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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Energy and Development
- Council conclusions (28 November 2016)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on Energy and Development, as adopted by the Council at its 3505th meeting held on 28 November 2016.

Council conclusions on Energy and Development

1. The Council recalls its conclusions of 20 July 2015 on EU Energy Diplomacy which underlined the need to ensure coherence between EU foreign and energy policies. The Council further recalls the Energy Union strategy and calls for Europe to become the world leader in renewable energy, including research, innovation and technologies. The Council underlines that the EU's development policy and actions in the energy sector are a fundamental part of a revitalised European energy and climate diplomacy. The Council underlines the importance of policy coherence for sustainable development and the need to strengthen linkages between development, energy, climate, environment, water, and food and nutrition security, as well as research and innovation policies.
2. The Council recognises that access to energy is crucial for eradicating poverty and for delivering on the 2030 Agenda and achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs), notably SDG7 on access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, and SDG13 on climate action. The Council stresses that energy is also comprehensively linked to the achievement of all other SDGs. The Council reaffirms the EU and its Member States' commitment to assist partner countries in providing energy access to 500 million people by 2030 and stresses the importance of decentralised renewable energy in reaching universal access to energy.
3. In line with the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy and the related Council conclusions of 17 October 2016¹, the EU stands ready to support neighbouring countries and all relevant development partners around the world in their energy transition efforts, which are essential for building resilience. The Council acknowledges that lack of or uneven access to energy is part of the root causes of irregular migration.

¹ 13026/16.

4. The Council stresses the need for an EU strategic approach for cooperation and development in energy, with three interlinked objectives: i) of addressing the lack of energy access; ii) of increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy generation to achieve a sustainable balance between energy production and consumption; and iii) of contributing to the global fight against climate change in line with the Paris Agreement and the related Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) presented by the Parties.
5. The Council welcomes the recent EU ratification of the COP21 Paris Agreement, which enabled its entry into force, confirming the EU's readiness to be at the core of the transition of the global economy towards a climate-neutral future, resource efficient and low-carbon societies. It further supports the promotion of affordable, sustainable and safe access to energy and energy services as essential elements for sustainable economic growth as well as for stability and security across the world. The Council recalls that cleaner and more sustainable energy production and consumption will be central for delivering on the EU commitment to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century.
6. The Council further encourages the EU and its Member States to promote partnerships and structured political dialogue on sustainable energy with their neighbours and all relevant development partners, including the private sector, drawing on the EU Energy Diplomacy and EU Climate Diplomacy Action Plans, and in order to promote win-win solutions and mutually beneficial cooperation, including on innovation. The EU underlines the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships such as the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) initiative for delivering on SDG 7. Policy dialogue and joint activities should notably be reinforced in the framework of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, in view of the 2017 Africa-EU Summit and within the Africa EU Energy Partnership in particular. Similarly, the EU should continue its efforts in the context of the CELAC-EU Action Plan, the Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy, the Joint Declarations concluded with several African partner countries and Pacific states, and the partnerships for renewable energy supported in all these countries through the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA), as well as its work with key partners such as the US, in support of sustainable energy.

7. The Council supports the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) launched by African Heads of State at COP21 and led by the African Union. It welcomes progress made on the AREI's governance at the 28th Summit of the African Union in Kigali and on implementing commitments made by partners of the AREI at COP21 to mobilise 10 billion US dollars cumulatively from 2015 to 2020.
8. The Council recognises that unlocking Africa's energy potential in a sustainable manner and interconnecting Europe and Africa across the Mediterranean implies further increasing the generation capacity, developing cross-border interconnections and energy transit across Africa and between Africa and the EU, greater energy efficiency, mutually beneficial technology transfer, as well as off-grid sustainable energy systems and adequate technology to reduce rural-urban divide in electricity access, including supply through solar systems for rural households. It also recognises the need to develop existing and new energy connectivity across Europe and Asia. In that context, the Council acknowledges the transitional role that gas can play in meeting energy demands for particular countries and their sustainable energy transformation towards renewable energies and increased energy efficiency.
9. The Council recognises that the use of traditional biomass for cooking dominates the energy balance, in particular in sub Saharan Africa, and has major impact on health and wellbeing, especially for women and girls. Therefore the Council stresses the importance of promoting clean cooking solutions.

