European Energy Forum

ACTIVITY REPORT 2024

Tsvetelina Penkova

Member of the European Parliament (S&D, Bulgaria)
President of the European Energy Forum

2024 was truly an impactful year for the EU. We went through the latest round of EU elections and several member states had important national elections and transferred power to new governments. The future ahead of us will be even more dynamic but I am sure we can come out better prepared for all of the challenges that await us.

I am extremely grateful for the privilege to be elected as the first female president of the EEF and to succeed our dear colleague and mentor - Mr Jerzy Buzek. I hope to continue to lead in his gentle style of combining sharp contributions and on-point expertise.

The election of the new European Commission has showed us that the transition to a climate-neutral economy is no longer a choice but a path forward if we want to build a real European autonomy. Europe stands at a critical juncture, facing environmental challenges, economic pressures and growing global energy demands. Our main priority should be to secure affordable energy prices for our households and industries! This context demands leadership in building sustainable, resilient and forward-looking energy systems.

Resilience is the cornerstone in this process. As our world grapples with supply chain disruptions, volatile markets, geopolitical tensions and climate-driven disasters, Europe's energy infrastructure must not only endure, but adapt and thrive. A resilient system does more than just ensuring energy supply; it supports economic growth, fosters innovation and enhances competitiveness - benefiting industries and households.

Europe's ambitious targets, from the European Green Deal to climate neutrality by 2050, provide a strong foundation. The anticipated Clean Industrial Deal, set to be introduced by the new EU Commission in the first months of 2025, could further strengthen our competitiveness. However, achieving these goals requires regulatory predictability, balanced policies and clear long-term signals to investors.

Energy independence is equally crucial. Recent geopolitical pressures underscore the need for Europe to secure its energy autonomy in order to underpin stability and growth. Achieving this requires a tailored approach that reflects the individual choices of the member states, leveraging Europe's regional diversity in resources, climate and industrial needs. Local solutions can drive impactful EU-wide strategies, fostering cross-border cooperation and innovation.

A truly resilient energy system must embrace a diverse energy mix, including baseload power, renewables and innovative storage solutions. This balance protects us against supply shocks, stabilises costs and ensures affordability for consumers and businesses. Strengthening grid interconnections and investing in digital and smart technologies, such as AI and predictive tools, will further enhance efficiency, adaptability and flexibility.

Regulatory alignment across the EU is essential. Conflicting policies could undermine progress, while clear and consistent frameworks will encourage investment and foster competition, transparency and reliability. This will ensure affordable energy for all, secure Europe's competitiveness and build trust with consumers, who seek stability in their energy costs.

The road to a resilient, climate-neutral energy system is undoubtedly challenging, but it is within reach. Through innovation, collaboration and a focus on regional insights, Europe has the opportunity to lead globally - safeguarding our economy, social model and natural resources for future generations.

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of 2024, let us strive for a secure, sustainable and affordable energy future. Together, we can lay the foundation for a Europe that thrives economically while meeting its climate ambitions.

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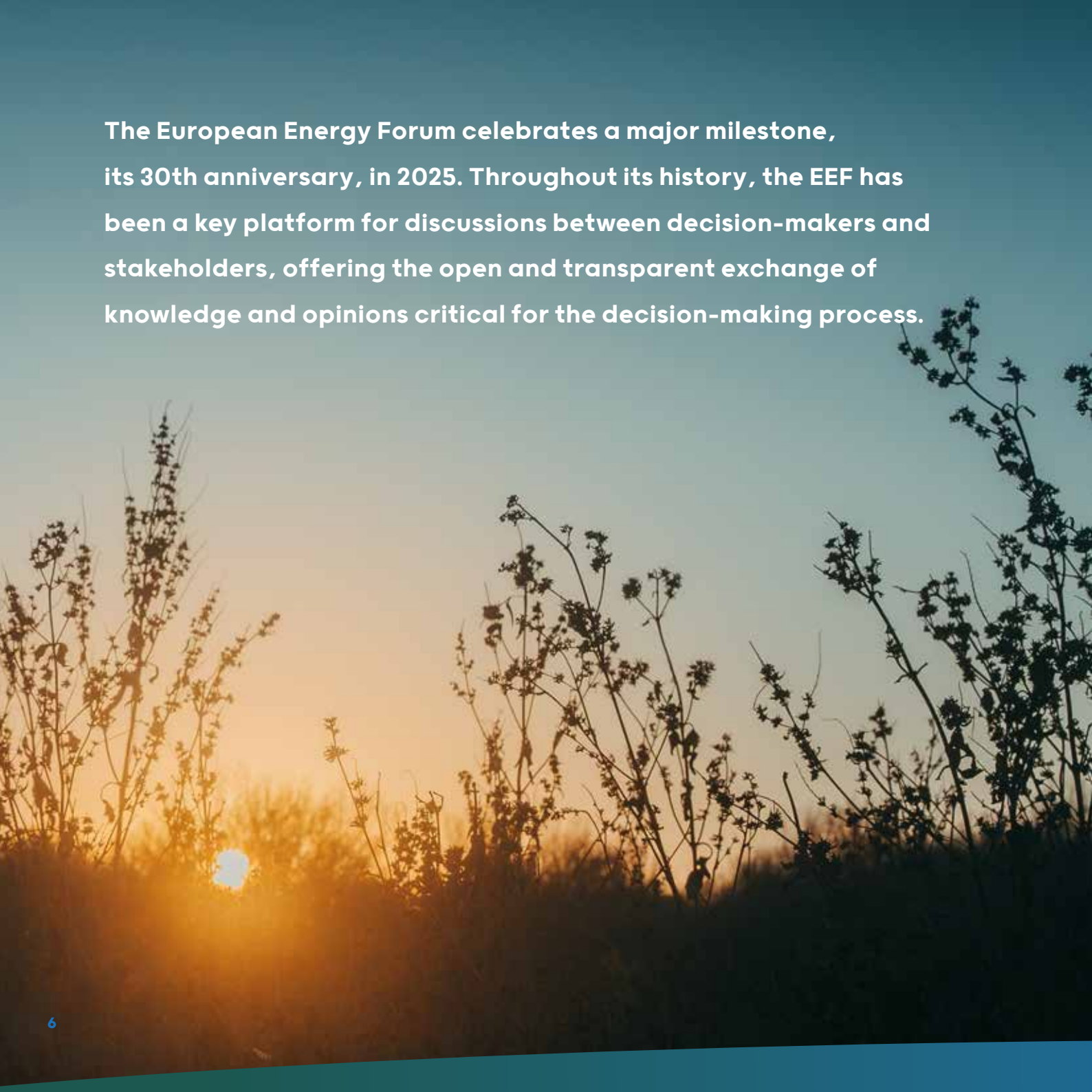
The European Energy Forum celebrates a major milestone, its 30th anniversary, in 2025. Throughout its history, the EEF has been a key platform for discussions between decision-makers and stakeholders, offering the open and transparent exchange of knowledge and opinions critical for the decision-making process.



