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Event: INOGATE conference on statistics in Zagreb

Author: Gabriel Namtalashvili

### **Statistics under Chopin’s Music**

#### **At the INOGATE International Conference in Zagreb**

Wars, emergence of new states and laws, change of governments and ministers – Goran Granich, Director General of EIHP Croatia’s Energy Institute in the field of energy balances has seen all of this during his 40-year professional career. However, as he says the significance, objectives and need for statistics in general and particularly energy statistics have remained unchanged despite such ambivalent background. Furthermore, they acquired a new dimension.

Speaking frankly, I deliberately selected this point of view from the very beginning out of many interesting and authoritative speeches made at the international conference in Zagreb organised by the EU’s INOGATE programme. The conference was dedicated to the achievements under the Action Plans on Statistics of 2012-2014. For me, the remark made by the distinguished professor greatly explained the mandate of statistics in the current conditions. To tell you briefly, it should not change as new ministers come or go.

### **Code of Norms**

By the way, the presentation prepared by F.Diaz Alonso and delivered at the conference by Michele Skivazappa (EC, Eurostat) spoke about the Code of Norms of European Statistics. I dare to say that the general public, for instance in Georgia who recently signed the Association Agreement with the EU does not know much about this undoubtedly important and remarkable document. It underlines that “the independence of national statistical institutions and Eurostat from political or any other external interference with the development, production and dissemination of statistical information is envisaged by the law”.

Meri Daushvili, Head of the Georgian national statistics “Sakstati” spoke about this priority: “Indeed, it is important for us that any product that we prepare including energy statistics is not politically loaded. No matter if it is for the Ministry of Economy or the Ministry of Finance, for business or regional administrations it should be truthful and reliable. In this case, it will help the development of the sector and the country’s economy in overall”.

It is understandable that political will only is not sufficient to achieve this goal. What also needed is the modern instruments, methodology and system for collecting quality data. ITS project of the INOGATE in energy statistics assists the Partner Countries (the PCs represented in Zagreb were Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine) in achieving these goals. High ranking officials of the EC, Eurostat, International Energy Agency, National statistical institutes, Ministries as well as the INOGATE statistical network participated in the conference.

### **From Copenhagen to Zagreb**

This was the title of one of the sessions of the Zagreb conference. The Copenhagen conference was one of the starting points of the ITS project which was launched in February 2012. Therefore, Gloria Aguinaldo, Key Expert of ITS believes that the activities carried out so far represent an important step towards higher quality energy statistics in the PCs. The success became possible due to the close collaboration, coordination and the constructive dialogue at the national as well as international levels.

Project Director, Doctor Peter Larsen spoke about the key achievements in the area of energy statistics. Action Plans have been developed for 11 PCs, 9 out of these have been adopted. Regional cooperation has been enhanced; capacities of national institutions to collect, process and disseminate more reliable data have been increased. ITS implemented 17 technical assistance missions to the PCs during the project. Methodologies have been elaborated – models for producing energy balances, collection of monthly statistical data, statistical data on energy carrier prices as well as energy efficiency data. National meetings have been organised with the participation of key stakeholders with the view of increasing awareness on the importance of energy statistics for energy planning and distribution of work and exchange of information among the key players.

Georgia, for example was offered to organise the institutional system of energy statistics as part of the development of institutional and legislative frameworks. A model has been developed to collect energy statistics, monitoring of the data forms adopted by the GEOSTAT has been performed too. Forms and questionnaires have been developed for various forms of energy for which the data was gathered during 2014. Finally, assistance was provided for the compilation of the first official energy balance. For 2015, it is planned that the system of data collection and preparation of energy balance will be improved further.

Michele Skivazappa, Eurostat representative at the conference noted: “The main benefit that the national institutions draw from the programme is enhancing their capacities for gathering, processing and disseminating data of the necessary quality which can be used for the development of policy based in factual data”.

### **“Freshman’s Experience**

Croatia joined the EU recently – has been the member since 1 July 2013. The “Freshman’s” experience is particularly interesting for the INOGATE PCs – it is an opportunity for good analysis. I noticed that

besides the people directly involved in the energy statistics, Croatia was represented at the conference by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Mr. Ioshko Klisovich. His presentation was about “energy diplomacy”. The country, where only one out of 50 energy producers is managed by the state is working on the development of energy plans for 2030. High hopes are attached to the construction of Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline connecting Croatia with the Caspian energy resources. As we know, it will go through Georgia.

