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- Council conclusions (22 May 2018)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on Energy and development, as adopted by the Council at its 3618th meeting held on 22 May 2018.

Energy and development**Council conclusions**

1. With the aim of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and leaving no-one behind, the EU and its Member States seek to unlock the potential of the energy sector by pursuing, in a cost-effective manner, three interlinked key objectives in the area of energy and development: (1) addressing the lack of access to energy; (2) increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; and (3) contributing to the global fight against climate change in line with the Paris Agreement and the related Nationally Determined Contributions presented by the Parties.¹
2. For developing partner countries, the Council recalls that the EU and its Member States address energy poverty at all levels by contributing to universal access to energy that is affordable, modern, reliable and sustainable, with a strong focus on renewable energy, energy efficiency and sound governance of energy systems. The Council recognises that access to energy is crucial for eradicating poverty and that energy transition is essential for delivering on the 2030 Agenda including the Sustainable Development Goals. The Council calls upon all stakeholders to target their support, including through relevant social policy instruments, in particular to poor people and vulnerable geographical areas. The Council underlines that energy poverty and its related consequences are amongst the root causes of irregular migration as it moves people to pursue better livelihoods elsewhere.

¹ As detailed in the 2017 European Consensus on Development (10108/17)

3. The Council underlines the potential of cross-sectoral linkages to maximise multiple benefits and synergies by promoting sustainable energy as an enabler for the SDGs. Special attention should be given to the interlinkages between energy and other themes, including poverty eradication, gender equality, jobs, sustainable agricultural growth, food security, education, health, clean water and sanitation, peace and security, refugees and other situations of displacement. Risks of trade-offs, inter alia among sustainable energy, food security and water, will have to be managed in order to increase resource-use efficiency, harnessing synergies, and improving governance and greater policy coherence across sectors. The Council further stresses the importance of promoting policy initiatives and support partner countries in planning, coordinating and implementing an integrated approach to concretely address the interlinkages between land, food, water and energy.

4. The Council acknowledges the need to mainstream gender equality in all development and energy actions, and recalls the commitments in the EU Gender Action Plan. In particular, the Council underlines the importance of ensuring equal access to and control over energy resources among men and women. The Council stresses the need to further support the empowerment of women, girls and youth, and their equal involvement in the energy sector, including through women's entrepreneurship, education, vocational training and improved access to financial resources.

5. The Council recalls its conclusions on Energy and Development² and on implementing the EU Global Strategy³. Supporting Africa and the EU's Neighbourhood in their energy transition to affordable, secure and sustainable energy is an important part of the external dimension of the EU's Energy Union. Supporting better coherence of energy and climate policies, including through coordinated climate and energy diplomacies, to enable energy transition to be aligned with the Paris Agreement goals will also be an important contribution to state and societal resilience in partner countries. In line with the EU Global Strategy and the European Consensus on Development, the EU stands ready to support all development partner countries in their transition efforts, essential for building resilience and stability. The Council reiterates the need for full compliance with international environmental and nuclear safety standards in partner countries, as stated in the European Consensus on Development.
6. The Council further stresses that the transformation of the energy sector and the rest of the economy are inseparable. As a key driver of the economy, the energy sector plays a key role in sustainable development.
7. The Council stresses the necessity to strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation and capacities in the sustainable energy and climate sector. The Council moreover supports efforts towards increasing the cost-effectiveness of the energy sector that are conducive to regional integration, trade and investment such as Regional Sustainable Energy Centres anchored in the regional economic communities.

² 14839/16

³ 6981/17

8. The Council welcomes the Commission Staff Working Document 'Empowering Development: Implementation of the new European Consensus on Development in energy cooperation'⁴. In particular, the Council agrees that the following three drivers are of critical importance to achieving the development objectives in the area of energy: (i) promoting political ownership and partnerships for implementation, (ii) improving governance and reforms of the energy sector, and (iii) boosting investment through appropriate policies and regulatory frameworks, including through innovative financial instruments. The Council also stresses the importance of supporting the digitalisation of the energy sector, as digital solutions are proving to be instrumental to cope with the increasing complexity of energy systems. The Council also encourages the Commission to increase visibility, monitoring, knowledge-sharing and exchange of best practices of EU actions, including through cooperation on science, technology and innovation, in the area of energy and sustainable development.
9. The Council commends the decisions and commitments on energy and development taken at the Eastern Partnership Summit and the 5th African Union – European Union Summit which took place in November 2017.
10. The Council further welcomes concrete action in the area of energy and development including progress achieved with the EU4Energy Initiative and the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative. The Council acknowledges the potential of other partnership initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance.
11. In the area of energy and development, the Council encourages the use of sustainable procurement to achieve the appropriate balance between the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – for the procurement of goods, services or works during the various stages of projects.
12. The Council reiterates the role of civil society organisations and local authorities as decisive partners to achieve SDG 7, notably as partners in enabling energy access in both urban and rural areas.

⁴ 15866/17

13. The Council underlines the importance of mobilising all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector so as to increase investments, by mitigating financial risks and leveraging additional resources for energy and development. In this context, the Council commends the thematic initiatives supported through blending and welcomes the design of the investment window on sustainable energy and connectivity under the European Fund for Sustainable Development of the External Investment Plan. This instrument supports investments and increased access to financing, including in renewable energy and energy efficiency. It benefits partner countries and the private sector in Africa and the European Neighbourhood seeking to effectively use sustainable energy as a driver for inclusive economic growth, sustainable development and thus address specific socioeconomic root causes of migration.
14. The Council acknowledges the Commission's efforts to strengthen development and financial additionality in EU blending operations, particularly in the area of energy and development. The Council reiterates the commitment of the EU and its Member States to use blending in line with the principles set out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development.⁵
15. The Council recalls that the EU and its Member States will also promote the phasing-out of environmentally harmful fossil fuel subsidies and support solutions that are safe and sustainable, resource efficient, climate-smart and contribute more effectively to poverty eradication.
16. The Council welcomes actions for accelerated SDG7 implementation, including clean cooking and heating solutions, closing the electricity access gap and harnessing the potential of decentralised and local renewable energy solutions.

⁵ Outcome document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development: Addis Ababa Action Agenda, paragraph 48 (15 July 2015)

17. The Council stresses the importance of global partnerships on energy and development aimed at empowering stakeholders at all levels to implement holistic transformation processes. It therefore encourages the Member States and the Commission to ensure an effective collaboration and coordination, including in the preparation of the 24th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2018.
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