Core values and mission

Energy is at the heart of the economy - it drives economic activity.

The European Energy Forum (EEF) offers a place where EU policymakers can get accurate **information**, listen to **varied points of view**, share **opinions** and gain a **deeper understanding** of energy-related issues, and through this create a favourable operating environment for citizens and businesses alike and allow for a full-fledged energy transition.

The EEF has a neutral stance towards energy technologies and sources supporting the energy transition.

Over the last term of the European Parliament, the forum's discussions covered a wide range of topics, linked to energy, climate and transport, adding even more value to the unprecedented decarbonisation commitment that began in 2019 with the European Green Deal.

As a membership-driven association, the EEF works for the benefit of its members, whose cooperation is fundamental to the organisation and success of the forum's discussions.

The EEF has a large network of experts and institutional representatives: the diversity of viewpoints ensures that exchanges are valuable and stimulating.

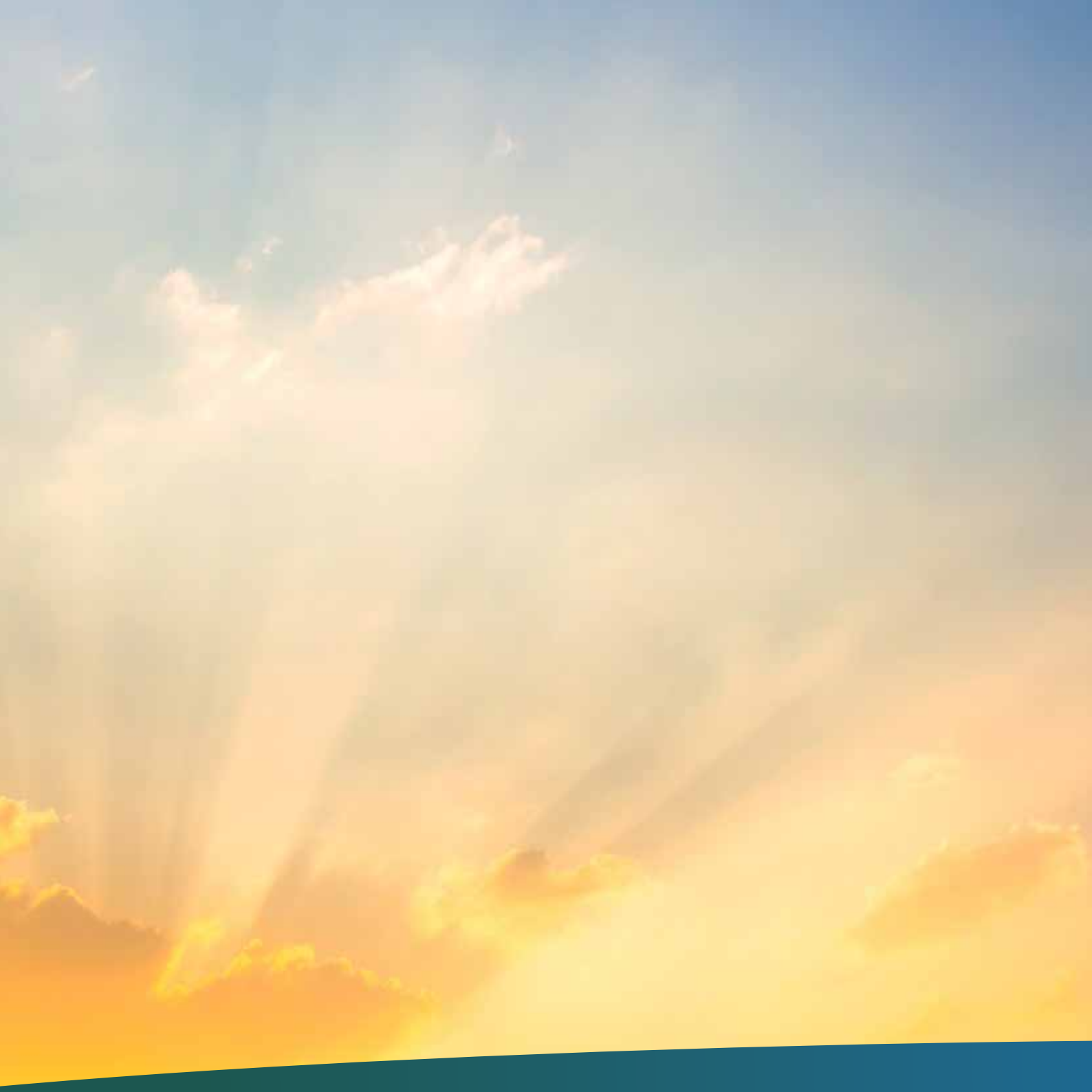
**There is no one-size-fits-all solution for decarbonisation.
The EEF is the ideal place to discuss the solutions available,
with an open mind and benefiting from different points of view.**

EEF

Open debate for stakeholder engagement

EEF discussions

Get involved ans shape our discussions



The EEF in a nutshell

2024: From one president to another

2024 saw the election of a new president after Jerzy Buzek MEP (EPP, Poland) decided to step down following 10 years in the role.

The EEF's president is elected, along with the board of directors, at the general assembly following each European Parliament election.

Tsvetelina Penkova was unanimously elected as the EEF's new president on 16 July 2024 during a congenial ceremony that gathered key MEPs from the 2019-2024 term and newly elected MEPs.

MEPs are the driving force of the EEF

The EEF's board of directors for 2024-2029 is composed of the following:

- Tsvetelina Penkova MEP (S&D, Bulgaria), President
- Inese Vaidere (EPP, Latvia), Vice-President and Treasurer
- Pilar del Castillo Vera (EPP, Spain), Vice-President
- Seán Kelly (EPP, Ireland), Vice-President
- Christophe Grudler (RE, France), Board Member
- Jens Geier (S&D, Germany), Board Member
- Radan Kanev (EPP, Bulgaria), Board Member
- Ondřej Knotek (PfE, Czechia),Board Member
- Massimiliano Salini (EPP, Italy), Board Member

The general assembly held on 16 July was an occasion to look back at past achievements and forward to the future, in a ceremony that brought together MEPs and EEF Associate Members.

Jerzy Buzek

Member of the European Parliament (EPP, Poland)
Outgoing president of the European Energy Forum

After starting out as a member of the EEF back in 2004, I took over as president 10 years ago from Giles Chichester of the UK, at the time part of the ECR Group in the European Parliament. Now, we are moving forward again on the geographical and political map - from myself as an EEF president from Poland and the EPP Group to Bulgaria and the S&D Group with the forum's new president, Tsvetelina Penkova.

Discussion of EU energy issues and policies between different political groups is hugely important. I have to thank the whole family of EEF members, for a 20-year adventure during which we have talked, exchanged views and sometimes argued, but always listened to each other constructively and learned from one another. I cannot imagine a better, more cooperative community with very different approaches to energy matters.

