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Towards the fully integrated energy market in the EU - URE’s active participation in the Polish Presidency.

A special panel organized by URE - *Towards fully integrated energy market: first 6 months of ACER* - took place during the conference *Competitive and integrated* market as a guarantee of the EU energy security. The panel was chaired by Marek Woszczyk, the President of URE.

ACER plays a key role in achieving the European goal of creating a fully integrated energy market by 2014 - said the President of URE opening the discussion. ACER is situated between the European Commission (the executive arm of the EU), national regulatory bodies (members of CEER) and transmission system operators (members of organizations such as European Network of Transmission System Operators: for Gas - ENTSO-G - and Electricity -ENTSO-E). *One of the main tasks of the Agency is to coordinate and simplify the work within the triangle: EC, national regulatory authorities and transmission system operators* - said Marek Woszczyk - member of the ACER Board of Regulators, presenting the Agency’s modus operandi.

President Woszczyk presented the work undertaken by the Agency within the first 6 months of its existence; ACER began first public consultations and adopted the guidelines for the mechanisms of allocating the transmission capacities for gas, mechanisms of allocating the transmission capacities and congestion management for electricity and electricity grid connection. There are important tasks and challenges before the Agency concerning issues such as: grid codes, certification, monitoring of gas and electricity markets, new regulation on energy market integrity and transparency (REMIT) and further development of the Agency’s authority.

The President of URE was asking about ACER’s current organizational status and risks

associated with the economy crisis - the challenges well known to the regulatory institutions and public administration in the EU. Questions concerned also ACER's challenges related to REMIT. According to the URE President six months after the launch of ACER it is worth to ask again if ACER is going to replace the national regulatory authorities in the EU member states. During ACER's inauguration in March 2011 the representatives of European Commission and the Agency's authorities emphasized that ACER will not take over all competence of the national regulatory institutions.

Alberto Pototsching, the director of ACER, spoke about the newly created Agency's outlook. He emphasized that ACER is a new agency and as such has to deal with the initial challenges e.g. recruiting staff. Eventually the Agency will consist of 53 employees. At the moment 35 people were employed and by the end of this year almost all positions will be filled. - *We are trying to act fast as we see many challenges before us* - said Alberto Pototsching. REMIT was mentioned as one of the main challenges for ACER.

When it comes to the relationship between ACER and the national regulators, according to Alberto Pototsching, there has been no change - *The Agency continues to support the regulators' activities and tries to coordinate them. The support is the strongest in the area of transborder cooperation including the possible gaps in the EU member states' works in the process of creating a common integrated market.* - said Alberto Pototsching. The director of ACER stressed that the integration is an advantage for the 'institution' but also for the citizens of the European Union member states and they - thanks to the increase of competition, better prices and consumer rights - will be the direct beneficiaries of the Integrated European Energy Market.

Another debater was Lord Mogg, the Chairman of the ACER Board of Regulators the Board of CEER. According to Lord Mogg the process of integration and creating the energy market is too slow. - *Having the perspective of 2014 I would expect more activity from the member states in this area* - said Lord Mogg. The Chairman of the ACER Board of Regulators pointed out that ACER's capabilities are the result of the current institutional framework and the biggest challenges related to the goal of 2014 depend on the compromise between the Agency, regulatory bodies and the EU member states.

According to Lord Mogg ACER should have strong partners and to achieve the integration goals set out for ACER it is necessary to increase the independence of national regulatory institutions. During the further integration the internal conditions should not be forgotten and one of the obstacles for the European regulator and its proper functioning may turn out to be extensive and sometimes not properly defined area of operation.

Inge Bernaerts, responsible for implementation of the legislation on the internal EU energy market at the DG Energy of the European Commission took part in the discussion. Ms Bernaerts admitted that launching ACER was a great success. The EU Commission representative emphasized the work of national regulators that allowed the Agency to quickly become operational and ready for work. - *ACER should focus on the tasks that create an added value and to keep in mind that the citizens for whom the EU institutions work are the most important* - said Inge Bernaerts.

Members of ENTSO-E and ENTSO-G also took part in the discussion; the organizations came to life to aid the cooperation between the transmission system operators. In light of the 3rd Energy Package the operators play an important role in the creation of the target model that is the fully integrated energy market. Discussion moderator - President Woszczyk was asking the representatives of both organizations about their role in the creation of the fully integrated market.

Both Konstantin Staschus, the Secretary General of ENTSO-E and Vittorio Mausazzi, General Manager of ENTSO-G stressed the necessity of close cooperation and emphasized a very good cooperation of all parties so far.

The President of URE, Marek Woszczyk, in conclusion stressed the role of ACER in the creation of fully integrated energy market. Although the stakeholders may differ on how to achieve the goal of 2014, nobody seems to question the importance of the Agency in the process.

Conference summary and materials available at www.prezydencja.ure.gov.pl

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