

Bureau Meeting Report – GERE BMR N. 2015/1

**ECE Group of Experts on Renewable Energy (GERE)/ Committee on Sustainable Energy
Bureau Meeting
Geneva, 2 April 2015**

Report of the Meeting

Present:

Mr. Ulrich Benterbusch, Chair
Mr. Zeljko Juric, Vice-Chair
Ms. Christine Lins, REN21
Mr. Paolo Frankl, IEA

Secretariat:

Mr. Gianluca Sambucini, GERE Secretary, SED
Mr. David Townsend, Intern, 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 a brief welcome statement before entering in the core of the discussion with the other Bureau members.

Item 2. Approval of the agenda

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

Item 3. REN21 Status Report

3. The GERE Secretary briefed Bureau Members on the status of this new project with REN21. After having signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 19 November 2014, UNECE and REN21 have partnered to document the current status of renewable energy in the ECE region. The UNECE Renewable Energy Status Report aims to establish a baseline of renewable energy in the region. The REN21 Executive Secretary provided the Bureau Members with key information on how the UNECE report will be done based on the REN21 methodology applied to the global and other regional reports.
4. On 23 March, the GERE Secretary met in Paris with the REN21 Project Manager mainly on the current status of the report preparation and to refine the project management timeline. Bureau member have been informed on the on-going process to identify the authors. The deadline to respond to the call for proposals was on the 3rd of April. Bureau Members will be informed on the screening process and final decision.

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Item 4. Menu of technologies and policies to support them

5. Bureau Members were briefed on the draft paper of the Menu of technologies and policies to support them which is the up-date of the previous paper and follow-up to the GERE discussion at the first session in November. An executive summary and draft table of contents was distributed to the Bureau members before the call. The paper intends to transform the initial analysis into a framework for best practices in policies to accelerate renewable energy uptake in the UNECE region. It is a practical tool for collection, classification, exchange and use of information on concrete cases. The report outlines the key dimensions of renewable energy: Technical, Structural, and Social.
6. The paper of the Menu of technologies and policies to support them contains two templates for a dynamic process for continuous inputs from member States and create best practices information exchange. The first one is pertaining to policies, instruments, legal framework, and targets on key renewable energy technologies by country. Furthermore, a second template is available to summarize existing case studies or project proposals for key stakeholders, financial institutions, potential partners and investors operating in UNECE countries.
7. Bureau Members agreed on the table of contents and the direction undertaken with this paper. Bureau Members may provide additional comments at a later stage in April. The draft paper will be circulated to Bureau members before circulating it to the GERE constituency and posting it on the UNECE website.

Item 5. Energy Access

8. Bureau members were briefed by the secretariat on the process related to energy access taking into account the November GERE meeting when in a background paper and based on available information, 9 countries in the UNECE region were identified as not having full energy access, in particular in remote areas. The intention is now to identify and have more information on those communities with no access to energy in these nine countries through the on-going work of the REN21 report.
9. The Executive Secretary of REN21 pointed out that a questionnaire will be sent out for the status report and it will make reference to various energy access aspects. Therefore, the information included in the status report will depend very much on the level of information which will be provided by the countries. The use of the status report to better analyse the situation of energy access in the UNECE region and the role of renewable energy to facilitate energy access in remote areas was also underlined by another Bureau member.

Item 6. Azerbaijan's proposal to hold workshop on best practices and policies to increase the uptake of renewable energy in the Caucasus and Central Asia region

10. Bureau members were briefed on the opportunity to hold a conference/ workshop on best practices and policies in Azerbaijan during the second half of 2015. They all considered it a very positive initiative. The Secretariat has been working together with the Bureau member

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from Azerbaijan to explore this initiative, including preliminary organizational matters and financial aspects. The Chair asked the Secretariat to write a letter to the relevant renewable energy authorities in Azerbaijan, i.e. the State Agency on Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources, on this opportunity and the related practical and financial implications. The IEA representative informed Bureau Members that a similar workshop will be organized by them together with EBRD in Istanbul in June and it could represent a preparatory meeting for the Azerbaijan event in October.

Item 7. Azerbaijan has proposed to host the 2nd session of GERE in Baku in conjunction with the foreseen workshop

11. Bureau members were informed on the possibility for Azerbaijan to host the second session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy, initially scheduled to take place in Geneva on 12-13 October 2015. Bureau members expressed their positive views on this possibility. The Chair asked the Secretariat to contact Azerbaijan on this. IEA and REN21 Bureau Members expressed their preference in having the GERE session on the 12 and 13 October and then the workshop as the following days they will play a high-level role at the China Wind Power event (Beijing, 14-16 October). Draft agenda can be prepared as soon as the Azeris will confirm their intention to host the GERE session and the conference.

Item 8. Renewal of mandate and work plan 2016-2017

12. The Secretary provided information on the key steps to be undertaken in the coming months to develop the direction of the Group of Experts and build a consensus on the work plan 2016-2017. The Group should identify what should be continued and how among the current on-going activities. However, new challenges need to be identified such, e.g. (i) Explore the need for developing international standards; (ii) How the work of our Group of Experts could contribute to the implementation of the overall Sustainable Energy programme by taking into account the strategy which will be indicated at the open-ended consultations of the Committee on Sustainable Energy in May; (iii) How to include RE within future energy systems, strategic cooperation with other energy areas, e.g. cooperation between renewable energy and gas.
13. The Chair pointed out that it is often difficult to get electricity from gas into the market. In Germany, for example, coal is very competitive and this is a fact that regulates the market. And as long as we have an energy market, we cannot intervene.
14. Another Bureau member presented a snapshot of the situation as follows: misalignment of policies in Europe, strong decarbonisation agenda and a system which is already supplying. It is important to intellectually understand that more we push for low carbon technologies and more we have to go out from the un-flexible and polluted part of the mix. Otherwise, with the current market, coal is there and is going to stay. There are clearly also security reasons why Europe wants to keep some coal into the mix.
15. Bureau Members agreed to send ideas on the future direction of the Group and on key elements for the future work plan to the Secretariat by the beginning of May.

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Item 9. Establishment of Task Force on renewable energy best practice policies

1. DENA is currently discussing with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) on their role and contribution to the GERE work. More information will be provided by the mid of May.

Item 10. AOB

1. There was no other business