Tsvetelina Penkova

Member of the European Parliament (S&D, Bulgaria)
Incoming president of the European Energy Forum

I am proud to have been part of the EEF for the past 5 years, truly a place for practical debate on energy policies and their application in our daily lives. Unlike political debates in the plenary, the forum's debates are not based on ideology; they are about listening to experts. It is a great honour for me to take on the mantel from President Buzek after his 10-year tenure.

The road ahead will be challenging, with the need to invest in real connectivity, more baseload power and renewable energy, to find the right balance between affordable prices for citizens and ensuring Europe and its industries remain competitive. The EEF will continue to provide a strong platform for debate so we can overcome the challenges in store together.

Pascale Verheust

Director General of the European Energy Forum

Under Jerzy Buzek's presidency, the EEF has grown in both size and influence. Promoting a culture of collaboration and inclusivity, he has helped ensure that every voice is heard and every point of view valued, bringing a diversity of stakeholders to the forum. He leaves a legacy of accomplishments that will continue to shape the future of our association and the broader energy sector for years to come. He leaves the EEF in good hands with Tsvetelina Penkova, finding the perfect new president to continue the forum's work.

Active Members

Elected **Members of the European Parliament** (MEPs) have always been the EEF's **driving force**.

EEF Active Members come from different political parties, different parliamentary committees and different EU member states. They support the EEF's mission and share an interest in energy-related fields.

Their strong commitment highlights the EEF's value as an important platform for obtaining information and exchanging views on the full spectrum of energy-related topics. The transparent, inclusive and open discussions between all parties involved are a key pillar of policymaking.

The association is administered on a voluntary basis by a board of directors, composed of MEPs from different political groups and of various nationalities. The board is elected by Active Members every five years during the general assembly following each European Parliament election. All Active Members are invited to the annual general assembly.

Within the board of directors, a bureau composed of the president, MEP Tsvetelina Penkova, the treasurer and vice-president, MEP Inese Vaidere, and the vice-presidents, MEPs Pilar del Castillo Vera and Seán Kelly, takes the lead and meets during the year to discuss the EEF's activities.

Active Members govern the organisation and support its activities at each stage: they help build the programme for the year, chair discussions and participate actively in them.

Inese Vaidere Member of the European Parliament (EPP, Latvia) Vice-President and Treasurer of the European Energy Forum

Energy is one of the fundamental pillars of human progress. For centuries, energy production has posed significant challenges while simultaneously driving development across all sectors. Today, it is clear that diversification is the cornerstone of a sustainable and resilient energy strategy. This is why the European Energy Forum (EEF) plays such a vital role, bringing together members from a wide spectrum of energy production and associated industries.

For us, as Members of the European Parliament, the EEF provides an invaluable opportunity to deepen our understanding of this complex and essential field. In 2024, the EEF has once again proven to be an irreplaceable platform for fostering dialogue and collaboration. I would particularly like to welcome the new associate and active members of the EEF, emphasising that you have joined a truly dynamic and impactful platform.

Associate Members

EEF Associate Members are **private and public stakeholders**, **associations**, **regulators** and **research organisations**, active in all energy-related sectors.

Associate Members recognise the importance of having **all sides of energy represented** in the debate and are committed to helping Active Members with access to comprehensive and factual information. They are ready to answer questions, listen to different viewpoints and share opinions with panellists and the audience at EEF discussions.

Associate Members' cooperation and involvement are key to the forum's success: they provide expertise, share suggestions on topics to cover and take part in EEF discussions.

**Associate Members pay an annual membership fee.
They are invited to discuss the EEF's proposed programme for the year with the board at the annual Industrial and Technical Advisory Committee meeting.
The EEF has 92 Associate Members from within and outside the EU's geographical borders.**

93

Associate Members

a2a LIFE COMPANY
AIR PRODUCTS
amprion
axpo
bdew
NUCLEAR FORUM
Bioenergy EUROPE
bp
Carbon Capture & Storage Association
CEER
cefic
CEMBUREAU
Cepi
CEWEP
CEZ GROUP
Chemours
COGEN EUROPE
DOW
DTEK Energy in action
E-CONTROL
E.DSO
e·on
EASE
EBA European Biogas Association
EBB
EDF
EDISON
EERA
eFuel alliance
ehpa
EIGA
ENEDIS
enel
energy traders europe
ENGIE
eni
entsoe
entsog
equinor
EDGINE
EURACOAL
eurelectric
EUROFER
eurofuel
eurogas
Euroheat & Power
EA
ExxonMobil
Fertilizers Europe
Finnish Energy
fortum
FuelsEurope
GAS system
GD4S
GEODE
Gas Infrastructure Europe
GRDF
GREEN POWER DENMARK
Hydrogen Europe
Iberdrola
International Copper Association Europe
ifiec europe
International Association of Oil & Gas Producers
Liquid Gas Europe
NAFTOGAZ GROUP
nationalgrid
natran
NESTE
NHO
nuclear europe
OFFSHORE NORGE
orana
ORLEN
PGE
PKEE Polish Electricity Association
ppc
Renewables Norway
Rte
SHV ENERGY
snam
SolarPower Europe
SSE
TERĒGA
Terna
TotalEnergies
TRANSNET BW
UFE Union Française de l'Électricité
uniper
urenco
WÄRTSILÄ
WindEurope
zep

Team

The Brussels-based team is headed by a director general, who acts under the responsibility of the bureau and directs the EEF's day-to-day work, activities and discussions.

The team works closely with the forum's political leadership, liaises with members and maintains relations with the broader EEF network.

The team's different backgrounds and adaptability enable them to handle the EEF's wide range of tasks successfully.

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The small team is involved in all aspects of the EEF's work, carrying out legislative research, monitoring the latest developments in energy-related fields, handling internal and external communication, and managing the activities that allow key topics to be addressed.

Extended network

The EEF has long welcomed high-level officials from the European Commission as speakers at its discussions, in addition to the forum's own members.

MEPs working on energy and environment dossiers are invited to the EEF's discussions. As an open and neutral forum, we also invite other MEPs who are interested in participating, including those on committees not directly involved in energy. Key policymakers take an active part in the debates, sharing their thoughts and exchanging views with other participants.

The permanent representations and missions to the EU, along with other public authorities and institutions inside and outside the EU, are also invited to take part in energy debates relevant to their fields of work.

Thanks to exchanges with the EEF's large and ever-expanding network, the needs of the European energy sector are better understood.

