



Plenary session

16.4.2021

RESOLUTION

Towards energy efficiency, diversification and independence; addressing capacity needs for strengthening European energy policy and countering energy security threats in the Eastern Partnership

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“Towards energy efficiency, diversification and independence; addressing capacity needs for strengthening European energy policy and countering energy security threats in the Eastern Partnership”

The Euronest Parliamentary Assembly,

- having regard to the Council Conclusions on Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 approved on 11 May 2020;
 - having regard to the Joint Communication of the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 18 March 2020 entitled ‘Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all’;
 - having regard to the “20 Deliverables for 2020” document endorsed by the Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit in November 2017;
 - having regard to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change ratified by the European Union, to which the Eastern Partnership countries are also party;
 - having regard to the Association Agreements between the EU and Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in particular the provisions on energy cooperation;
 - having regard to the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the EU and Armenia, in particular the provisions on energy cooperation;
 - having regard to the Treaty establishing the Energy Community, of which the three associated countries are contracting parties and Armenia observer;
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the EU and Azerbaijan, in particular the provisions on energy, and to the ongoing negotiations of an enhanced agreement;
 - having regard to the work of the Eastern Partnership Platform 3 – ‘Connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change’, and in particular the Energy Panel;
 - having regard to the resolution of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly of 9 December 2019 on ‘The future of the Trio Plus Strategy 2030: building a future of Eastern Partnership’;
- A. whereas energy security is a fundamental element of national security of EU Member States and Eastern partner countries alike; whereas increasing connectivity, domestic renewable energy capacities and energy efficiency are key in order to enhance energy

security and limit dependence on imports from dominant suppliers and foster social, economic and political stability in the region;

- B. whereas the European Union has always shown interest in creating lasting and powerful bilateral and multilateral relations with the Eastern partner countries, with a great focus on the energy sector; whereas this partnership, based on common values and rules, mutual interests and commitments as well as shared ownership and responsibility, aims at delivering tangible results for citizens in the region, including in the area of energy efficiency;
- C. whereas fulfilling the Paris Agreement is a common commitment of the EU and the Eastern partner countries; whereas climate change is an issue that cannot be ignored; whereas there is a strong need for ‘green’ investments in energy efficiency and in municipal infrastructure, in order to strengthen environmental and climate resilience across the region; whereas clean energy transition, decarbonising the economy and boosting the use of renewable energy sources in most cases also contribute to increasing energy security;
- D. whereas the Russian Federation is notably the biggest energy supplier for most European countries and this aspect is often used as a measure of political pressure and leverage; whereas recent developments in the EU-Russia diplomatic relations, especially the incarceration of Alexei Navalny and the expulsion of European diplomats from Russia, during HR/VP Joseph Borrell’s meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, show that Russia can be an unreliable partner; whereas significant dependence on the Russian gas threatens the energy security and the economic stability of the European Union and its partners;
- E. whereas energy security and the clean energy transition are integral parts in two out of the five long-term Eastern Partnership policy objectives beyond 2020;
- F. whereas Eastern partner countries are in the process of modernising their energy regulations and infrastructures and implementing policies on renewables and energy efficiency, but continued EU support is essential to provide technical assistance and monitoring of its implementation and create the necessary investment framework conditions;
- G. whereas support of the EU and its Member States has played an important role in improving energy efficiency and developing energy production from renewable sources in the Eastern partner countries, including through projects on energy efficiency of buildings, district heating, urban transport, street lighting, renewable energy (solar, hydropower, biomass) and others, financed inter alia by the Neighbourhood Investment Platform, the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environmental Partnership (E5P) or in the framework of the Covenant of Mayors; whereas the room for energy efficiency gains and potential for renewable energy exploitation in the Eastern partner countries compared to EU Member States remains significant;
- H. whereas projects supported by the EU and other partners have contributed to building interconnections and modernising infrastructure across the region to improve energy security of the countries involved, for example the Romania-Moldova gas and power

interconnections, the Armenia-Georgia power interconnection, or the Southern Gas Corridor (including relevant interconnectors);

