



Energy - Development - Democracy Conference Conclusions

The Conference was the first regional event organised within the project titled *Public Dialogue on the Sustainable Use of Energy in the South East Europe (SEE)*. The Conference was held on October 17-18 in the National Assembly of Serbia, under the auspices of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), chaired by the Republic of Serbia as of June 30, 2011. The Conference gathered over 250 participants from 15 European countries including nine SEECP country delegations. The delegations comprised MPs, representatives of ministries, local-self-government, experts, media, civil society and business.

The Conference pointed out the necessity of a quality long-term dialogue on energy efficiency, renewable energy resources and sustainable use of energy in SEE, as well as that such dialogue must be conducted on three levels: local, national, and regional. This dialogue should remain open for regional experiences, as well as the experiences of other countries that have accomplished substantial progress in improving energy efficiency and introducing new - renewable and sustainable forms of energy production. This dialogue is developed with the understanding that climate change should remain the focus of our attention and that the introduction of a “green economy” leads to new employment opportunities, improves public health, and secures the future of the Planet. It was also stressed that public dialogue should recognise all efforts striving towards these goals and provide for a cooperation and synergy of these efforts on the local, national, and regional levels.

The ***Energy - Development - Democracy*** Conference pointed out three key components that will determine the new energy prospects of the whole region and each of its countries:

1. regional cooperation
2. inter-sectoral cooperation
3. the role of decision-makers, in particular representatives of citizens - the Parliament

Regional cooperation was identified as a priority in the following areas:

1. investments and improved resource management on the national and regional levels
2. legislation regulating the use of common resources such as hydroelectric power plants and river basins
3. the rational deployment of capacities/human resources, including continuous transfer of knowledge and experience.

In the scope of supporting regional cooperation, it was proposed that the plan of the *Igman Initiative* should be endorsed: parliamentary cooperation in the area of environmental protection and shaping the new energy future should rely on the Nordic model.

Inter-sectoral cooperation refers to the joint engagement of business representatives, research and academic institutions, experts, executive and legislative government branches, civil society, and media on establishing firm cooperation between the energy sector, environmental sector, agriculture, transport, industry, and services. It was concluded that this cooperation is a precondition for quality public dialogue, since it increases the level of information sharing, improves knowledge, and generates political will. Inter-sectoral cooperation is also necessary in terms of adopting quality laws and ensuring their implementation.

Political will is generated when well-informed citizens are ready, willing, and able to demand from their representatives a responsible approach to the energy future of their countries and overall development, as well as facing the challenges of climate change.

The conference participants emphasised that the rule of law and sustainable democracy cannot be preserved without development and facing the challenges of the future.

It was agreed that the next regional event will be held in the fall of 2012 in Zagreb, with a focus on the role of local authorities and other local public actors in achieving higher levels of energy efficiency and sustainable use of energy. A group of expert participants will formulate detailed conclusions of the **Energy - Development - Democracy** Conference, with the aim of contributing to the content of the further course of public dialogue. These Conclusions will be distributed to all conference participants, as well as during national and local events organised prior to the next regional conference.

Public dialogue will continue in Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro, countries that have been implementing the project for over a year now, and the organisers hope that the dialogue will extend to other SEE countries during 2012. The organisers wish to express their gratitude to the German International Cooperation (GIZ), the International Visegrad Fund, and the Electric Power Industry of Serbia for supporting the project of Public Dialogue on the Sustainable Use of Energy in South East Europe and this Conference.

Belgrade, October 18, 2011