BIOGAS
REGULATION
GRID
BIOENERGY
THIRD COUNTRIES
INTENSIVE ENERGY USERS
PHOTOVOLTAICS
RENEWABLES
GEOTHERMAL ENERGY
ENERGY GENERATION
HYDROGEN
SUSTAINABLE FUELS
MARKET DESIGN
DISTRIBUTION
OIL
INTERCONNECTORS
GAS
RENEWABLE ENERGY
NETWORK
HIGH VOLTAGE
COAL
CLIMATE
COGENERATION
CONSUMERS
ENERGY
INNOVATION
GREEN DEAL
DECARBONISATION
WIND ENERGY
DISTRICT HEATING
INDUSTRY
TRANSPORT
NUCLEAR
SCIENCE
DISTRIBUTION
NETWORK
TRANSMISSION
HOUSEHOLDS
DISCUSSION
RENEWABLE FUELS
LOW-CARBON
ENERGY TRANSITION
HYDROPOWER
FOSSIL FUELS
R&D
COOPERATION
LOW-CARBON
SOLAR THERMAL
E-FUELS
HEAT PUMPS
RAW MATERIALS

EEF Discussions in 2024

Each EEF event is carefully planned, follows discussions in the European Parliament and helps to shape informed decisions to deliver the energy transition in an *orderly way*.

Energy debates

For almost 30 years now, the EEF has organised its traditional discussions: energy debates. These illustrate the forum's essence - providing a cross-party, cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platform for constructive discussion.

Energy debates follow the EU legislative timeline closely, ensuring discussions are timely and respond to information needs at the right moment.

High-level roundtables

These smaller gatherings give Active and Associate Members the opportunity to sit around the same table and discuss key energy issues in depth.

Briefing sessions

The EEF also organises briefing sessions, where Active Members and their advisors, along with political groups' advisors and assistants, can find out more about energy technologies and realities.

These sessions are developed through close cooperation between the EEF team and Associate Members, to ensure the content is comprehensive, factual and informative.

Energy site visits

Visits to energy sites are a unique opportunity to gain insights into energy, related technologies, production processes and real-world applications - to see the realities of the industry.

Engaging with industry experts during site visits helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation, giving a better grasp of a wide range of topics.

The EEF's Active and Associate Members meet to discuss energy-related topics, together with non-member MEPs, representatives of the European Commission and other key institutional representatives.

New Year Reception

Reception in Brussels **30 January 2024**

Chair

Jerzy Buzek MEP (EPP, Poland), EEF President

The EEF team and members came together at the forum's office in Brussels to welcome in the new year. The gathering also gave the opportunity to raise a glass to Director General Pascale Verheust and celebrate her 25th anniversary with the EEF.

The energy landscape has seen many changes over the past quarter century. Thanks to Pascale's hard work, energy and commitment, the EEF has remained at the forefront of debates on key energy questions, all while staying as close as possible to the work of the European Commission and the Parliament.

Here's to Pascale and many more years with the EEF!

Energy Forum

2040 climate target: a discussion with the industry

Dinner Debate in Brussels 19 March 2024

Chair

Tsvetelina Penkova MEP (S&D, Bulgaria), EEF Director

Speakers

Robert Jeszke, CEO, Centre for Climate and Energy Analysis/ KOBiZE

Jędrzej Maśnicki, Director for International Affairs, PGE

Emmanuel Brutin, Public Affairs Director, CEMBUREAU

Adolfo Aiello, Deputy Director General, Climate and Energy, EUROFER

Anna-Maria Karjalainen, Director for Clean Transition, International Copper Association Europe

Jasmine Barahman, Climate Policy and EU Affairs Senior Manager, Fertilizers Europe

Miguel Gil Tertre, Chief Economist, Energy policy: Strategy and Coordination, DG ENER

EEF Director Tsvetelina Penkova opened the discussion by emphasising the need for strategic autonomy and reliance on European expertise, as shown by the challenges seen in recent years. Meeting the EU's climate goal for 2040 will require existing and future legislation to be implemented. Alongside this, to ensure European industry stays competitive, it is vital to identify member states' individual strengths and focus on a fair transition. A level playing field and clear understanding of interdependencies would help ensure that competition with international partners is fair.

Robert Jeszke, CEO, Centre for Climate and Energy Analysis/ KOBiZE, looked at various scenarios put forward for hitting the 2040 climate target, on the way to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. There are uncertainties around climate policies post-2030, especially the EU Emissions Trading System. Removal technologies, although not operational yet, have a fundamental role to play in reducing emissions by 2040. However, having ambitious targets without clear implementing mechanisms in place means a more nuanced approach to climate policy discussions in Europe is needed, he noted.

Jędrzej Maśnicki, **Director for International Affairs, PGE**, highlighted some key elements that can help deliver on the EU's climate target - electrification and investment in storage facilities. Investing in diverse sources of energy generation like nuclear can help increase electrification while also guaranteeing competitive energy prices. There are challenges linked to grid connectivity, though, and he questioned the decline of nuclear capacity projected in certain models. To reach the EU's 2050 climate goal, substantial investment is needed every year up to then, and financial mechanisms are crucial to secure this.

Four energy-intensive industries then took the floor.

Emmanuel Brutin, Public Affairs Director, CEMBUREAU, focused on the pressing need to boost investment in energy-intensive sectors and stressed carbon capture technologies' pivotal role, particularly for industries like cement. Mitigating carbon leakage and implementing the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) can help avoid industrial decline in Europe, he noted.

Adolfo Aiello, Deputy Director General, Climate and Energy, EUROFER, explained that reaching the EU's climate goals means fully decarbonising the steel sector. This is achievable with two energy-intensive technologies: carbon capture and hydrogen-based steel production. At the same time, the sector must remain competitive, and implementing the CBAM is key to avoid unfair trading practices.

Anna-Maria Karjalainen, Director for Clean Transition, International Copper Association Europe, highlighted copper's strategic role in decarbonising the EU economy and as an enabler for electrification. Production of copper must be decarbonised, too, with the help of substantial investments and regulatory support. She urged policymakers to guarantee the resilience of Europe's raw material value chains.

Jasmine Barahman, Climate Policy and EU Affairs Senior Manager, Fertilizers Europe, emphasised the importance for companies of having flexibility in their choice of decarbonisation technologies, based on member states' individual situations. Depending on the availability of renewables, industries should be able to produce green ammonia and green hydrogen, or rely on carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS).

Miguel Gil Tertre, Chief Economist, Energy policy: Strategy and Coordination, DG ENER, underlined the importance of cost-efficient strategies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The European Commission's communication on a 2040 climate target paves the way for designing an appropriate post-2030 policy framework to deliver this target in a fair and cost-efficient way. To achieve it, massive investments, both public and private, will be needed and all available technologies, including nuclear and CCUS. To ensure the EU stays competitive, particularly with the US and China, energy prices must be affordable. For this, investment in renewable energy sources, grid infrastructure and interconnections is vital. Energy-intensive industries will need customised measures to manage their energy costs and retain industrial capacity.

The subsequent **Q&A session** covered a wide variety of topics, such as the need for a regulatory framework to support industrial decarbonisation, gas infrastructure resilience, biomethane's role in decarbonising Europe's economy, energy taxation discrepancies, and the need for private investments in order to meet ambitious climate targets.