- I. whereas energy poverty remains an important challenge for many households in the Eastern partner countries;
 - J. whereas, as part of the European Green Deal, the EU envisages strong environment, energy and climate partnerships within the Eastern Partnership; whereas, following up on the ‘20 deliverables for 2020’, a new set of goals for the Eastern Partnership is to be determined for the period 2021-2030;
 - K. whereas most estimates suggest that world fossil fuel reserves will deplete by 2060; whereas this aspect should encourage the EU and all its partners to strive towards diversification of their energy mix including a stronger focus on renewable energy sources;
1. Reiterates its support to increased energy cooperation between the EU and the Eastern partners and to the creation of tailor-made strategies to advance more ambitious forms of cooperation and integration where desired by the partner countries to enhance their energy security and resilience, while protecting the environment, contributing to the achievement of climate policy goals, and furthering the integration of associated countries into the European energy market with regard to the Trio Plus Strategy 2030; states that cooperation of member states with their neighbours and partners regarding the implementation of energy policy is of vital importance in order to have an open, secure and competitive European energy market;
 2. Stresses the need to step up efforts on decarbonisation and environmental protection, in line with the European Green Deal, and to pursue ambitious climate and environmental policies, in particular to meet the commitments under the Paris Agreement; calls on the Commission to extensively include the Eastern partner countries in the EU sectorial policies and particularly in the European Green Deal; calls in this respect for a comprehensive regulatory framework enabling and facilitating access to financing and other incentive mechanisms and for supporting a more effective energy policy implementation; encourages Eastern partners to set clear renewable energy and energy efficiency targets for 2030 and 2050;
 3. Reiterates the need for reliable, secure, independent, environmentally sustainable and affordable energy for all citizens from both the European Union and its partner countries;
 4. Acknowledges the great efforts and progress made by Eastern partner countries towards fighting widespread corruption; believes, however, that there are still multiple issues that need to be addressed regarding corruption and calls on the relevant authorities to step up measures to eradicate it, bolster the rule of law and promote good governance that can help underpin the sectoral reforms, including in the energy sector, envisaged by the Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020;
 5. Reiterates the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector; believes that stronger cooperation between the EU and the Eastern partner countries is

needed in order to address energy security and reliability, energy efficiency, energy poverty and the development of the renewable energy sector;

6. Observes that the energy intensity in Eastern partner countries remains considerably higher than the EU average and highlights the enormous potential for energy savings in those countries; observes that increasing energy efficiency is strongly linked to reduction in energy poverty; points to the importance of national building renovation policies and of introducing, maintaining and enforcing regulatory and institutional frameworks that define minimum energy efficiency standards for buildings, provide for incentives for the renovation of buildings and for energy efficiency in industries and SMEs, promote optimisation of energy infrastructures, including through minimum energy efficiency criteria for public procurement when relevant, and guarantee appropriate information to consumers including accurate metering of energy consumption; stresses that EU funding directed towards renovation of the public building stock in collaboration with Eastern partner countries should assess the possibility of introducing minimum energy efficiency standards;
7. Notes that the development of renewable energy sources is a crucial element of efforts towards clean energy transition, competitiveness and energy independence, while also contributing to local job creation; welcomes the establishment of a regional network on renewable energy, led by Lithuania and Georgia, under the Eastern Partnership Energy Panel; encourages the establishment of similar bilateral or multilateral networks between Eastern partner countries and EU Member States, with the support of the EU;
8. Stresses that investment towards ensuring an independent and secure energy sector in the EU and in the Eastern partner countries must also be corroborated by sustained investment in the renewable energy sector;
9. Emphasises the need to pursue efforts to improve connectivity between Eastern partner countries and with the Trans-European Networks for Energy and to develop strong cross-border infrastructure, starting with the full implementation of objectives earlier identified within the '20 deliverables for 2020'; calls for continued support to build technical capacity for connectivity projects; encourages using diversified routes and further developing the Black Sea coast connections with EU Member States;
10. Welcomes the operationalisation of the Southern Gas Corridor, bringing important benefits in terms of diversification and economic opportunities; welcomes the start of commercial operations and transportation of first gas via the Trans Adriatic Pipeline¹; stresses the importance of connecting Eastern and Central Europe to the Southern Gas Corridor; welcomes the operationalisation of the Iasi-Ungheni gas pipeline between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, increasing supply diversification and bringing a

