

Reforming the EU: What Role for Climate and Energy Policies in a Reformed EU?

Workshop, 17th April 2018
Bucharest, Romania

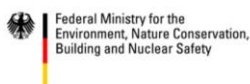
Summary

About 50 participants attended this high-level event (participant list and programme attached). Participants came from Parliament, government, EU institutions, several European embassies, civil society, and business. Several former ministers (energy, environment and foreign affairs) spoke at the event. Romania is privileged to have a few months to discuss and set priorities for its presidency although time is running short. Public priority setting has not started in full; only first draft priorities have been discussed in Parliament, which apparently includes energy security and interconnection. Participants agreed that the Romanian presidency should select only few priorities – if everything is a priority, then nothing is. They agreed that climate and energy policies are among the long-term priorities the EU reform should help to address. Participants agreed that EU reform is about the future of the EU: It should enable the EU to address the challenge of tomorrow, notably energy and climate policies. To be successful EU reform needs to become more specific and needs to abandon general language soon.

In more detail:

- **Energy nationalism** is slowly disappearing and giving way to more cooperation and deeper integrated energy markets. Participants agreed that more interconnections are needed as well as a coherent regulatory framework. In light of ever more integrated energy markets it was discussed whether the EU energy policies in general and the treaty's energy chapter are adequate for this purpose. It was agreed that more cooperation was needed at all levels, regional and EU-wide, and some participants raised the issue that article 194 TFEU regulating national energy mixes is an obstacle to successfully integrating energy markets. Some participants called for more powers for ACER and regretted opposition from some MS, notably Germany. Participants said that these issues should be a priority of the Romanian presidency. It should be addressed in the context of EU reform.
- In the discussion, energy policies played a bigger role than **climate action**. Long-term climate considerations were mentioned but did not feature highly. It was noted that climate and energy policies would have to compete with a number of other policies. It was said that climate and energy targets would have to increase to keep up with future developments and competitiveness of European and international markets.

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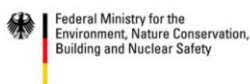
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- Many participants pointed to **Romania's limited administrative capacities**. They considered Romania as an agenda taker, rather than an agenda setter. Some participants did not have high expectations of Romania's capacity to deliver a good presidency. In response, some participants pointed to the fact that even Member States with limited administrative capacities can shape the agenda with conviction, good ideas and a focus on a distinctive set of priorities. They said that limited ambition and self-confidence are self-defeating and an obstacle to a successful presidency and policy making.
- Participants were very critical of a **multi-speed Europe** although the details of this concept were not specified. Multi-speed is a particular problem for countries at the periphery, such as Bulgaria or Romania. It risks that integration becomes an empty vision.
- It was agreed that the Balkans have the **cheapest potential for renewable energy** in the EU but it is still not clear how it could extract the economic value of the RES resource properly. It was pointed to Romania's significant gas potential in the Black Sea.

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