Wrapping up the parliamentary term: an exchange with Executive Vice-President Šefčovič on the EU's climate and energy policy

Dinner Debate in Strasbourg 23 April 2024

Chair

Jerzy Buzek MEP (EPP, Poland), EEF President

Speakers

Maroš Šefčovič, Executive Vice-President, European Green Deal, Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight

EEF President Jerzy Buzek MEP launched the discussion with a recap of key initiatives and results from the latest European Parliament term, mostly driven by the European Green Deal. The focus should now move to implementation and ensuring the EU economy's needs are duly taken into account, he explained. Clear energy and climate plans are also important for the next legislature.

Maroš Šefčovič, **Executive Vice-President, European Green Deal, Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight**, highlighted some of the challenges faced in recent years, like the COVID-19 pandemic, the energy crisis and geopolitical turbulence at international level. Effective collaboration by EU institutions meant responses were swift, with the combination of emergency and structural measures sustaining the economy successfully.

Decarbonisation remains a top priority for the EU - and the 2040 climate target is a crucial step to reach climate neutrality by 2050. However, more attention to the competitiveness of EU industry is needed. With this in mind, the spotlight should shift to implementing the policies adopted during the past legislature, and strengthening their industrial and social dimensions.

The European Commission's priorities for the next legislative term reflect the commitment to build a more resilient, competitive and sustainable EU. They include swift implementation of the agreed EU legislative framework while minimising administrative burdens; strengthening the EU's energy autonomy, reducing energy prices for consumers and ensuring energy-intensive industries can remain competitive; and developing EU energy infrastructure to accelerate electrification of the economy. To strengthen the EU's competitiveness globally, it must focus on domestic value chains in critical sectors for the move to a decarbonised economy - such as wind turbine production, solar panels, batteries, heat pumps, cables and electrolysers. An EU single market for clean technologies is also vital to boost investment in domestic industries that can support the transition to a low-carbon economy.

A dynamic **Q&A session** followed, spanning a broad range of topics, from global competitiveness, water resilience, copper's role in the green transition, the role of hydrogen, and improving plastic recycling methods to digitalising energy infrastructure and the need to strengthen the EU's energy infrastructure.

European Energy Fo
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Handing over the torch from one EEF president to another

General Assembly in Strasbourg 16 July 2024

Co-chairs

Jerzy Buzek MEP (EPP, Poland), outgoing EEF President

Tsvetelina Penkova MEP (S&D, Bulgaria), incoming EEF President

This occasion saw the EEF's Active Members, MEPs, elect a new president along with 8 board members in the wake of the European Parliament election. Tsvetelina Penkova MEP (S&D, Bulgaria) was unanimously elected as the forum's new president, taking over from Jerzy Buzek MEP (EPP, Poland), who decided to step down after 10 years in the role.

Ms Penkova is supported by the EEF's board of directors, also elected unanimously at the assembly: Inese Vaidere (EPP, Latvia), Pilar del Castillo Vera (EPP, Spain), Seán Kelly (EPP, Ireland), Christophe Grudler (RE, France), Jens Geier (S&D, Germany), Radan Kanev (EPP, Bulgaria), Ondřej Knotek (PfE, Czechia) and Massimiliano Salini (EPP, Italy).

Henna Virkkunen (EPP, Finland) was also elected to the board on 16 July. She has since been appointed Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy at the European Commission and has therefore resigned as an EEF Active Member.

Looking back at the last 5 years' achievements and shaping tomorrow's energy policy with Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson

Dinner Debate in Strasbourg 16 July 2024

Co-chairs

Jerzy Buzek MEP (EPP, Poland), outgoing EEF President
Tsvetelina Penkova MEP (S&D, Bulgaria), incoming EEF President

Speakers

Kadri Simson, European Commissioner for Energy

This debate followed the election of the **EEF's new president, MEP Tsvetelina Penkova**, and gave members the opportunity to express their gratitude and thanks to **outgoing president, MEP Jerzy Buzek**.

Tsvetelina Penkova kicked off by focusing on a recently published impact assessment of possible pathways to reach the EU's climate-neutrality goal by 2050. For the interim goal of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by 90% by 2040, several things are needed. These include full implementation of the 2030 legislative framework; transformation of the European Green Deal into an industrial decarbonisation deal; focusing on a just transition; a level playing field with international partners; and strategic dialogue including industry and agriculture. Better grid connections and investments in baseload and renewable energy are also crucial to sustain the transition.

Kadri Simson, European Commissioner for Energy, took a look back at the past 5 years and considered what EU energy policy should prioritise during the current mandate. The COVID-19 pandemic required coordinated action by member states, as did the energy crisis that followed, with measures adopted to make the energy market less volatile, address energy supply disruptions, and give direct energy access to businesses and citizens. The adoption of the REPowerEU plan led to a significant decrease in EU imports of Russian gas, at the same time as boosting electricity generation from renewables.

Looking ahead, the European Commission is committed to working with Ukraine to help restore its generation capacity, while increasing funding and integrating its energy system with that of the EU. Finalising national energy and climate plans will be key to deliver on the EU's goals, guiding the investments needed and paving the way to reach the 2040 and 2050 climate targets. Focusing on infrastructure development will remain crucial, to ensure the modern, upgraded and digital grids that are essential to deliver on renewables targets. Gas infrastructure must also be repurposed to make it fit to transport hydrogen and CO_2. All this will require significant investment, along with international partnerships with non-EU countries that bring mutually beneficial cooperation.

During the **Q&A session**, participants shared their views on what should be prioritised during the current mandate, ranging from financing, energy efficiency, the importance of the internal market, and nuclear energy's role in the transition to low-carbon hydrogen production, the development of the grid and interconnectors for electricity and decarbonising hard-to-abate industries.

In his final EEF speech, the outgoing president, Jerzy Buzek, thanked the commissioner and stressed the importance of continued collaboration between the European Commission and the EEF. Recalling many moments of constructive dialogue and debate, Mr Buzek expressed his gratitude for 20 years of working with the forum, thanking the director general and the rest of the EEF team for their efforts during his tenure.

Tsvetelina Penkova wrapped up by thanking Mr Buzek for helping to make the EEF such a hotspot for debate and contributions. She pledged that the forum and its members will continue his extraordinary work, providing a platform for informative and constructive discussions on the full gamut of energy issues, and ensuring his legacy lives on.

g dialogue
the future

Going back to basics: gas molecules

MEP Assistant Briefing in Brussels — 5 September 2024

Chair

Mihael Mihov, Advisor to Tsvetelina Penkova MEP, EEF President

Moderator

Pascale Verheust, EEF Director General

Speakers

Lucie Boost, Head of European Affairs, Air Products

Nicola Rega, Executive Director, Climate Change and Energy, Cefic

Philippe Cornille, General Secretary, EIGA

Daniele D'Angelo, Head of Upstream, Midstream and EU Energy Policy, Eni

Victor Bernabeu, Director, Eurogas

Antoine Hoxha, Director General, Fertilizers Europe

Frédéric Dykmans, Secretary General, GD4S

Tobias Bühnen, Policy Advisor, GIE

Lilia Brandusa, Head of EU Office, GRTgaz

Matus Muron, Manager, Market Intelligence, Hydrogen Europe

François-Régis Mouton, Managing Director, IOGP Europe

Valeria Palmisano, Senior Manager EU Institutional Relations, Snam

Martin Carbonez, Regulatory and Institutional Affairs Senior Manager, TotalEnergie

This briefing explored the history and development of the gas sector, giving participants a better understanding of the EU's energy mix today. The technical characteristics of natural gas, biogas, biomethane and hydrogen were outlined, and their development over time.

