

Bureau Meeting Report – GERE BMR N. 2016/1

**UNECE Group of Experts on Renewable Energy (GERE)
Geneva, 22 January 2016**

Report of the Meeting

Present:

Mr. Ulrich Benterbusch (Germany), Chair
Mr. Nazir Ramazanov (Azerbaijan), Vice-Chair
Mr. Andrei Miniankou (Belarus), Vice-Chair
Mr. Paolo Frankl (IEA), Vice-Chair
Mr. Jeffrey Skeer (IRENA), Vice-Chair
Ms. Christine Lins, Vice-Chair, and Mr. Martin Hullin (REN21)
Mr. Oliver Frank, DENA
Mr. Thomas Fohgrub, Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN Geneva

Secretariat:

Ms. Stefanie Held, Chief of Section, SED
Mr. Gianluca Sambucini, GERE Secretary, SED
Mr. David Elzinga, Secretary of the Group of Experts on Gas, SED
Ms. Lisa Tinschert, Junior Professional Officer, SED

Item 1. Chair's welcome

1. The Chair of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy, Mr. Benterbusch, started the call of the Group of Experts with welcoming the call participants.

Item 2. Approval of the agenda

2. The agenda was adopted as proposed and reflected in the current report.

Item 3. Discussion on the GERE Work Plan 2016-2017 implementation: leading role of Bureau members on specific activities

3. The Chair went through the Work Plan 2016-2017 to identify champions among the Bureau members and other key actors to lead areas of work or specific activities. On the area of the Work Plan “A Tracking of the progress made in the uptake of renewable energy sources in the UNECE Region”, REN21 is ready to take the lead on the key activities, in particular on the outreach activities of the UNECE Renewable Energy Status Report and on the possibility to extend the investigation or the mapping of the status of all the countries in the ECE region.

- Additional resources are needed for the implementation of these activities by REN21. The GERE Secretary suggested to potentially use funding for the Baku RE Conference also for activity area A.

- The representative from Azerbaijan positively welcomed the suggestion and emphasized that resources for this type of activities can be considered in case if the funds will be available.

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(see agenda item 4).

The REN21 representatives and the GERE Secretary informed Bureau members on the launching of the report at COP21 in Paris on 7 December 2015 and that a series of outreach events have been identified for implementation in 2016 together with the UNECE secretariat, starting as soon as resources will be made available. The ECE secretariat indicated that outreach activities should then lead to more funding in the long run to conduct further studies.

- The GERE Chair agreed with the REN21 Executive Secretary to have a call by the first week of February to strengthen the strategy for additional fund-raising for this specific group of activities.

- The Chair further strengthened the fact that he could facilitate the conversation between the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature, Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) of Germany with regards to funding.

4. On the area of the work plan “B. Exchange of know-how and best practices in the UNECE region on how to help significantly increase the uptake of renewable energy”, DENA is ready to lead this group of activities and support with its work the strengthening of the UNECE platform for collective action, the expansion of already developed policies and measures across countries of the region, and the identification of barriers and options for renewable energy development. A first step towards this direction is undertaken by DENA with a study on the Capacity Development for Climate Policies in the UNECE region, with focus on the South East Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The main aim of this study is to facilitate the exchange of relevant information and best practices that address key challenges and transform them into opportunities within a future energy system with high shares of renewable energies, considering different starting positions due to heterogeneous framework conditions of the UNECE Member states. The study will present examples of particular cases, and a catalogue of different funding and implementation instruments will be developed. To further implement GERE activities in this area and for DENA to be able to support them, additional resources would be needed. With regards to the ongoing study, DENA representative has anticipated that the time schedule proposal will be sent soon to the UNECE secretariat and advanced draft of the study will be made available in the coming weeks for further circulation among the Bureau members.

- The draft DENA study will be made available for GERE review by the end of February 2016, via email or DENA website link. The publication is scheduled for March.

- The GERE Secretariat added that the outreach activities under activity group A should lead to more funding which could be linked to activity area B. The Secretariat suggested to write few more letters to or contact governments / organisations.

- The Chair of GERE and DENA agreed to talk again bilaterally about the activities and funding concerns in the next week after this call (end of January).

5. On the Work Plan area “C. Integration of Renewable Energy in future Sustainable Energy Systems in the region, IEA seems to be interested and already committed in a series of related activities that GERE may also benefit. However, financial constraints require a deeper discussion on what can be done under this activity area. In particular, the cooperation between gas and renewable energy can be further strengthened (see agenda item 7), as IEA plans a

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Workshop on Gas and RE for the Central Asia region, for which cooperation with the GERE group may be fruitful. A project focusing on clear policy recommendations could be developed. This activity can be instrumental to the path undertaken by the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy for a Ministerial on energy foreseen in Kazakhstan in 2017. Kazakhstan proposes “Future Energy” as the theme of Expo-2017 in Astana, a platform to exchange worldwide experiences in alternative and sustainable energy development.

