

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE ROLE OF REGIONAL INITIATIVES
OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES RECEIVED AND WAY FORWARD**

I) OVERVIEW OF REPLIES TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE ROLE OF REGIONAL INITIATIVES

The public consultation on the future role of Regional Initiatives launched on 7 December 2010, officially closed on 15 February 2011. Member States, EU and national level organisations, business and professional federations, individual companies, regulators and Transmission System Operators have all participated in the consultation – most by means of submissions.

The present document provides an overview of the main trends emerging from this consultation.

General overview

The Commission services received a total of 48 responses to the consultation. Contributions have been published online in accordance with Commission practice and applicable rules (see http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/consultations/doc/20110215_regional_initiatives_contributions.zip).

Online responses can be broken down as follows, according to the category respondents identified themselves with:

Respondents to the online public consultation on the future role of the RIs

- Industry Federation – 13 responses
- Company – 10 responses
- Transmission System Operators – 7 responses
- Member States – 11 responses
- EU Wide Organisations – 4 responses
- Regulators – 1 responses
- Others – 2 responses

Overview by themes

Tasks of the Regional Initiatives (RIs)

Generally, the work achieved by the Regions so far is assessed positively.

For the future, most of respondents welcomed very positively the proposals made by the Commission.

The fact that the RIs should implement the Network Codes is positively received even if respondents seem to have different opinion on what network codes will look like and the level of details it will bring. Early implementation is seen with a mix of interest and doubts.

On infrastructure, respondents expressed general support that Regional Initiatives should spend the necessary attention to network development but there are still some concerns about the repartition of tasks between the ENTSO-E and G, ACER, the Commission and the RIs.

On pilot testing most of the respondents are in favour even if some of them do consider that this task will not be necessary any more with the Third Package.

On market coupling by 2015 for electricity the objective was largely shared, whereas for gas a wide majority thinks further studies and analysis are needed.

Composition of the Regional Initiatives (RIs)

Most respondents are in favour of the status quo for the composition of electricity regions but some of them do favour merging the Northern Region, the UK and the Central West region by 2012.

On the suggested split of the South South East Gas region, some respondents expressed reservation. Most of the Iberian respondents are against Italy joining the South Gas Region at this stage to avoid a slow down of the achievements even though in Italy there appears to be support for the idea.

Some stakeholders are in favour of the definition of criteria to assess whether or not adjustments are necessary.

Most of the respondents would prefer a flexible way of setting the regions even if some of them would like a EU decision (annex of gas and electricity regulation).

Governance of the Regional Initiatives (RIs)

Some respondents expressed doubts about the new Regional Steering Committee suggested by the Commission in the governance scheme. They consider that such a committee would bring a new layer of bureaucracy in the system.

Most respondents welcome very positively a stronger participation of Member States, Commission and ACER in the RIs.

II) Way forward

a) Gas Forum (21-22 March 2011) conclusions on Regional Initiatives.

12. New Regional Initiatives concept (report on public consultation)

(26) The Forum notes the report by the Commission on the results of the public consultation and supports the invitation to the existing Gas Regional Initiatives to present their work program for 2012-2014 to the Commission and to ACER by September recognising that further progress on the Gas Target Model would be helpful.

(27) The Forum discusses the Commission's initial thoughts about the composition and governance structure and looks forward to hearing further ideas taking due account of the work programme of the existing Gas Regional Initiatives. The active role of Member States, the Commission and ACER in the Regional Initiatives is considered to be valuable.

b) Electricity Forum (23-24 May 2011) conclusions on Regional Initiatives.

The Forum welcomed the proposal of the Commission, following its Communication and the public consultation, to adapt the Regional Initiative's tasks but to retain their composition whilst leaving the regional governance to remain flexible at this stage.

The Forum supported the Commission's request for a concrete "EU Energy Work plan 2011-2014" at a Pan-European and regional level which, in order to focus the Regional Initiatives on the results, they should deliver by 2014, as decided at the European Council in February 2011. The Forum welcomed that ACER intends to ensure consistency of these work plans.