For natural gas, experts detailed the state of play using current data and future projections, and gave an overview of the main legislation impacting the sector over the past 5 years. Transport of natural gas via pipelines is now being complemented by an increasing share of imported liquefied natural gas (LNG). Methane emissions at European and global level, their origin and the actions taken to tackle them also came under the spotlight.

The briefing then focused on the molecules currently gaining momentum and which will further complement natural gas in the future, in line with the EU's climate objectives: biogas, biomethane and hydrogen. The feedstocks, production processes and end uses of biogas and biomethane were outlined. Experts also explained the differences between natural gas and biomethane and why the latter, as a renewable gas, is more sustainable.

Turning to hydrogen, its history and early discovery was detailed, along with different production processes. Speakers underlined the importance of safety in industrial applications of hydrogen. End users gave their perspectives on hydrogen as a feedstock, including how it is used in the production processes and for decarbonisation of the chemical and fertilizer industries.

The briefing continued with explanations of the state of play of gas infrastructure in Europe - transmission pipelines, storage sites and LNG terminals - and the important role that it will continue to play during the energy transition. To wrap up, experts presented some Italian and French infrastructure projects involving biomethane, hydrogen and CO_2.

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Electrification: potential, benefits and challenges

Dinner Debate in Strasbourg 17 September 2024

Chair

Tsvetelina Penkova MEP (S&D, Bulgaria), EEF President

Speakers

Walburga Hemetsberger, CEO, SolarPower Europe

Armando Martínez, CEO, Iberdrola

Greg Jackson, Founder and CEO, Octopus Energy

Catherine Vandenborre, CEO, Elia

Ditte Juul Jørgensen, Director-General for Energy, DG ENER

EEF President Tsvetelina Penkova MEP opened the discussion by emphasising that high energy prices present a significant challenge across member states, affecting economic competitiveness. She suggested that future policies should prioritise price stability and infrastructure investment, with long-term energy contracts, a redesigned electricity market, and improved transparency.

A recent report on EU competitiveness by Mario Draghi, former Italian prime minister and former president of the European Central Bank, highlighted similar concerns, noting that energy price volatility and differences in pricing across countries create unequal impacts on industries and hinder competitiveness. It underlined the need to focus on energy contracts, market structure, and infrastructure upgrades which could help the EU stay competitive globally and stabilise energy prices in the short term.

Walburga Hemetsberger, CEO, SolarPower Europe, called for an electrification action plan to speed up the energy transition, saying that with its cost advantages electrification could be a strategic choice for Europe. This plan should cover all aspects of energy production and distribution, positioning renewables as a locally produced and cost-effective solution. She stressed that rapid action is essential to make the EU a leader in sustainable energy and bolster industrial resilience.

Armando Martínez, CEO, Iberdrola, looked at the transformative potential of electrification, which serves the dual purpose of climate action and economic growth. Electrification presents industries with opportunities to innovate, create sustainable markets and improve competitiveness. Given the challenges and costs involved, he recommended that financial incentives and policy support be provided to industries transitioning to renewable energy. He also advocated for simplifying regulatory processes to accelerate the adoption of green technologies and improve industrial efficiency.

Greg Jackson, Founder and CEO, Octopus Energy, highlighted the technological advances driving down costs for renewable energy, batteries and electric vehicles. This makes renewables-based electrification increasingly viable and competitive. Technology-driven price reductions also create benefits for consumers. He noted the strategic importance of electrification in securing Europe's position in a competitive global market, adding that the EU should act quickly to support consumer access to renewable energy and capitalise on green technologies' cost benefits.

Catherine Vandenborre, CEO, Elia, looked at the infrastructure needed for successful electrification, including the importance of cross-border transmission and distribution networks, saying stronger grid connectivity is crucial for achieving a stable and resilient energy union. She recommended that the EU expand investments in domestic and international infrastructure, especially in offshore wind - central to Europe's energy future. These investments should be coordinated at EU level to ensure a unified approach to energy distribution and avoid regional disparities.

Ditte Juul Jørgensen, Director-General for Energy, DG ENER, introduced the EU's forthcoming electrification strategy, aimed at tackling barriers to widespread electrification. Key areas of focus include increased grid investments, greater deployment of renewable energy and revised taxation policies to encourage adoption of green energy. Existing regulatory frameworks provide a strong foundation for this transition, but further coordination among member states is essential to maximise the economic and environmental benefits of electrification. An inclusive approach across the EU would help foster economic growth while meeting climate goals, she concluded.

The **Q&A session** that followed covered a number of issues, including the need for balanced and extensive electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the EU and the importance of maintaining competitiveness for energy-intensive industries. Concerns were voiced about the impact of energy costs and supply chain dependencies on EU industries, along with suggestions for encouraging collaboration across sectors and countries to enhance energy security and industrial resilience.

Going back to basics: electricity

MEP Assistant Briefing in Brussels — 3 October 2024

Chair

Mihael Mihov, Advisor to Tsvetelina Penkova MEP, EEF President

Moderator

Pascale Verheust, EEF Director General

Speakers

Patrick Clerens, Managing Director, EASE

Andrei Goicea, Policy Director, nucleareurope

Viktoriya Kerelska, Director for advocacy and messaging, WindEurope

Naomi Chevillard, Head of Regulatory Affairs, SolarPower Europe

Michael Mieszczanski, Brussels Representative, TransnetBW

Yvan Hachez, ENGIE

Andreas Ehrenmann, ENGIE

Antoine Bizet, EU affairs - Deputy Director, ED

Annette Jantzen, Manager Policy and Public Affairs, EUGINE

This briefing offered an introduction to the EU electricity market, its history and essential concepts that are crucial for shaping future legislation.

It kicked off with an overview of the EU electricity market's evolution, starting in 1996 with the first energy package and the first set of common rules for the internal electricity market. At the time, the electricity sector was dominated by state-owned, vertically integrated utilities, with very little infrastructure for cross-border trade.

Subsequent energy packages brought other big changes, such as legally separating transmission system operators from electricity generation - unbundling. Nowadays, the EU energy market is more detailed, connected and integrated, a process that continues. Renewable energy has transformed the landscape once more, bringing system flexibility to the forefront.

Next, the spotlight shifted to electricity generation, starting with the basics and taking a technology-neutral approach. The different ways of producing electricity and their evolution over time were explained, along with key issues for understanding the power system's complexity, including electric current, voltage, frequency, AC/DC, system efficiency, services and N-1 security.

