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Tremendous accomplishments of cross border energy cooperation in Central Europe

Central European countries have achieved significant results in the field of cross-border energy cooperation, both in gas and electricity sectors. A key reason for this progress is the increasing infrastructural interconnectivity and integration of the markets. There has also been remarkable progress achieved in the synchronization of the Baltic States with the continental European network. What's more, due to the liberalisation processes and legal system in place, cross-border trade is growing dynamically in the region. These were the main conclusions of the 3rd Central European Day of Energy Conference held on the 5th of November in Bruxelles.

Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of the Energy Union, Mr. Maroš Šefčovič pointed out that it is now clearer than ever that a single well-integrated energy market is a prerequisite for Europe for building a future-proof low-carbon economy. It is a prerequisite for facing the challenges of the 21st century; notably climate change, pollution, and the modernisation of our entire economy. No EU country can handle any of these challenges on its own; not in the West, nor in the East. Regional cooperation is a necessity.

Given that Central European states have already acquired a strong level of interconnection and integration, Chairman of the Board of Directors of CEEP, Mr. Leszek Jesień stressed the importance of cooperation in the electricity sector as demonstrated by the example of Regional Security Coordinators (RSC). "The regional cooperation should follow bottom – up logic. In this regard the EU support and coordination is one of the crucial factors facilitating it. Flexibility, however, remains a key feature enabling the enhancement of the cooperation. On the other hand, administratively imposed obligations and measures would not guarantee desired outcomes."

The agenda for regional cooperation in Central Europe is becoming more ambitious. Firstly, it focused mainly on gas infrastructure interconnections to ensure security of supply. Currently and increasingly its aim is proper management of electricity flows, development of smart solutions and innovations which support cost-efficient energy transition in the region" stressed Mr. Jerzy Buzek, Member of the European Parliament, and Chair of the ITRE Committee.

CEEP members and other stakeholders from the EU-11 that have participated at the high-level conference debated different aspects and scopes of the cooperation. The discussions centred around the appropriate administration of the flows, the need for an accurate institutional framework, bidding zones delimitation and better coordination of cross-border trade. The participants agreed in principle that most effective solutions to the problems related to transmission and supply are possible mainly at the regional level.

“Regional cooperation is a key element of the European Energy Policy and an indispensable stepping stone for the establishment of a truly European Internal Energy Market. Thanks to the regional cooperation, through the Connecting Europe Facility, the Central European countries are improving their level of interconnectivity and their functional resilience in particular markets. The intensive and comprehensive projects and initiatives in the region are not only beneficial for Central European countries but, as a consequence, for the entire European Union Energy Market” commented Mr. Dominique Ristori, Director-General of DG Energy.

Central European Day of Energy showed the need for discussion on region-related problems and challenges. During the event, the speakers focused on the ongoing and future projects which connect the markets and make the region more economically resilient. “We should however remember that not all the projects have been concluded so far. There is still a need for EU financial support in form of CEF and other funding mechanisms for development of new infrastructure. Thus in the coming EU financial perspective, sufficient resources shall be guaranteed for this purpose” concluded Maciej Jakubik, Executive Director of CEEP.

Central European Day of Energy 2018 was organised by the Central Europe Energy Partners in cooperation with the European Commission (DG Energy), with the support of International Visegrad Fund and under the auspices of the Slovak Presidency of the Visegrad Group, on the 5th of November in Brussels. This third edition of the conference was prepared in cooperation with partners from the Czech Republic (Masaryk University), Hungary (REKK), Lithuania (Vytautas Magnus University), Poland (Sobieski Institute), Romania (Romanian Energy Center), Slovakia (Slovak Foreign Policy Association), Bulgaria (Center for the Study of Democracy) and Croatia (Institute for Development and International Relations).

Central Europe Energy Partners (CEEP) represents the interests of the energy and energy-intensive companies from Central Europe in order to promote balanced energy transition in accordance with technological neutrality principles, enhance regional cooperation and strengthen the region's energy security within the framework of EU energy and climate policy.

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