

Meeting of Energy Community Parliamentary Plenum

Minutes

9 December 2020, virtual

1. Opening statements

The Energy Community Parliamentary Plenum was opened by the President of the Parliament of Montenegro, Mr Aleksa Bečić, on behalf of the Energy Community Presidency in Office, and by the Chairman of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy of the European Parliament, Mr Cristian-Silviu Buşoi.

President Bečić stressed that the Green Deal is an overarching strategy that includes measures to improve the effective use of resources by switching to a clean circular economy, stopping climate change, renewing biodiversity and reducing pollution. He referred to the Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans under which these Contracting Parties committed to a zero-carbon economy by 2050. He underscored the importance of adopting ambitious 2030 targets in the field of climate and energy.

Mr Cristian-Silviu Buşoi underlined the value of exchanging views and experiences under the platform of the Parliamentary Plenum as EU Member States and the Energy Community Contracting Parties share common goals and challenges. Mr Buşoi briefed the Plenum on the recent legislative developments in the field of energy and climate at the level of the European Union, including the European Climate Law where the European Parliament proposed to increase the level of ambition of the EU-wide greenhouse gas reduction target from at least 55 to 60 percent by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. To reach the new level of decarbonisation ambitions, the European Commission is currently reviewing all relevant legislation and considering introducing a number of new instruments, including a carbon border adjustment mechanism.

The Secretariat's Director, Mr Janez Kopač, moderated a tour de table, to allow the Members of Parliaments to introduce themselves.

2. Green Deal for the Energy Community

Mr Kopač explained the key legal acts under the European Green Deal and highlighted those acts which will soon be on the Energy Community's agenda, transforming it into an energy and climate community, – the European Climate Regulation, the Emissions Trading Scheme legislation, amendments of the Energy Efficiency and Renewables Directives and revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive and Third Energy Package for gas. Other initiatives relevant for the Contracting Parties include the "Renovation Wave" for energy efficiency measures, hydrogen and methane strategies and coal regions in transition. 2030 targets for renewables, energy efficiency and carbon reduction would be adopted by the Energy Community Ministerial Council already in 2021.

Mr Kopač underlined that the upcoming fundamental transformation of the energy system will bring many challenges but is inevitable. The European Union is making assistance available to the Contracting Parties but it cannot cover all financial costs. Introducing carbon pricing and using these revenues to help coal regions would facilitate a just transition.

Members of Parliaments exchanged views on the future legislative initiatives under the banner of the Green Deal and underlined their commitment to reforming the energy sectors under the framework of the Energy Community. They outlined ongoing and future reform initiatives and projects in their countries.

3. Dialogue on developing National Energy and Climate Plans

Mr Kopač presented¹ the process of adopting National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) in the Energy Community Contracting Parties. He underlined that given the significance of the NECPs in terms of fundamentally transforming the energy sectors, it is absolutely essential that Parliaments have a key role in the NECP's preparation and public consultations, which should encompass other relevant stakeholders at large.

In the Q&A session, the Secretariat clarified that public consultation was obligatory under the Governance Regulation, to be adopted in the Energy Community in 2021. However, how and at what stage the consultation should be conducted was not prescribed. Some EU Member States had conducted the public consultations ahead of the planning process, some after. It was underlined that the consultations help create ownership of the plan, which will facilitate its subsequent implementation in practice.

The Secretariat explained that the approach to involving national parliaments also differed across the EU Member States depending on the constitutional set-up of the country. In some Member States, the Parliaments had to adopt the NECPs, while in others they were only consulted. Members of the Plenum were also encouraged to organize consultations with neighboring countries in order to improve cross-border energy and climate cooperation.

4. Preparation for 2021 activities

Subject to the easing of measures against the spread of the Covid-19 virus, the next Parliamentary Plenum meeting will take place in Brussels in the Spring, followed by a meeting in Serbia, as holder of the 2021 Energy Community Presidency, in late Autumn. The Secretariat will send invitations two months prior to the meeting.

The report on the Future of Energy Efficiency in the Energy Community will be voted at the next physical meeting. If a physical meeting cannot take place, the Secretariat will propose rules of procedure for electronic voting.

The Secretariat briefed the Members on its planned activities on hydropower development cooperation. In 2019, the Secretariat was approached by the parliaments of North Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo* and Montenegro with an initiative to sign a memorandum of cooperation on hydropower development and environmental impact assessment. The Secretariat will approach these parliaments regarding the signing of such memorandums in the upcoming months and broaden the initiative to parliaments of other Contracting Parties.

The Secretariat invited the Members of Contracting Party Parliaments to get in contact regarding the organization of virtual presentations of the Annual Implementation Report by the Director.

¹ <https://energy-community.org/dam/jcr:5a6bd955-e9c7-4d17-979d-c241ddac5e32/ECS.%202020%20EnC%20Parl%20Plenum%20NECP%20presentation.pdf>.

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Members: Snježana Novaković-Buršać (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Kakhaber Kutchava (Georgia), David Songulashvili (Georgia), Cristian-Silviu Buşoi (European Parliament), Jutta Paulus (European Parliament), Mimoza Kusari Lila (Kosovo*), Aleksa Becic (Montenegro), Petru Burduja (Moldova), Dime Velkovski (North Macedonia), Veroljub Arsic (Serbia), Snezana R. Petrovic (Serbia), Andriy Gerus (Ukraine), Oleksii Kucherenko (Ukraine)

Energy Community Secretariat: Janez Kopač, Barbora Poyner, Aleksandra Bujarovska, Tibor Schaffhauser, Anja Rosenberg, Svitlana Karpushyna, Maksym Polischuk

Parliamentary Secretariats: Aleksandra Balac, Fiona Dubernet, Kristina Milosevic, Muhamet Morina, Tijana Knezevic, Nenad Pandurevic, Dragan Pulevski, Costis Yeraris

Civil society: Julia Nagel, Lesya Nedelcu, Lidija Radulović, Biljana Ramic, Jelena Ristic, Dragana Pokrajac, Zlatko Simonovski, Iris Somen, Erjon Tase