Attention then turned to electricity storage, an area with many options available and under development. Storage of electricity can be chemical, electrical, electrochemical, mechanical or thermal, with each technology having its benefits.

The speakers also gave a broad overview of flexibility and energy system integration, explaining the different time horizons, the needs and the challenges for increasing flexibility. Storage and batteries enable a flexible response to the market's needs. Other options include demand-side management, pumped hydro and flexible electricity generation.

Lastly, the focus shifted to the economics of the electricity market: consumers' differing needs, depending on their size; the ever-changing demand curve; and optimal dispatch in the short and long term. A deep dive into the market's design, electricity prices and different support mechanisms gave participants an in-depth economic perspective of electricity.

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Maintaining a resilient energy system for a climate-neutral and competitive economy: regional insights for EU-wide strategies

Dinner Debate in Strasbourg 8 October 2024

Chair

Tsvetelina Penkova MEP (S&D, Bulgaria), EEF President

Speakers

Małgosia Rybak, Climate Change & Energy Director, Cepi

Werner Götz, CEO, TransnetBW

Andreas Guth, Secretary General, Eurogas

Tsvetelina Penkova MEP, EEF President, opened by expressing the need for predictability in the EU regulatory framework. Balancing climate goals with energy competitiveness is no easy task. But bringing regional insights and perspectives together, and so making the most of Europe's diversity, can help build the foundations of climate neutrality while maintaining competitiveness. A diversified energy mix is crucial, with more investment in baseload renewables and innovative storage solutions, cross-border cooperation, and use of digital technologies that are game-changing for resilience, effectiveness and flexibility.

Małgosia Rybak, Climate Change & Energy Director, Cepi, highlighted some examples of decarbonisation at Europe's pulp and paper mills. These include replacement of natural gas by biogas produced on site; combining cogeneration and E-boilers, thus increasing the availability of green electricity in the grid; and using 100% green electricity. Such examples can help with the energy transition elsewhere in Europe.

Werner Götz, CEO, TransnetBW, detailed some of the challenges the company faces, as one of Germany's transmission system operators. These range from public acceptance and environmental constraints to replacing energy generation. The firm must provide a reliable source of energy for Baden-Württemberg, a highly populated region with a very variable landscape and home to one of the strongest industrial clusters in Germany. He emphasised that the energy transition must be considered from an industrial and economic point of view, adding that affordability is key and bureaucracy should be reduced. Focusing on the essentials would reduce the cost of the transition and provide a stable market and framework for investments to take place. To support grid stability needs, there should be back-up capacity at the right place and ready by 2030, he noted.

Andreas Guth, Secretary General, Eurogas, explained that the success of the energy transition depends on achieving the right balance between affordability, sustainability and security of supply. All different gases - natural gas, biomethane, hydrogen, low-carbon and renewable gases - have a role to play in achieving this balance. There is a need to diversify the energy mix, by investing in domestic resources such as biomethane, a no-regret option, and also in natural gas. He highlighted the importance of electrolysers, at times of excess generation from renewables, to avoid wastage, adding that high availability of renewables will reduce electricity prices. Looking to 2050, the share of molecules in the energy system is expected to increase in most scenarios, both in relative and absolute terms. Even with a high level of electrification, final energy consumption would still include 85% of the gases used today. Although natural gas's share of final energy demand is set to decline drastically, it will remain an important primary energy source as it is needed for producing hydrogen.

In the **Q&A session**, MEPs and industry representatives discussed a mix of issues, from energy-intensive industries' dependence on electricity prices to storage options, carbon capture and storage development, efficiency loss during energy transformation, and intermittent energy sources. Further potential reform of the European electricity market, grids for hydrogen, and energy flexibility and efficiency were also debated, along with the EU's goal of having 35 billion cubic metres a year of biomethane production by 2030 and the guarantee of origin.

Going back to basics: electricity infrastructure

MEP Assistant Briefing in Brussels 6 November 2024

Chair

Mihael Mihov, Advisor to Tsvetelina Penkova MEP, EEF President

Moderator

Pascale Verheust, EEF Director General

Speakers

Noemi Szabo, Policy & Stakeholders Manager, ENTSO-E

Michael Mieszczanski, Brussels Representative, TransnetBW

Charles Esser, Secretary General, E.DSO

Remy Garaude-Verdier, European Affairs Director, Enedis

Sven Kaiser, Deputy Director, E-Control

Nicolai Romanowski, Energy Manager, Cefic

Annita Westenbroek, Energy Innovations Manager, Cepi

This second briefing session on electricity focused on transmission and distribution, illustrated with a section of 70kV underground cable used in regional transmission. It also touched on regulation of the sector by national authorities.

Raw materials are a key part of the power system. At their core, transmission cables are made of conductive material - either copper or aluminium. Copper is a better conductor of electricity and has a smaller cross-section for the same rated power to be transmitted, but the choice of material has an impact on price.

The 70kV underground cable presented has an aluminium core, insulation made of cross-linked polyethylene and an outer protective layer of PVC. By contrast, overhead lines are bare conductors with no insulation covering, since the surrounding air is a natural insulator. Underground cables are better protected from harsh weather but more complex to install and, if they fail, to repair. Although overhead lines are more vulnerable to environmental factors, they are easier to build and maintain, and less expensive than underground cables.

On the power grid, electricity is transmitted through high-voltage lines and then distributed at local level, via lower-voltage networks, to end users. While most countries have just one transmission system operator (TSO), there are more than 2,000 distribution system operators (DSOs) in Europe. To ensure this complex system works properly, each EU member state has an independent national regulatory authority.

Speakers gave an overview of the different types of system operator and detailed the essential role of the regulatory authority in each EU country.

On the transmission side, the TSO's role is to make sure the grid operates safely. It must develop the grid, maintain security of supply and ensure the system can still operate safely if there is an outage of one element (the N-1 criterion). The audience also found out more about interconnections, the 10-year network development plan for electricity, network codes, examples of grid extension, and different areas where countries are synchronously functioning at the same frequency and where they are electrically interconnected for real-time synchronisation of electricity generation and consumption.

For their part, DSOs operate, manage and sometimes own the local and regional energy distribution networks which transport electricity to end users. They play a critical role in the electricity system - one that is evolving alongside the energy system itself. Participants discovered more about the technology involved in distribution, including substations and transformers. They also learned how a DSO operates, with key figures, grid planning and new connection possibilities presented.

The session concluded with speakers from the chemicals and paper sectors, two energy-intensive industries, explaining the consumption side of the value chain.

