger @GOettingerEU

20 March 2014, Brussels

Meeting with Minister Prodan

"Fruitful discussion on [#EU](#)-[#Ukraine](#) [#energy](#) relations with Ukrainian Energy Minister Prodan yesterday. europa.eu/!yJ96PF"





20 March 2014, Brussels
Joint press briefing by Günther OETTINGER and Yuri PRODAN, Ukrainian Energy Minister

Watch:

http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?site_lang=en&ref=I087677

Background story

MARCH INFRINGEMENTS PACKAGE

Reasoned Opinion

Energy services: the Commission asks LITHUANIA to ensure that heat and hot-water consumers are provided with individual meters

The Commission has formally requested Lithuania to bring its national law in line with the EU Energy Services Directive (2006/32/EC) as regards heat and hot-water metering and billing. Under this Directive the Member States have to ensure that final energy customers are provided with competitively priced individual meters that accurately reflect their actual consumption. Individual metering plays a crucial role in promoting the efficient use of energy as it allows energy consumers to better monitor their individual consumption of electricity, gas, heating/cooling or hot water. Individual metering is also needed for the provision of individual billing based on actual consumption. The Directive had to be fully transposed into national law by 17 May 2008. The Commission's request takes the form of a reasoned opinion under the EU infringement procedure. If Lithuania does not comply with its legal obligation within two months, the Commission may decide to refer it to the Court of Justice. For more information on the Energy Services Directive: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/efficiency/end-use_en.htm

Read the full press release on March infringements: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-241_en.htm

COMMISSIONER OETTINGER AT THE REAL ESTATE FAIR IN CANNES

From 11 to 14 March the European Commission participated in the MIPIM fair, the biggest world fair for the real estate sector that took place in Cannes. In a joint stand, DG Energy and DG Enterprise presented the policies on energy efficient buildings and smart cities, and the available financial support under the Structural funds and Horizon 2020. DG Energy organised a session on the common voluntary certification scheme for non-residential buildings, that the Commission is supposed to adopt soon with the Energy Performance of Buildings directive. Commissioner Oettinger delivered speeches about re-inventing Europe and energy transition, to an audience which included a panel of 80 CEOs. He also took part in the Mayors' think-tank, and presented an award for the best "Green building and innovation" project.

Read Commissioner Oettinger's full speech as part of the "Masterminds Europe – Re-inventing Europe" panel at the MIPIM Fair: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-14-214_en.htm

Question from a Member of the European Parliament

Question By MEP Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)

Subject: Energy poverty

Energy poverty, defined as a situation where a household is unable to access a socially and materially necessary level of energy services at home, has been on the rise, in particular since the start of the economic crisis. Several points relating to this were incorporated into Directives 2009/72/EC and 2009/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, which concern common rules for the internal market in electricity and natural gas, respectively. Among other things, the directives require the Member States to adopt a definition of 'vulnerable customers'.

- 1. Can the Commission provide data on the number of people considered to be in a situation of energy poverty in each Member State following utility price increases?**
- 2. Can the Commission say which Member States are in line to reach the energy targets set for 2020?**
- 3. What action does the Commission intend to take to overcome energy poverty in the EU and ensure that all citizens have access to basic energy services?**

1. Data on the number of people considered to be in a situation of energy poverty are not available at EU level. While Member States are obliged under the 3rd Energy Package to define the concept of vulnerable customers and to protect them, there is no obligation for Member States to collect and report harmonised data on energy consumer vulnerability and energy poverty.

2. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the Impact Assessment accompanying its recently adopted Communication "A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 up to 2030"

3. The Commission is conducting compliance checks of the 3rd Energy Package Directives to ensure full transposition in the Member States. Where non-conformity of Member States' legislation with the EU acquis is identified, infringement proceedings will be launched when justified. In 2012, the Commission set up an expert group on vulnerable consumers in energy. The report completed by the group in late-2013 was published as a guidance document in January 2014 with the aim of assisting Member States to meet their obligations on vulnerable customers and energy poverty under EU energy legislation.

As vulnerability is a phenomenon that cuts across sectors, the Commission is now conducting a study to identify vulnerability patterns across key consumer markets, including energy. The study findings, to be published in 2015, should help identify possible future policy actions to mitigate vulnerability.

Figure of the month

We have set ambitious goals for the roll-out of smart meters to consumers – **80%** by 2020.

Read the full speech of Commissioner Oettinger "The 2030 energy targets: What challenges for innovation?", pronounced at the Conference organised by Knowledge 4 Innovation on "Europe's energy future. Efficiency and Competitiveness through Innovation and Smart Integration" in Brussels on 19 March: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-14-241_en.htm

For more information: <http://www.knowledge4innovation.eu/europe%E2%80%99s-energy-future-efficiency-and-competitiveness-through-innovation-and-smart-integration>

Coming up next

Scheduled for Commission adoption

June 2014

- Report on state of implementation of the internal energy market

July 2014

- Communication on nuclear off-site emergency preparedness and response and nuclear third party liability and insurance
- Communication on the internal energy market at retail level

Calls For Tenders

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy/tenders/index_en.htm

Until 4 April 2014

Support to EU wind energy technology development and demonstration, with a focus on cost competitiveness and smart integration

Until 10 April 2014

Whole-body counter measurements to assess internal exposure of radiation workers

Until 13 May 2014

Condensation trails from biofuel/kerosene blends scoping study

Until 23 May 2014

Multiple framework contract with reopening of competition for qualified legal, technical and economic expertise in the field of energy efficiency to support the Commission in the design,

Events

7 April 2014

Hannover Messe - Metropolitan solutions EU side event on Smart cities and Communities, Hannover, Germany

8 April 2014

Benchmarking the smart metering deployment in the EU, Brussels

10-11 April 2014

Lech Energy Forum, Austria

Read more: <http://energy.lech.eu/>

Public Consultations

Until 17 April

Retail Energy Market

To participate:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/consultations/20140416_energy_retail_market_en.htm

Until 28 April 2014

Progress towards the 2020

energy efficiency objective and a 2030 energy efficiency policy framework

preparation and proper implementation of EU initiatives and legislation in the area of energy efficiency

Also ongoing (no deadline)

Horizon 2020: Experts wanted for biggest EU research programme yet

To participate:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/efficiency/consultations/20140428_eed_2020_2030_en.htm

Until 9 May 2014

Public consultation

"Establishment of the annual priority lists for the development of network codes and guidelines for 2015 and beyond"

To participate:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/consultations/20140509_network_code_en.htm

Colophon

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