¹ On 15 November 2020, the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) commenced operations. First gas has reached Greece and Bulgaria, via the Nea Mesimvria interconnection point with DESFA, as well as Italy, via the Melendugno interconnection point with SNAM Rete Gas (SRG). The Southern Gas Corridor consists of the South Caucasus Pipeline expansion (SCPX) through Azerbaijan and Georgia - 428 km of new 48-inch pipeline through Azerbaijan; 59 km of new 48-inch pipeline and 2 new compressor stations in Georgia; the Trans Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) - 1340km of 56-inch pipeline, 34km of 36-inch pipeline and 476km of 48-inch pipeline across Turkey; and the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) – 878 km of 48-inch pipeline across Greece, Albania and Italy.

significant improvement to the energy security situation of the region;

11. Welcomes the development of the Black Sea Transmission Line and calls for greater focus on the development and financing of electricity interconnections, as well as smart grids, in order to ensure the necessary infrastructure allowing to reach the climate and energy targets; emphasises that the security of electricity grids is a key element of energy security and encourages increased EU support to efforts of Eastern partners that so desire towards synchronisation with the European continental energy grid (ENTSO-E);
12. Recognises the substantial financial and technical support provided to the Eastern partners by the EU, in coordination and cooperation with other international actors, promoting decarbonisation, as well as connectivity; welcomes in particular the work of the EU4Energy Initiative, Initiative for coal regions in transition in the Western Balkans and Ukraine, investments and policy-based loans under the Neighbourhood Investment Platform, the E5P partnership, the Covenant of Mayors and EU budget guarantees for loans from the European Investment Bank and other International Financing Institutions;
13. Encourages the Eastern partner countries to collaborate with the EU Member States regarding the importation of energy technologies available in the EU and to exchange good practices of energy policy and administration; states that there is a great need for knowledge transfers and inter-institutional transformation and collaboration towards achieving a greater share of green technology; believes that cooperation between universities and research centres in the EU and those from the Eastern partner countries is a necessary step in achieving common goals;
14. Acknowledges that EU Member States and their partners should be more oriented towards greater liberalisation of the energy market for different operators, and states that this should be accompanied by the creation of a more collaborative market from which all could benefit greatly;
15. Points out that the energy transition needs to be fair, inclusive and cost-efficient and that it should ensure sustainability, security of supply and affordability of energy; notes that current low fossil fuel prices benefiting from price regulation, subsidies and not internalising external costs mean that additional incentives will be needed in order to spur investment in energy-saving and clean energy projects; points to the need to reform energy pricing and taxation to avoid penalising renewable energy against other energy forms and giving the wrong price signals to final energy consumers;
16. Stresses the need to support consumer empowerment to generate, consume, store and sell energy, bearing in mind it can help fighting energy poverty; highlights the potential of decentralised renewable energy production which can increase the utilisation of local energy sources, increase local security of energy supply, and foster community development and cohesion; highlights the importance of overcoming oligarchic monopoly in the energy sector;
17. Encourages Eastern partner countries to appropriately tackle energy poverty wherever it is identified and protect vulnerable energy consumers, in particular those in remote areas; stresses the importance of adopting a clear definition of 'energy poverty' and 'vulnerable energy consumer' for better monitoring and policymaking;

