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(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

RESOLUTION ⁽¹⁾

on energy security, renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy infrastructure: developments in the Eastern Partnership and in the EU countries

(2012/C 153/01)

THE EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY,

- having regard to the Constituent Act of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly of 3 May 2011,
- having regard to the Conclusions of the Eastern Partnership Summits of 29-30 September 2011, in Warsaw,
- having regard to the European Parliament's previous resolutions on the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as on the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine,
- having regard to the Joint Communication by the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission on 'A new response to a changing Neighbourhood' of 25 May 2011,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission on security of energy supply and international cooperation - 'The EU Energy Policy: Engaging with Partners beyond our Borders' of 7 September 2011,
- having regard to the Conclusions of the Council of the EU on strengthening the external dimension of the EU energy policy, of 24 November 2011,
- having regard to the Conclusions of the Council of the EU on Energy 2020 - A Strategy for competitive, sustainable and secure energy, of 28 February 2011,
- having regard to the Joint Declaration of Commissioner Oettinger and the deputy ministers of energy and senior representatives of the ministries of energy and national authorities responsible for nuclear energy of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Croatia, the Russian Federation, the Swiss Confederation, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine on comprehensive risk and safety assessments of nuclear plants ('stress tests') of 23 June 2011,

⁽¹⁾ As adopted in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 3 April 2012.

- A. whereas secure, sustainable and competitive energy is of great importance to the citizens, economy and environment of the EU and Eastern European partners; whereas the EU has set ambitious objectives for reducing carbon dioxide emissions, developing renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency by 2020; whereas the EU and Eastern European partners share common interest in the achievement of these objectives taking into account their interdependence in the areas of energy supply and transport;
 - B. whereas energy cooperation under the Eastern Partnership is based on a policy dialogue aiming at further market integration, improved energy security, nuclear safety and the development of new partnerships on renewable energy sources and energy efficiency;
 - C. whereas regulatory cooperation and convergence are essential to establish a well-functioning, inter-connected and integrated energy market of the EU and the Eastern European partners; whereas the Energy Community Treaty has established an effective regional cooperation in which the EU and other Contracting Parties have developed a stable regulatory framework favouring sustainable growth and investment in the energy sector; whereas the accession of the Republic of Moldova and of Ukraine as well as Armenia's and Georgia's observer status in the Energy Community set the basis and institutional frame for deepening energy cooperation and partnerships between the EU and those partner countries;
 - D. whereas competitive energy markets, development and creation of energy production and transport facilities, stable energy supply and transit routes, further development of energy efficiency and renewable energy and the safe use of nuclear energy are essential elements for strengthening energy security of both the EU and the Eastern European partners;
 - E. whereas the EU and Eastern European partners as well as other Black Sea and Caspian littoral states have, under the 'Baku Initiative' launched in 2004, acknowledged their mutual interest in developing regional energy markets and attracting new investments in the Caspian Sea region;
 - F. whereas the diversification of suppliers, routes and sources of energy supply to the EU is a EU priority objective; whereas building up the Southern Gas Corridor comprising various routes and types of infrastructures, is of high importance both for the EU's gas supply diversification strategy and for the energy trade between the EU, the Caspian region and Central Asia;
 - G. whereas the most-cost-effective solution for reducing energy dependency is to stimulate energy savings, renewable energy and energy efficiency measures, which also contribute to job creation, combating climate change and progress towards a resource-efficient economy;
 - H. whereas the EU and the Eastern European partners share the common objective of raising the level of nuclear power safety; whereas transparency, accessibility of information and full compliance with international nuclear safety and environmental agreements are essential for ensuring an efficient cooperation in this area between the EU and Eastern European partners; whereas the EU and national bodies responsible for nuclear energy of the Republic of Armenia, Republic of Belarus and Ukraine agreed on the need to evaluate the safety of nuclear power plants, in particular through undertaking on a voluntary basis comprehensive risk and safety assessment ('stress tests');
1. Recommends to support and strengthen the dialogue on energy security between the EU and the Eastern European partners, based on the EU external energy policy, the 'Baku initiative' and the Energy Community Treaty in consistency with the overall objectives of EU energy policy of competitiveness, security of supply and sustainability as well as with the EU 2050 energy and climate objectives;
 2. Emphasises that today in the era of digital economy and society that is far more dependent on continuous and reliable supply of electricity, there is a strong need to strengthen energy security in the EU and its neighbourhood; recalls that in order to meet this need, the creation of a real competitive energy market and the full integration of energy infrastructure networks, as well regulatory convergence are needed;

