

PROJECT INFO

“Public Dialogue on the Sustainable Use of Energy in South East Europe” is a long-term initiative aimed at achieving more responsible and effective energy policies in the region. Recognizing that the burden of responsibility falls primarily on political decision-makers, as well as that there is a continuous gap in the policy process stemming from lacking coordination and consultation of all relevant actors in the energy sphere, the initiative engages and integrates all relevant public actors, creating stronger cross-sector partnerships. The focus is on generating political will through a more participative policy process, fostering a dialogue and enhancing levels of trust between the different actors, sharing information and institutional knowledge, and generating solutions and relevant good practices. In the first stage of the process, emphasis is placed on the Parliament as a key institution of democratic dialogue.

Energy systems in all of South-East Europe are under heavy pressure to maintain stability and at the same time provide development. This is especially the case for the Western Balkans, where disintegration of a once unified energy system took place. While the countries in the SEE region are making progress towards transposing the *acquis communautaire* into their national legislation and policy, progress is slower in the actual implementation of the adopted policies. The lack of implementation of public policies is one of the key weaknesses of the current governance system in the region, and poses particular challenges in the field of energy policy.

The key objectives of EU environmental and energy policies are summed up in “20:20:20” by 2020. The 20:20:20 targets refer to 20% of improvements in energy efficiency, 20% of energy consumption to come from renewable energy sources (RES), and to achieving a reduction of CO₂ emissions of at least 20% below the 1990 level. The overall goal of the Public Dialogue initiative is to support progress towards the achievement of these targets, in particular energy efficiency, the area with greatest potential for improvement without necessarily having to rely on grand scale investments. Through dialogue, the aim is to support the creation and improvement of communication networks on the national and regional level and to create awareness of the importance of energy efficiency policy implementation and the necessity of sustainable energy management practice.

The implementing organizations provide capacity building through cross-sectorial dialogue and contact with leading experts in the form of conferences, seminars, round tables and other platforms for dialogue. In its first year, the project has recognized Members of Parliament, and the institution of Parliament itself, as a starting point for generating political will through empowering its legislative and oversight role. This approach ensures access to all political options as a key factor to successful dialogue and sustainable implementation. As the project continues, it will expand not only in the number of countries in which events take place, but also in shifting the focus to different actors and approaches, always balancing knowledgeable energy experts representing varied viewpoints from every sector - *industry, academia, government, law, finance, non-profit organizations, think tanks, media and international institutions* - to participate in and drive public dialogue that will sharpen distinctions, identify points of consensus, and stimulate innovative solutions.

CONFERENCE INFO

The conference **Energy-Development-Democracy: Shaping a New Energy Future for South-East Europe** is the main event of a regional initiative 'Public Dialogue on the Sustainable Use of Energy in South-East Europe' in the year 2011. It brings together Members of Parliaments from the regional countries, MEPs, high-ranking government officials, CSO leaders, energy experts, investors, donors and senior business executives.

The objective of the conference is to exchange information and ideas, discuss the shaping of the political action required in order to face the ever-greater global and regional energy and environmental challenges, and focus on paving the way to sustainable energy policies that will help prepare the SEE region for being fully integrated into the European energy space.

During the conference, the overall topic of energy policy will be addressed through a number of different contexts. The nature of the initiative dictates the primary context of regional cooperation, and the role it plays within the overarching context of EU integration. Other topics such as the importance of investments necessary for implementing successful EU integration will be examined, as well as the role of the parliament and executive branch, while special focus will be on energy efficiency as a key tool for achieving energy security and environmental protection in the region.