



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

Brussels, 19 May 2016
(OR. en)

8237/16

ENER 127
COEST 103
RELEX 303

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Council

Subject: **Any other business**

External relations

- (a) Southern Gas Corridor - Advisory Council
 - (b) Strategic Group for international energy cooperation
 - (c) EU-OPEC
 - (d) Iran
 - (e) Euro-Mediterranean Energy Cooperation
 - (f) EU-US Energy Council
 - (g) Clean Energy Ministerial
-

Delegations will find attached factual information on recent and upcoming events and developments relating to the item "External relations" on the agenda of the TTE (Energy) Council on 6 June.

(a) Southern Gas Corridor - Advisory Council

The 2nd Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) Advisory Council took place on 29 February in Baku. It was opened and co-chaired by the President of Azerbaijan Aliyev and Vice-president Šefčovič. EU High Representative/Vice President Mogherini gave a key note speech in the closing session. Participants to the SGC Advisory Council included energy ministers of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Croatia, Albania and Montenegro. Greece, Italy and UK were represented at senior official level. The US State Department, CEOs from the main SGC companies and consortia (SOCAR, BP, TAP, TANAP) as well as representatives from the main International Financing Institutions also attended. All speakers reconfirmed their determination to continue and deepen the long term strategic relationship among the stakeholder countries to the Southern Gas Corridor. A Joint Declaration was signed at the end of the meeting. The presence of both VP Šefčovič and HRVP Mogherini ensured a prominent EU role and illustrated the EU's political commitment to the SGC. Overall, the meeting proved valuable in bringing together all stakeholders to reconfirm their clear and strong commitment to a timely completion of the project.

(b) Strategic Group for international energy cooperation

The Strategic Group for international energy cooperation met on 18 March in Brussels, back-to-back with the Directors-General meeting. Discussions focused on EU cooperation with multilateral fora and more specifically on how EU participation in multilateral fora like the G7, the G20 and the Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) can help the EU to advance its energy and climate agenda, and build on the Energy Union agenda. Participants confirmed the interest to strengthen cooperation with all three multilateral fora in order to achieve the major global goals in coherence and in cooperation with other multilateral organisations. The need for the EU to have a coherent approach towards all three fora and to get engaged in the Mission Innovation initiative was also stressed as was the usefulness of involvement of the private sector.

(c) EU-OPEC

In the framework of the EU-OPEC Energy Dialogue launched in 2004, the 12th EU-OPEC High Level Meeting took place in Vienna on 21 March. The EU side presented the latest developments in its energy policies, implementation of the Energy Union, and macro-economic developments in the EU and globally. Joint EU-OPEC initiatives carried out in the framework of the Energy Dialogue were also presented.

The Commission conveyed the message that the current low oil prices should not be seen as an "existential threat" by OPEC, but as an opportunity to reduce environmental harmful subsidies. The vast potential of energy efficiency to reduce the environmental impact of fossil fuels was underlined. The EU expressed its availability to share expertise and best practices with OPEC countries in the framework of our dialogue and in other fora.

The contribution of some OPEC countries in reaching the agreement in Paris was commended.

(d) Iran

On 16-17 April, EU High Representative/Vice President Mogherini and Commissioner Arias Cañete alongside other Commissioners went to Iran in order to explore the possibility for a gradual reengagement with Iran on different levels and in different sectoral areas, including on energy (oil, gas, renewables, energy efficiency and civil nuclear cooperation). As a result of the mission, it was inter alia agreed to launch a High Level Energy Dialogue on non-nuclear energy. This would include oil, gas and electricity, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

(e) Euro-Mediterranean Energy Cooperation

The EU-Turkey High Level Energy Dialogue was held in Istanbul on 28 January. The importance of Turkey as a key country for the EU's energy security and as a regional energy hub was underlined, and the joint commitment to the successful implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor re-affirmed so as to allow gas to flow to Europe by 2020. Other issues discussed include nuclear safety, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.

As regards regional cooperation with the Southern Neighbourhood, meetings of the UfM Platforms on Gas and Electricity and on Regional Energy Market were held on 7 and 8 March in Barcelona. As a result of these meetings, the platforms' work programmes are about to be finalized. In the framework of the EU-Algeria energy dialogue, the Commission and the Algerian authorities have organized an EU-Algeria Business Forum on Energy, aiming to promote EU investments in the Algerian energy sector (gas and renewable energy/energy efficiency). The Business Forum took place in Alger on 23 and 24 May and brought together Algerian policy makers and representatives of the European energy industry.

(f) EU-US Energy Council

On 4 May, the seventh meeting of the EU-US Energy Council was held in Washington D.C., with the participation of EU High Representative/Vice President Mogherini, European Commission Vice President Maroš Šefčovič and European Commissioner Arias Cañete. Minister for the Environment of the Netherlands Sharon Dijksma represented the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. On the US side, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz participated. A Joint Statement was issued following this meeting (*cf.* doc. 8812/16). The discussions focused on energy security challenges, the importance of fully integrating the EU's internal market, the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and the importance of increased co-operation, including in the energy sector, to ensure that the commitments made at COP21 are fulfilled. An important achievement was the agreement to establish a Climate Change Working Group under the EU-US Energy Council, alongside the existing working groups on energy security, technology and policy, with a commitment to hold a first meeting before the end of 2016.

(g) Clean Energy Ministerial

The seventh Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM7) and inaugural Mission Innovation (MI) Ministerial will take place on 1-2 June in San Francisco, California, with energy ministers and other high-level delegates from over 20 countries and the European Commission. The meeting will focus on advancing clean energy policies and technologies as one of the key responses to the commitments made at COP21 in Paris at the end of 2015, given that CEM Members account for some 90% of global clean energy investments and more than 75% of greenhouse gas emissions.