



**UNECE Group of Experts on Renewable Energy (GERE)
Bureau Meeting
Kiev, 14 November 2018, 13:00-14:00**

Report of the Bureau Meeting, 9 December 2018

Attendance:

Mr. Nazir Ramazanov (Azerbaijan), Chair, elected at the 5th session

Mr. Kostiantyn Gura, Vice-Chair, Ukraine, elected at the 5th session

Mr. Artan Leskoviku on behalf of Mr. Adrian Bylyku (Albania), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

Ms. Tea Avazashvili on behalf of Ms. Margalita Arabidze (Georgia), Vice-Chair, , elected at the 5th session

Ms. Baltugan Tazhmakina on behalf of Ms. Ainur Sospanova (Kazakhstan), Vice-Chair, , elected at the 5th session

Mr. Paolo Frankl, International Energy Agency (IEA), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

Mr. Anuar Tassymov on behalf of Mr. Gurbuz Gonul (IRENA), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

Secretariat, UNECE:

Mr. Gianluca Sambucini, Sustainable Energy Division (SED), GERE Secretary

Ms. Annukka Lipponen, Environment Division, UNECE

Mr. Ryan Brown, Intern

Apologies received:

Mr. Andrei Miniankou (Belarus), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

Mr. Tibor Fischer (Germany), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

Mr. Felice Cappelluti (Italy), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

Ms. Isabela Cabrita (Portugal), Vice-Chair

Mr. Georgy Ermolenko (Russian Federation), Vice-Chair

Mr. Milos Banjac (Serbia), Vice-Chair

Ms. Rana Adib (REN21), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

Ms. Maria Michela Morese (GBEP-FAO), Vice-Chair, elected at the 5th session

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Item 1. Chair's welcome

The Chair of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy, Mr. Ramazanov, conveyed welcome remarks to the participants. He congratulated newly elected members of the Bureau.

Item 2. Approval of the agenda

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

Item 3. Status of implementation of the Work Plan for 2018-2019

Chair and the secretariat informed the Bureau that implementation of the current Work Plan is on track. The ongoing 5th session of GERE reviews the activities of the Group to support the renewable energy uptake and has shown to be very productive. The secretariat briefly reported on the Renewable Energy Hard Talk held in 2018 in Kazakhstan and the positive impact had in the round of renewable energy auctions in the country.

Renewable Energy Hard Talks are foreseen in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia from a water-renewable energy nexus approach, with special attention to the Drina river basin. The Hard Talk in BiH is planned to take place on 4-5 December in Sarajevo.

The representatives from Albania and Georgia pointed out the progress made by their respective country to substantially increase the share of renewable energy in the energy mix and to attain their renewable energy targets in the short and medium-term. In Georgia, overall installed capacity is 4102.7 MW and currently has 55 Projects on construction and licensing with installed capacity of 1,574 MW, annual generation of 5,452 mln. kWh. Georgia has vast untapped hydro resources: only 20-21% of total hydro potential is utilized. Potential of wind and solar energies is also untapped. The representative of Albania outlined that tAlbania's primary energy supply is dominated by oil, hydropower and biomass. The country's energy sector relies heavily on energy imports, particularly oil by products and electricity imports. Water resources are Albania's most important natural resources and total hydropower potential is estimated at 4,500 MW. Today, the country has exploited only 35% of its hydropower potential. Albania has substantial RES potential. Its solar energy potential has been estimated at 1,500-1,700 kWh/m² per year. The country has also untapped wind energy potential, particularly along the Adriatic coast. Renewable heating, currently provided by inefficient use of firewood, is promoted, mainly by the introduction of solar water heating systems, industrial biomass and agriculture biomasses. Albania has committed to a binding 38% target of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption by 2020. In February 2017, a new Law on Promotion of the Use of Energy from Renewable Sources that partially transposes Directive 2009/28/EC was adopted. The Law introduces the granting of support to renewable energy producers through a tendering procedure based on contracts for difference on top of the market price of electricity. It also incorporates an auction scheme for renewable capacities greater than 2 MW and a net metering scheme for photovoltaic (PV) panels on rooftops with a capacity of up to 500 kW.

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The secretariat informed Bureau members on the prominent discussion held on renewable energy within the session on “Deep transformation of the Energy System through Electricity on 27 September, during the annual session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy.

Item 4. Discussion on the draft Work Plan for 2020-2021 – which directions?

The Chair and the other Bureau members expressed a positive view to continue the activity of tracking progress and exchange of experiences on how to increase the uptake of renewable energy through a new edition of the REN21 UNECE Renewable Energy Status Report, if resources will allow it.

On the support to renewable energy investments, the Chair and Bureau praised the UNECE Renewable Energy Hard Talks as valuable multi-stakeholder policy dialogue to identify key obstacles and discuss possible options and pathways that would allow UNECE countries to capitalize on existing benefits. The Hard Talks are able to gather a broad range of stakeholders, including policy-makers, public administrations, private developers and investors, financial institutions, donors, experts and civil society representatives to discuss the opportunities and challenges of renewable energy investment. A broader mechanism to support the bankability of project development, in conjunction with renewable energy hard talks, could be envisaged in the new Work Plan and resources could be raised. The Chair proposed to write a letter to the relevant institutions in the countries that already organized a Renewable Energy Hard Talk to ask them an update on the progress made since they had the Hard Talk in their respective country. The IEA Vice-Chair pointed out as the issue is not the lack of resources but the lack of bankable projects. The potential of a better use of biomass and the integration of solar and wind into the grid are issues that would need further attention. The representative of IRENA also outlined the need to support a proper use of the high renewable energy potential in UNECE countries.

Discussion continued on the ways GERE and its Bureau could be more involved in cross-cutting activities of the Sustainable Energy programme and other sub-programmes in UNECE. In particular, it was discussed how GERE can be involved in the projects on Pathways to Sustainable Energy. For now, the involvement is at a personal level and Tibor Fisher is the GERE focal point for the project. There is a need for more resources for broader involvement. At the moment, the project is currently in the process of wrapping up the scenario work and moving towards the formulation of key messages and then policy recommendations. All of this will feed into a series of consultations, policy dialogues, workshops and publications in 2019. A 1-2-page paper is being prepared by the Pathways project manager, so it can be sent to GERE Bureau and members to ask their views.

The representative of the UNECE Environment Division recalled the good practices in using intersectoral synergies in the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus published in 2017 as collaboration between UNECE Water Convention and GERE. She informed about the series of Hard Talks with a nexus theme planned as continuation of the cooperation in the Drina River Basin countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia). This series allows to identify some criteria and considerations to increase the benefits and reduce trade-offs between renewable energy development and water management/environment. She invited the GERE Bureau to include in the planned future work elaboration of guidance for sustainable renewable energy development and investment taking into account the intersectoral (nexus) opportunities and issues, building on the results of the Hard Talks in the Drina River Basin.

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The secretariat informed the Bureau members on the envisaged process for the new GERE Work Plan 2020-2021 to be developed, considered and approved. The UN is moving from the biennial to annual budget but at least for now the Work Plan is expected to remain biennial. As the next session of GERE will take place after the session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, the Work Plan will need to be approved by GERE by written procedure. Chair and other Bureau members expressed their interest in having a draft Work Plan distributed to the other Groups of Experts and, if there is a similar interest from them – to receive their draft Work Plans. If there are interconnections between Work Plans of various Groups of Experts, they can be formalized. GERE can also be consulted by other Groups of Experts on renewable energy in their work.

Item 5. AOB

There was no other business