10. The Council supports efforts to make international energy institutions more representative and inclusive of emerging and developing economies, to support regional and multilateral initiatives, and to promote stable, sustainable and market based energy systems. The European Union moreover supports strengthening appropriate frameworks for the energy sector that are conducive to trade and investment all around the world and in particular in African countries and regional organisations. Platforms and policy processes, supported, inter alia, by technical assistance facilities, aiming at enabling conducive environments to investments in the sustainable energy sector, should be reinforced and mainstreamed with an emphasis on existing platforms and instruments for coordination. To this end, the EU knowhow and expertise, at Union, country and local levels, will be shared to the benefit of the consumers and people both in Europe and in the partner countries. The Council recognises the importance of the EU Energy Initiative as a forum for exchange amongst the EU and its Member States in order to promote the coherence of the European energy development cooperation.
11. The Council stresses the importance of ownership in partner countries of reinforced governance for meeting the needs in sustainable energy and for promoting an appropriate and transparent regulatory framework for the energy sector. The Council further stresses the importance of an enabling environment to overcome market distortions, financing obstacles and regulatory barriers that impede private sector engagement, including micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The Council also underlines the need to address and develop opportunities that the sustainable energy sector brings to the MSMEs. The Council recalls the need to gradually eliminate environmentally harmful subsidies that are incompatible with sustainable development, including for fossil fuels, and to promote solutions that are resource efficient, climate-smart and contribute more effectively to poverty eradication. The Council recognises the importance of technical assistance for reforming energy policy and institutional and legal frameworks.

12. As investments needed to achieve universal access to sustainable energy are estimated to be almost EUR 1 trillion up to 2030², the Council underlines the need to crowd in additional funds, including with the involvement of the private sector and the use of innovative financing and project development initiatives and instruments such as ElectriFI, the Africa-EU Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme (RECP), and the Regional Investment Facilities, as well as through the guarantee fund proposed as part of the External Investment Plan. Private sector engagement should be further enhanced with regard to the financing of sustainable energy infrastructures and the related creation of green jobs. The EU will work together with its partners in the framework of existing initiatives as listed in May 2016³ by the Africa EU Energy Partnership, such as the African Renewable Energy Initiative, notably to build on existing programmes, identify priority projects and programmes, and in fulfilment of the Joint Declaration between the European Union, the European Investment Bank and the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) on reinforced cooperation in the field of sustainable energy, as well as in the framework of the continued and broadened EU-New Zealand energy partnership for the Pacific.
13. The Council emphasises the key contribution of women in the energy value chains, in particular in promoting renewable energies and increasing access to energy and energy services. The Council stresses the need to further support the empowerment of women, girls and youth, and their involvement in the energy sector, including through women entrepreneurship, education and vocational training. In this context, the Council underlines the importance of increasing women's access to sustainable energy services in line with the EU Gender Action Plan.

² International Energy Agency, 2011. World Energy Outlook 2011, Energy for All.

³ European Union Energy Initiative Partnership Dialogue Facility, Mapping of Energy Initiatives and Programs in Africa, Final Report, May 2016.

14. Civil society organisations and local authorities also have an important role to play as critical partners in a bottom-up transition to a global low-carbon economy and society through adequate planning and investment, where energy efficiency should be enshrined in education syllabuses and vocational training curricula.
 15. The Council recognises the enabling role of digital technologies in facilitating the management of electricity and electricity consumption, and supports the use of digital solutions in promoting education for energy efficiency.
 16. The Council further stresses the importance of raising awareness and of communicating results of EU cooperation and development in energy both to European and to partner countries' to mobilise and involve citizens towards this goal. It therefore calls on the Commission to ensure proper linkages with the EU Results Framework and to report in the framework of the Annual Report on the EU's development and external assistance policies and their implementation. To this end, the Council stresses the need for the Commission and Member States to work towards the harmonisation of definitions, indicators and methodologies for the monitoring of global progress towards the achievement of SDG 7.
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