3. Stresses the importance of ensuring the EU's assistance, cooperation and support with regard to the measures implemented by EU and Eastern European partners with the purpose of boosting the energy efficiency and encouraging the use of renewable resources;
4. Stresses the need to foster strategic partnerships on green technologies between the EU and the Eastern European partners in the fields of innovation, research and development, energy efficiency and savings, application of renewable energy technologies as well as energy storage, smart grids and balancing of energy systems;
5. Recommends to raise the European investments in the production of energy resources and their supply to the markets, to increase the volumes of joint development of the hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern European partners, specifically the Caspian Sea basin; recommends to increase the political and financial support of the existing pipeline systems, including the Trans-Caspian system;
6. Calls for the creation of the conditions necessary to increase the presence of the Eastern European partners in the common market of energy resources, which are open to all producers; recommends to support the privatisation, unbundling and commercialisation of energy producing and energy transporting structures in the Eastern European partners, according to the provisions of the Third Package for Electricity and Gas markets;
7. Encourages a greater emphasis on the environmental aspects of energy production and energy consumption in the Eastern European partners, to achieve carbon dioxide emission abatement; recommends to further support the development of renewable resources and energy-saving technologies;
8. Encourages Eastern European partners to include in their national energy policies clear targets for the development of renewable and sustainable energy;
9. Calls to promote the merger of the Eastern European partners' electricity and gas capacities and networks and the development of advanced technologies for the transport and use of liquefied natural gas (LNG);
10. Recommends to cement the ties between the expert community of the EU and that in the Eastern European partners in matters related to energy security by means of establishing a network of relevant institutions; welcomes in this respect, the Commission Communication 'On security of energy supply and international cooperation'; recommends the creation of working groups (think tanks) consisting of energy security experts from the Eastern European partners and the EU; recommends to use such expert networks for sharing of experience and best practices by means of seminars and conferences;
11. Underlines the benefits that diversification of energy supply sources and routes can provide in terms of energy security; recalls that the EU and Eastern European partners will in the near future, be needing significant investments in construction and modernisation of existing energy infrastructure; welcomes the European Commission proposal for Trans-European energy infrastructure and highlights the need to coordinate policies and developments in the EU with the Eastern European partners; stresses the necessity to ensure the diversity of energy supply routes; at the same time draws the attention to the fact that the practice of closed borders policy increases artificially the cost of energy networks and prevents and hinders the effective cooperation in the process of diversification of energy supply sources and routes; recalls that the opening of the Southern Gas Corridor shall stay one of the political agenda priorities;
12. Calls for increased transparency of intergovernmental energy contracts, with the aim of ensuring full cooperation for energy security and avoiding supply interruptions and potential crises; welcomes, in this respect, the Commission Proposal for a decision setting up an information exchange mechanism with regard to intergovernmental agreements between Member States and third countries in the field of energy, as an essential first step towards these aims; recommends Eastern European partners to join such initiatives with a view of creating a stable and reliable cooperation environment;

13. Recognises that the Black Sea Region is of geo-strategic importance for the energy security of the EU, with regard in particular to the diversification of energy supplies, connecting Europe with the Caspian Sea area, the Middle East and Central Asia; emphasises the need to strengthen multilateral energy cooperation in the Black Sea region, and develop its energy infrastructure;
 14. Recommends to ensure a reliable, efficient and stable system of mutually effective guarantees with regard to ensuring the security of the production facilities and the transportation of energy resources; declares any public threats to the energy generating facilities (nuclear power plants, dams, oil platforms, pipelines and terminals, oil refineries and chemical plants) in the Eastern European partners absolutely unacceptable and criminal. Any hostile actions in respect of such facilities shall be qualified as directed against the interests of the EU and the Eastern European partners;
 15. Stresses the need to ensure that the highest nuclear safety and security standards in the preparation, construction and operation of nuclear power plants are maintained in the EU and concerned Eastern European partners; welcomes the participation of Ukraine and Armenia in the stress-test exercise and encourages the other concerned Eastern European partners to confirm their commitment to participate;
 16. Underlines that Eastern European partners are to ensure that the highest environmental, social, efficiency and safety standards for the exploitation, construction and operation of energy infrastructure and power plants are maintained;
 17. Stresses the need for the elaboration of joint energy roadmaps by the EU and by all key energy supplier and strategically important transit countries with the aim of promoting know-how exchange through technological, research and industrial cooperation;
 18. Recalls the importance of international cooperation among researchers in the energy sciences; encourages Eastern European partners actively to participate in the energy-relevant specific programmes of the EU Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development;
 19. Recommends that Eastern European partners promote and engage in such energy-related initiatives as 'Smart Cities and Communities' and the Covenant of Mayors;
 20. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the President of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Eastern European partners.
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