18. Calls for closer cooperation within the Eastern Partnership on renewable hydrogen production and use and for the promotion of common standards on hydrogen; notes the necessity to ensure that imports of hydrogen do not undermine decarbonisation;
19. Calls on the EU and its Member States to critically review cooperation with Russia in various foreign policy platforms and on projects such as Nord Stream 2; expresses concern over the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which reinforces EU dependency on Russian gas supplies, threatens the EU internal market and is not in line with EU energy policy or its strategic interests; acknowledges Nord Stream 2's long-term fundamental political, economic and security risks and calls on all stakeholders, and, in particular, those in the Member States and Europe, to make use of the available legal clauses to halt the project; reiterates the crucial role of Ukraine in the European energy supply network and calls on an enhanced cooperation with Ukraine as a major transit country;
20. Points out to the fact that EU and Eastern partner countries must stand united in order to be resilient to abuse from monopolistic energy suppliers; acknowledges that while such suppliers can financially afford to suspend the energy supply for one country, it is not sustainable to do that with the entire bloc; calls for halt on the Nord Stream 2 construction;
21. Reiterates its support to aid Eastern partners in reducing energy dependency from the Russian Federation by developing their domestic energy production as well as energy efficiency which will impact their energy needs and consequently their dependence on external suppliers;
22. Points out to the great danger that the frozen conflicts on the territory of Eastern Partnership countries pose to energy security, to democracy and to development; asks for further cooperation towards putting an end to such conflicts, namely in Crimea, Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh;
23. Calls for closer cooperation towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the transport and mobility sector; recalls that as well as reducing CO₂ emissions, a great attention should be paid to reducing emissions of other substances, which have harmful effects both on the environment and public health; welcomes the publication of the study "Prospects of LNG markets in Eastern Partner countries"; encourages Eastern partner countries to explore possibilities towards the increased use of LNG in freight transport, to the detriment of diesel; underlines that the use of LNG should only be part of a transitional solution towards sustainable green mobility and transport reliant on renewable energy sources; calls on the Commission and Eastern partner countries to enhance cooperation towards the development of new mobility infrastructure, such as high-voltage charging stations for electric vehicles;
24. Welcomes the establishment of the working group on gas led by Poland and Ukraine, under the Eastern Partnership Energy Panel, which should focus on the promotion of hydrogen and green gases, building business partnerships and investments attraction;
25. Stresses the importance of promoting evidence-based energy policy based on comprehensive data, as well as enforcement of legislation, and encourages further EU

support to strengthen the Eastern partners' administrative capacity in this area; calls for more transparent and readily available energy related data from European partner countries; calls on the Eastern partner countries to strengthen and protect their cyber security and critical energy infrastructure;

26. Recalls the commitments of the relevant Eastern partner countries under the Association Agreements, the Energy Community and the CEPA in terms of transposition of or approximation to EU energy regulations; takes the view that additional financial support should be conditional on effectively implementing and enforcing commitments of the partner countries, carrying out necessary reforms and making more ambitious commitments in the context of the European Green Deal, in line with the 'more for more' principle; acknowledges progress already made by some Eastern partner countries and calls for appropriate actions to enhance cooperation and support in order to reinforce the drive for reforms;
27. Commemorates the 35th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, expresses deepest condolences to the families of victims and solidarity to everyone affected, and calls for ensuring that existing and new nuclear installations in the Eastern partner countries comply with the highest environmental and nuclear safety standards, according to the international conventions; calls for ensuring that unsafe energy projects such as the Astravets nuclear plant will not be part of the European electricity network;
28. Recalls that energy cooperation and trade between EU and Eastern partner countries imply full cooperation and respect for international and European safety production standards and that this cooperation is now jeopardized by Belarus' refusal to fully comply to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) safety improvement recommendations regarding the newly functional Astravets nuclear power plant; urges Belarussian authorities to address all safety issues regarding the functioning of the power plant;
29. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the President of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Executive Vice-President in charge of the Green Deal, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Commissioner for Energy, the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, the European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the EU Member States and the Eastern European partner countries;