

Press Statement

Joint Press Statement by Ministers and Representatives of Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia and the European Commission

09 February 2015

Today representatives of Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia as well as European Commission Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič and Commissioner for Climate Action & Energy Miguel Arias Cañete have held the first meeting of the Central East South Europe Gas Connectivity (CESEC) High Level Group in Sofia. The objective of the High Level Group is to establish a regional priority infrastructure roadmap and advance its implementation in order to develop missing infrastructure and improve security of gas supplies.

Timely implementation of infrastructure is particularly important in view of the vulnerable situation of the Central Eastern Europe and South East Europe region. This was demonstrated most recently by the European Energy Security Strategy and Stress Tests performed last year. Security of energy supply is one of the building blocks of the Energy Union project, one of the priorities for the European Commission.

Today, the High Level Group adopted its Terms of Reference which define the specific scope of its activities and governance structure. The discussions covered both external and internal aspects of the supply situation in the region, with a specific focus on interconnections and on the optimal use of existing infrastructure. Further expert level analyses will be carried out in sub-groups looking at specific infrastructure corridors with the aim of identifying missing links and other barriers hindering effective market integration. The High-Level Group agreed that an Action Plan with concrete deliverables to accelerate realisation of the identified projects will be adopted by early summer. Its implementation will be regularly monitored by the High Level Group itself, thus building on the political momentum to end market fragmentation and prevent potential future supply crises.

Whilst the High Level Group has been established by the abovementioned Member States, neighbouring countries will also be involved to ensure a regional approach beyond the borders of the EU. Input from National Energy Regulatory Authorities, ENTSOG, ACER, the Energy Community Secretariat and project promoters (TSO or non-TSO) as well as International Financial Institutions will provide the basis for a solid assessment.

The High Level Group will meet again by early summer to take stock of the progress achieved on expert level and establish the Action Plan.