Promoting dialogue
Powering the future

The regulator's perspective for a secure, sustainable and affordable electricity system in 2030 and beyond

Dinner Debate in Brussels 13 November 2024

Chair

Tsvetelina Penkova MEP (S&D, Bulgaria), EEF President

Speakers

Jana Haasová, Vice President, CEER

Oliver Koch, Deputy Head of Unit, DG ENER

Paul Rübig, Administrator, ACER

EEF President Tsvetelina Penkova launched the debate by underlining the importance of balancing security, sustainability and affordability in Europe's transition to carbon neutrality. She called for regulatory certainty to ensure stable and predictable energy systems that address consumer and industry concerns about high prices. Regulatory frameworks must promote transparency and competition while integrating all resources to guarantee low costs and reliability, Ms Penkova concluded.

Jana Haasová, Vice President, CEER, outlined her organisation's role in creating a unified, competitive and sustainable energy market. CEER serves as a collaborative platform for Europe's national regulatory authorities and ensures independence from political and commercial influence, critical for building public trust. Its commitment to consumer protection is framed by the ASPIRE principles: affordability, simplicity, protection, inclusiveness, reliability and empowerment. CEER's work includes fostering market integration, monitoring consumer engagement and adapting to the increasing complexity of Europe's energy systems.

Wolfgang Urbantschitsch, Executive Director, E-Control, explored the technical and infrastructure challenges of decarbonising energy markets. With renewable energy sources like solar and hydropower becoming dominant, the volatility of energy production has increased. In Austria, for example, excess energy production on sunny days means innovative storage solutions such as pumped hydro and seasonal storage systems are needed. Mr Urbantschitsch highlighted the critical role of digitalisation in managing energy supply and demand, with tools like smart meters enabling real-time price signals for consumers. He called for a pan-European approach to infrastructure planning and energy integration, urging collaboration between national regulators, transmission system operators and governments to enhance flexibility and efficiency.

Oliver Koch, Deputy Head of Unit, DG ENER, looked at how regulators' roles have expanded from market access to include integration of renewables and decarbonisation. He stressed the importance of maintaining regulatory independence while focusing on implementing existing laws, rather than creating a surfeit of new legislation. The EU's market coupling system, which integrates 27 national energy markets, has proved a key achievement for improving affordability, efficiency and decarbonisation, particularly during the 2022 energy crisis. However, challenges remain such as underutilised infrastructure and limited interconnectivity. He also underlined the benefits of digitalisation, with tools like smart meters enabling demand-side flexibility and helping consumers optimise energy use based on price signals.

Paul Rübig, Administrator, ACER, emphasised the critical need for comprehensive mapping of energy production capacities over the next 3 to 10 years, to effectively address the

dramatically increasing demand for electricity. This is driven by advancements such as high-performance computing, heat pumps and electric vehicles. As a result, electricity needs may increase three- to fivefold by 2050. Mr Rübig underscored the importance of cross-border financing for the energy transition, suggesting that the Connecting Europe Facility could play a pivotal role, if equipped with the right incentives. He also called for streamlined regulatory processes to accelerate the development of energy storage facilities and hydropower plants, highlighting the interconnectedness of energy, water and food systems in addressing poverty and ensuring sustainable development in Europe.

Several key issues came up during the subsequent **Q&A session**, including the importance of preserving marginal pricing in the electricity market, the potential need for new legislation on demand-side flexibility, and the call for a more integrated approach to energy solutions.

Going back to basics: energy trading

MEP Assistant Briefing in Brussels — 5 December 2024

Chair

Mihael Mihov, Advisor to Tsvetelina Penkova MEP, EEF President

Speakers

Olivier Van den Kerckhove, Senior Advisor Market Design, ENGIE

Laura Bosetti, EU Regulatory Affairs Specialist, Eni

Jacobo Canseco, Head of Green Energy, Axpo Iberia

This briefing brought together representatives from the European Parliament and Commission along with industry experts to explore the intricacies of energy trading. Featuring insights from Energy Traders Europe, ENGIE, Axpo Group and Eni, it addressed the challenges and mechanisms that are shaping European electricity and gas trading as well as emerging markets.

Participants explored how energy trading underpins the efficient flow of energy, ensuring balance and adaptability in a rapidly evolving energy system. Speakers provided detailed technical insights into trading mechanisms.

The session began with an overview of electricity trading, covering essential trading concepts, market timeframes and portfolio management strategies. Explanations followed of the fundamentals of gas trading, the dynamics of liquefied natural gas markets, and the implications of the regulatory framework on the European energy landscape. The discussion then shifted to new market developments, delving into emerging decarbonised gas sectors like biomethane and touching on key questions such as proof of sustainability and guarantee of origin.

In a lively Q&A session, participants addressed fundamental principles of energy trading and specific challenges, including volatility, regulatory frameworks and market coupling across borders.

This interactive briefing included a visit to a trading floor, enabling MEP assistants and European Commission representatives to gain firsthand experience of the complex operations and decision-making processes involved in energy trading.

Energy priorities of the Polish Presidency

Dinner Debate in Brussels 10 December 2024

Chair

Tsvetelina Penkova MEP (S&D, Bulgaria), EEF President

Speakers

Mariusz Kawnik, Energy Attaché of the Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU

Agnieszka Ozga, Director, Energy Transition Division, GAZ-SYSTEM

Arno Büx, President, GIE

Matthew Baldwin, Deputy Director General, DG ENER

EEF President Tsvetelina Penkova introduced the event by underlining the critical role the Polish Presidency will play amidst global challenges. She emphasised the need for resilient energy infrastructure as a foundation for economic growth and competitiveness, calling for clear priorities such as a balanced energy mix, affordable energy prices, adoption of smart technologies, cross-border collaboration and consistent EU policies.

Arno Büx, President of Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE), highlighted Europe's gas infrastructure as a unique and adaptable resource, vital for energy resilience. He described how this infrastructure supports the integration of hydrogen, biomethane and CO_2 transport while providing flexibility for electricity systems. Mr Büx underscored the importance of maintaining openness to diverse technological solutions to address evolving energy demands and scenarios.

Agnieszka Ozga, Director of GAZ-SYSTEM's Energy Transition Division, showcased Poland's achievements in energy security, particularly its independence in terms of gas supply through diversification and regional interconnections. She emphasised that regional cooperation has been crucial in bolstering energy security and that Poland remains committed to furthering these efforts during its presidency. Future objectives include hydrogen, biomethane and CO_2 projects.

Mariusz Kawnik, Energy Attaché of Poland's EU Representation, spoke on behalf of the incoming Polish Presidency. Priority will be given to energy security, focusing on diversifying energy sources and competitiveness. The presidency is eagerly awaiting the work programme from the new European Commission's first 100 days, especially for the Clean Industrial Deal. The Polish Presidency will be steering debates on energy sector strategies and member state contributions to ensure a resilient and competitive energy market.

Matthew Baldwin Deputy Director General, DG ENER reiterated the importance of energy affordability, security and the clean energy transition, also acknowledging Poland's leadership in diversification efforts. He touched on a number of issues, including the Clean Industrial Deal, an affordable energy plan to bring down costs for households and businesses, and a just transition with a citizens' energy package to boost public participation in this transition.

An extensive discussion followed, with members from all parts of the energy spectrum able to pose questions and delve into the issues raised.

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