

Questionnaire on the geographical composition of SSE region

Summary of NRAs answers

In the first quarter of 2014 AEEGSI together with URE sent a questionnaire to NRAs - SSE members. The aim was to find out whether a geographical reconfiguration of the SSE region is needed and which obstacles are hindering cooperation in the region.

The questionnaire was fulfilled by 8 NRAs (Austria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia) out of 11 countries which are part of the SSE region. Detailed answers provided by participants are attached to this summary for information.

With reference to the main question, i.e. whether a geographical reconfiguration of the SSE region is needed, three countries (the Czech Republic, Italy and Slovakia) supported such a need, suggesting modifying the current shape by splitting the region. The other countries stated that the current composition is not a problem. Some members even suggest enlarging the participation to Contracting Parties of the Energy Community. One member declared that the first priority should be the definition of new goals before carrying out any organizational change.

Respondents have different opinions on the main obstacles existing to going forward with the process of building one common gas market in SSE region. In general, the different reasons underlined are: the lack of activity of some countries, insufficient infrastructure connecting the region, too large shape of the SSE region, too low level of involvement of stakeholders and Member States Governments in the process of integration, lack of uniform guidelines referring to both national and regional gas market development plans and policies, lack of resources both human and financial in some NRAs to strengthen regional cooperation, existing differences in legal and regulatory framework as well as energy policies of single member states, too ambitious goals, lack of a clear objective of Regional Initiatives, low turn-over in the chairmanship of the region, distinct stages of national market liberalization processes, different markets and tariff systems.

Respondents have also different views about the impact of a possible reconfiguration of SSE region on the creation of a common regional gas market. Some of them suggested that reconfiguration might accelerate the process; others that slow pace of integration is due to a lack of cooperation between countries rather than inaccurate shape of the region.

Finally, referring to the desirable tasks to be worked on in the region, the majority of respondents declared that the focus should be on the early implementation of network codes.

Main Conclusions

To sum up the above answers, a geographical reconfiguration (at least at this moment) does not seem to be the best solution to the problems that the SSE region is facing. The Region should rather focus on reconsidering the main tasks that should be worked on in the region. Based on the answers provided, it is clear that there are different interests in the region, but a common identified priority is the early

implementation of network codes. Therefore, in order to foster the participation in the SSE activities, one action to be done immediately is the update of the SSE WP to include new regional priorities. Cooperation among SSE members should be strengthened by sharing know-how and experience on the activities carried out at national/bilateral level to implement NCs.

Another action could be the introduction of a “rotating principle” for the chairmanship of the Region, to promote the commitment of all members to the success of the SSE regional initiative.

A discussion about geographical reconfiguration of the SSE region (including a possible extension to Contracting Parties of the Energy Community) will be held also during the forthcoming Stakeholders Group meeting (to be held in May 2014) in order to collect Stakeholders feedbacks.

Next steps

During a virtual RCC meeting (held by call conference on 27 March 2014) and based on the outcome of the above survey, SSE NRAs agreed on the following next steps:

- To share with ACER the answers provided by SSE members
- To start the process for the updating of the current SSE 2011-2014 Work Plan and for the identification of new priorities post 2014
- To inform Stakeholders about the results of the above survey and ask for their opinion (during the next Stakeholders Meeting in May)
- To discussion the introduction of a “rotating principle” for the chairmanship of the Region