Energy security is high on the agenda of diplomatic negotiations between the EU member states, and not only between them – noted the Deputy Minister. Energy statistics is one of the key instruments for energy planning and ensuring energy security. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Croatia assigns great significance to the INOGATE programme and recognises that energy policy is inseparable from the data acquired in accordance with the international standards. Therefore, “energy diplomacy” relies on statistical data. Such approach is particularly relevant in the context of reducing energy vulnerability.

Marco Kristov, Director General of the National Statistical Bureau of Croatia shared the experience of annual collection of data on renewable energy sources – biogas, biofuel, wood pallets etc. There is an energy consumption map in the service sector for each employee. The statistics responds to the changes of energy consumption structure. For example, during the last 10 years there has been a drastic increase in the use of air conditioners. The data is collected not only the nationwide but per regions too – there are 20 regions in Croatia. As a result, policy and decision makers get a comprehensive picture. This enables them to make short-term as well as long-term decisions duly and timely.

### **Here is an Energy Balance!**

- Georgia has made progress very quickly. For the first time, there will be an official energy balance....

This is how the Senior ITS expert, Alenka Kinderman-Loncharevich assessed the work of the representatives of Georgia within the ITS project in the field of energy statistics.

During one of the breaks, I organised a “round table” for the Georgian delegation. “Skastat” was represented by Meri Daushvili as well as the Head of Business Statistics Gogita Todradze, the Ministry of Energy – Advisor to the Minister Tamar Klarteishvili and Deputy Head of the Analytical Department Michail Mumladze. To summarise, we get the following picture:

From Copenhagen to Zagreb, there has been a way that allowed developing a modern methodology for collecting energy statistical data; experience sharing and learning from the PCs, assessments and improvement of questionnaires. In December 2014, for the first time and as result of the collaboration with the ITS experts Georgia will have the official energy balance. The Country had the observer status to the Energy Community – today it is a candidate country. One of the conditions for the EnC membership is exactly gathering and processing of energy data based on which the energy balance is drawn in accordance with the respective European standards.

At the same time, Tamar Klarteishvili noted: “We should not think that there was no energy data in Georgia before. The Ministry possesses massive information about the whole energy sector collected during several decades. We are fruitfully cooperating with “Sakstat” within the framework of the ITS project. What was planned by the ITS project to be achieved for this point in time, I think, “Sakstat” has achieved ahead of the planned time. The questionnaires developed by them were sent to other participants of the project as an example.

### **Point of View of Mathieu Bousquet**

ITS project – says Mathieu Bousquet, representing the Directorate General for Development and Cooperation of the EC – is a part of the cooperation between the EC and the Eastern Partnership countries and Central Asia. – It provides technical assistance to the Partner Countries. Georgia, specifically expressed interest in receiving assistance for the compilation of energy balance and sent an application on the basis of which our experts developed a plan working on-site and assisted in its implementation. As a result, by the end of this year Georgia will have the energy balance prepared in accordance with the European and international standards. Furthermore, it is believed that the National Statistics of Georgia will be able to prepare such balances independently in future. This is the most important aspect for us.

The process started two years ago. Now we want to reflect on and assess the work done. One thing is clear: the conference demonstrated the positive attitude of all the PCs towards the cooperation and showed their positive reaction to the technical assistance provided by the EC. This is very important as we see the possibilities of improvement of further work. There is a number of key line items on which we are actively cooperating with Georgia in the context of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. Georgia is a candidate country for the EnC membership. In order to become its fully-fledged member, it is important to strive for the improvement of reliability and quality of the energy data. The obvious progress made by Georgia in this area shows that the country has achieved considerable advancement on this path.

### **Faces of the project**

The “Motor” of the project Gloria Aguinaldo showed a creative video – the photos of its participants accompanied by the immortal music of Chopin. This was a very touching way of reminding everybody that “the success of this project was greatly determined by the firm commitment and ownership demonstrated by all national and international partners.”

Gabriel Namtalashvili

Tbilisi-Zagreb-Tbilisi