



“The Nuclear Option for South East Europe” IENE/ROEC conference

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I am very pleased to attend this event dedicated to the development of nuclear energy in the south-east of Europe. I would like to refer to 3 main issues:

- Challenges that nuclear energy faces
- The implications and obligations for MS which wish to continue or start to use nuclear energy (responsibility) and
- Which are the minimal conditions for nuclear projects to develop.

Energy Union - the new framework for the development of the energy sector in the EU

In my opinion, it is necessary to integrate the debates on this topic in the new framework for the development of the energy sector in the EU, namely the Energy Union, founded on the need to ensure energy security, decarbonisation of economies and increase of competitiveness.

The basic pillars of this edifice are related to security of supply and solidarity between the EU Member States, development of the internal market, increase of energy efficiency, enhancement of the research and development activity, use of renewable energy sources etc.

Regrettably, the contribution that nuclear energy can bring to increasing energy security, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring a secure, constant and base load supply, at prices affordable for consumers, **is not acknowledged in the Com Communication on Energy Union.**

In these circumstances, it is necessary to relate to the real situation and reflect on some aspects that COM emphasis when address the nuclear energy issue:

1. The European Commission is cautious in its statements on this topic, despite clear positions in favour of nuclear energy expressed by some Member States for which the nuclear sector is an important part of the energy mix and the fact that nuclear energy contributes to attaining the objectives of decarbonisation of the energy sector

2. The European Commission **refers particularly on two issues** related to nuclear energy: (i) ensuring and improving nuclear safety and (ii) the need to develop the nuclear programme throughout the entire nuclear fuel cycle, an important element herein being the safe disposal and safety of radioactive waste, including ensuring the funds for nuclear safety upgrades, radioactive waste management and decommissioning.

These elements must be reflected in the national programmes for the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste that shall be notified by the Member States to the European Commission, for the first time, by 23 August 2015, in accordance with the Directive 2011/70/Euratom establishing a Community framework for the responsible and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste

Moreover, investors should bear in mind that these costs should be reflected in the business plans for nuclear units projects.

These means that European Commission **wants from MS to take responsibility** on the conditions for development of nuclear energy over the whole chain of nuclear fuel cycle:

- improve and ensure certain standards of nuclear safety;
- addressing the final part of nuclear fuel cycle – final depository of nuclear spent fuel and radioactive waste;
- full independence of the regulatory authority for nuclear activities and an increased professional capability thereof in managing regulatory issues across the entire chain of the nuclear fuel cycle (sufficient, well trained and properly remunerated human resources);
- the responsibility and seriousness of the licence holder that should put nuclear safety and security above gaining profit;
- financing nuclear safety is business as usual.

IF those conditions are in place, then, we can say and promote that nuclear energy should be regarded as part of the solution and not as part of the problem

The role of nuclear energy in reaching the GHG targets at EU level

At this stage, starting from the developments and targets agreed at EU level of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40%, 27% renewable energy sources and increasing energy efficiency by 27%, all Member States are in a process of redefining the energy mix and transforming the energy sector. In this action, long-term perspective and stability are needed, because this type of decisions are defined and implemented over long periods of time.

We consider that nuclear energy will continue to play an important role in reaching the target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions at European level.

Although European policies encourage the growth of the share of renewable energy sources as well as taking significant measures for increasing energy efficiency, the tendency for rising CO2 prices through the reform of the emissions trading system (ETS) and the decrease of the share of

fossil fuel-fired power plants, **it is almost impossible to imagine the European energy mix, within the limits of the decarbonisation targets, without the contribution of nuclear energy.**

The challenge - integration with the renewable energy sources

I want to make it clear that nuclear energy is not competing with renewables but they are two complementary forms of energy that can contribute decisively to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Increasing the share of renewable energy sources is and remains a reality. Together, the two forms of energy can have a crucial role in reaching the energy and climate targets for the period 2035 - 2050. The challenge involved by the association of these two energy sources is related to the safe operation of nuclear power plants, of the National Energy System and of the electricity market and the creation of levers and market instruments to connect them: we have two sources of energy, one intermittent and one which must function on the baseload. It is necessary to find appropriate regulations and market instruments in order to make the operation of nuclear units flexible, under safety and efficiency conditions.

Only taking into account of these requirements, the Member States supporting nuclear energy can demonstrate the credibility of their nuclear projects, can respond to worries and speculations and can attract strong investors.

The need for a predictable investment environment

The lack of a clear-cut position from the Commission related to nuclear energy gives rise to interpretations, speculations, lack of vision and credibility from investors. We cannot change our energy scenarios every two years, according to the documents issued by the Commission. An energy mix involves long-term planning.

The market structure is essential for the investment potential; there is a need for capacity mechanisms for all low carbon sources.

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There is a need for involvement in dialogue platforms where all the stakeholders involved in the energy sector participate, because nuclear energy can no longer be treated separately but it should be integrated in the electricity market. There is a need for flexible base load energy, while maintaining the level of nuclear safety and security by developing regulations that would support renewable energy sources as well as base load, safe and reliable energy sources.