- The representative of IRENA pointed out the RE workshop to be held on 3/4 March in Vienna, with a focus on solar PV potential in South East Europe. Results could also be presented in Baku in October this year. The representative further proposed to strengthen the activities on bio-energy, in particular sustainable forestry and the potential for CHP development. Grid integration of bioenergy and the utilization of the potential bioenergy to provide baseload power could be one of the key topics. He is now focusing on bioenergy activities.

- A representative of the German Permanent Mission in Geneva participated in the call and proposed to strengthen the cooperation with the UNECE colleagues in charge of the economic side of forestry issues, in particular on wood energy.

- The Chair of GERE further strengthened the need to select specific areas to focus on in the broader field of renewable energy grid integration. The activities should be operational and help policy makers in the region to improve their policy development work, while at the same time provide arguments to address the widely spread scepticism towards this topics and build overall awareness.

Item 4. Identification of additional resources to implement planned activities

6. For the activities foreseen in the Work Plan 2016-2017 and discussed in the previous agenda item, and for which Bureau members and other stakeholders will play a leading role, specific financial resources have been and will be provided by Germany in particular by BMUB through the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). This support from Germany has been mainly provided for follow-up and outreach activities of the REN21 UNECE Status Report and to facilitate best practices exchange. Other resources have been approved by Azerbaijan for the organization of the Baku events in October 2016 and the preparation of support/ background material.

- Other resources are needed for the implementation of other activities or the strengthening of Work Plan activities already funded by donors. The Chair and other Bureau members will explore ways and means for additional fund-raising.

Item 5. Baku Events: Preparation for the International Conference on Renewable Energy / International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development and GERE session in Baku, Azerbaijan, 19-21 October 2016 (dates tbc)

7. The Vice-Chair from Azerbaijan informed the other Bureau members that Azerbaijan had officially approved funds for hosting the organization of an international conference focused on renewable energy and the third GERE session. The initially scheduled dates are on 19-21

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October. These dates are conflicting with other international events, namely Habitat III (Quito, 17-21 October) and China Windpower (Beijing, 19-21 October 2016).

- During the following days the Vice-Chair from Azerbaijan and his colleagues will confirm the overall configuration, duration and dates of the Baku events and will provide all necessary information for a host country agreement to the UNECE secretariat.

- The secretariat further suggested that all Bureau members confirm ideal dates around the 19 October 2016 in order to set the final dates for the Conference/ Forum. The Chair suggested to provide a first draft of the agenda by mid March, which should then be circulated and discussed during the next Bureau call (date tbc).

Item 6. Outreach activities of the UNECE Renewable Energy Status Report presented at COP21, Paris, on 7 December

8. The REN21 representatives and the GERE Secretary briefed the Chair and the other Bureau members on the forthcoming outreach activities, mainly bilateral meetings in countries considered by the Report and during relevant international conferences. Whenever possible, a REN21 and UNECE representative will both participate in the missions.

- The Chief of the Sustainable Energy Section outlined the importance of targeting financial institutions for the outreach activity.

- The representative from REN21 agreed to the importance of this suggestion. In case of possible project development and fund-raising, the Executive Secretary and / or the Director of the Sustainable Energy Division will participate in specific missions. The funding of key missions in 2016 is being approved by Germany.

Item 7. Cooperation with the Task Force on Gas and Renewable Energy; Bureau participation in the related discussion at the third session of the Group of Experts on Gas, 21-22 April 2016

9. In view of the forthcoming meeting of the Group of Experts on Gas on 21-22 April 2016 and the consideration, on that occasion, of the work which can be done by the Task Force on Gas and Renewable Energy, the GERE Chair and the representative of the IEA are ready to participate in a call with the Chair of Group of Experts on Gas in the coming weeks to agree on the direction of work to be proposed at the meeting in April and to potentially assign a co-chair from the GERE group for this task force. The Secretariat informed the group that the Chair of the Group of Experts on Gas has suggested to appoint a co-chair from Shell for the task force.

- The Chair and the other Bureau members will inform the Secretariat by the first week of February, if possible, on their possible participation in the forthcoming annual meeting of the Group of Experts on Gas. The secretary pointed out that the participation of GERE Bureau members at this meeting would provide a good occasion to organize a preparatory meeting for the Baku event in October.

- The Chair further suggested that intermediate results from this task force could be presented at the event in Baku in October 2016. He suggested that IRENA, IEA, and the Secretariat should work on the development of a project proposal. The Chief of the Sustainable Energy Section commented that the work of the task force should not only focus

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on technological aspects, but that the role of the task force should be in establishing a dialogue.

Item 8. AOB.

10. The representative of DENA provided more details to the Chair and the other Bureau members on the study under preparation on best practices and confirmed the submission of it by March after all the review process described in previous agenda item (see point 4, agenda item 3).