



ENERGY COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EU, THE LITTORAL STATES OF THE BLACK & CASPIAN SEAS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES



Report on EuroNest Workshop: 20 Sep, 2013 at Seimas, Vilnius, Lithuania

On 20th September 2013, INOGATE took part in the abovementioned workshop with a speaking role to present the INOGATE programme and the state of play on SE co-operation in the six EaP countries. The INOGATE programme featured highly in this workshop as the only programme implementing a full set of co-operation activities in EaP countries; not only through ITS but also through ESIB (mentioned a few times by other speakers) and CoMo East project.

The Seimas has hosted the workshop *Eastern Partnership prospects on energy efficiency and renewable energy* of the Committee on Energy Security of the EU-Neighbourhood-East Parliamentary Assembly (EURONEST PA). The EURONEST PA Committee workshop: cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries opens up excellent prospects in connection with energy security.

The need to shape a common energy policy in Europe has been the focus of the workshop *Eastern Partnership prospects on energy efficiency and renewable energy* of the Committee on Energy Security of the EU-Neighbourhood-East Parliamentary Assembly (EURONEST PA) hosted by the Seimas. The Eastern Neighbourhood is one of the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Energy security matters are no less important. Mr Saudargas stressed that the event held in the Seimas contributed to the resolution of matters crucial for the country.

The focus of the workshop was on the following issues: energy efficiency, promotion of renewable energy sources, cooperation on energy efficiency and renewable energy sources as well as prospects for cooperation under the Eastern Partnership. Discussions also focused on the possibilities of joining forces of the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries in an effort to increase energy efficiency and promote renewable energy sources.

Welcome addresses were given by Irena Degutienė, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, Borys Tarasyuk, Co-President of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly and Member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, and Kęstutis Daukšys, Chair of the Energy Commission of the Seimas. Opening remarks were made by Algirdas Saudargas, MEP, Member of the Committee on Energy Security of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, and Fuad Muradov, Member of the Milli Mejlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Co-Chair of the EURONEST PA Committee on Energy Security.

In her welcome address, Irena Degutienė noted that today Europe was moving towards a common energy policy though just ten years ago energy within the EU was only a matter of concern for private companies. She said that the EU had not only liberalised its gas and electricity sectors and financed various feasibility studies on energy connections, but also had developed the Connecting Europe Facility which provided for substantial funding by the EU for developing infrastructure projects in energy, transport and communications in 2014–2020. “Lithuania and the whole Europe need partners who can ensure safe, stable and market-based energy supplies. In this respect, cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries opens up excellent prospects,” said Ms Degutienė. In her view, it is competition that allows to curb monopoly prices which can be set by a single supplier as it sees fit.

With regard to the impact of the energy sector on climate change, Irena Degutienė stressed that the international community was committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. “This can be achieved through increased use of renewable energy and energy saving,” said the Deputy Speaker. Ms Degutienė, however, thought that given the need for investment into renewable energy, its payback and renewable energy prices, it was clear that renewable energy was not a panacea for all energy security problems. “Development of renewables is an important priority but this should be part of a broader energy mix helping to find the right balance,” stated Irena Degutienė.

Borys Tarasyuk noted that regional dialogue on energy policy was crucial for diversifying energy sources and creating a common infrastructure. He stated that the EURONEST PA Committee on Energy Security sought closer cooperation between the Eastern Partnership countries and the EU. In his view, attempts of some countries to use energy as a foreign policy instrument can have consequences and lead to crises Europe had in 2006 and 2009.

Kęstutis Daukšys voiced his satisfaction that the EURONEST PA encouraged the EU Member States and their partners in Eastern Europe to cooperate and help each other in developing common security mechanisms and energy policies. He expressed hope that this workshop would provide an opportunity to share knowledge, home country experiences and lessons learned on implementing energy efficiency policies, rational use and development of renewables, balancing the energy mix and ensuring reliable and safe supply at the most favourable prices, i.e. at the lowest customer price.

Referring to the challenges taken up by Lithuania for 2014–2020, Kęstutis Daukšys underlined that after six years renewables would make up at least 23% of the final energy consumption in the country. He said that Lithuania had launched a serious renovation programme to increase energy efficiency. He estimated that 30–50% of energy would be saved after modernising existing blocks and public buildings and upgrading their energy systems.

Algirdas Saudargas pointed out that the European Parliament also supported the EURONEST PA because energy was one of the most important priorities.

Fuad Muradov emphasised that the EU lacked a common policy in connection with renewable energy. Speaking about the future of renewable energy, he said that it should become one of the usual energy alternatives helping to increase energy efficiency. However, Mr Muradov thought that some countries were not yet ready to implement renewable energy policies and lacked the legal basis. He stated that not only political opinions, but also research and know-how were important in solving energy issues.

Further discussions are expected to focus on increasing energy efficiency, promotion of renewable energy, cooperation on energy efficiency and renewable energy and the scope of this cooperation for implementing the Eastern Partnership policy as well as possibilities to join the EU’s and Eastern Partnership countries’ efforts to increase energy efficiency and promote renewable energy.

The final agenda; the participants list; presentations, photos and press coverage can be found in this link:

<http://www.euronest.europarl.europa.eu/euronest/cms/home>