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MEDREG meets Ministers and Energy Regulatory Authorities of Israel and Palestine to strengthen regional cooperation in electricity and gas markets

Jerusalem, 16 November 2017

In an official visit to Israel and Palestine on 15 and 16 November, the President and General Coordinator of the Mediterranean Energy Regulators (MEDREG*), Mr Alexandre Santos and Mr Fabio Tambone, reaffirmed MEDREG's support to its Southern shore Members. They met with Dr. Yuval Steinitz, Israel's Energy Minister, and with His Excellency Eng. Zafer Melhem, Chairman of the Palestinian Energy Authority, to define and agree on concrete ways of supporting the two countries' energy market and regulatory reforms.

On 15 November, Mr Santos and Mr Tambone met with the Chairman of the for Electricity Authority (PUA), Dr. Assaf Eilat, and the Director General of the Natural Gas Authority Mr Alexander Varshavsky. They discussed ways for the two Authorities to benefit from MEDREG's experience on electricity and gas markets, infrastructure investments and consumer empowerment issues which may be beneficial to them. More specifically, in the context of and to accompany Israel's ongoing energy market reform, MEDREG is already supporting PUA, in applying for a TAIEX** workshop looking into specific market opening processes in the Mediterranean region, both in European Union countries and in the Eastern shore. Study visits of the Israeli Natural Gas Authority (NGA) to EU and non-EU regulators are also planned early next year to share national experiences on domestic households' consumers connection procedures.

Dr. Assaf Eilat, Chairman of Israel's Electricity Regulator declared:

"We highly value MEDREG's technical and personalized assistance to accompany PUA's efforts to establish a competitive wholesale market that provides benefits to consumers, consistent with the long-term financial viability of the industry."

Today, on 16 November Mr Santos and Mr Tambone participated in a Conference on Regulating the Electricity Market in Palestine held in Ramallah. The Conference, organized by the Palestinian Electricity Regulatory Council (PERC) in partnership with USAID***, provided the opportunity to high level stakeholders to discuss electricity market regulation in Palestine.

MEDREG President emphasized that competent and strong energy regulators in the region can substantially contribute to security of energy supply and consumer protection and that MEDREG can well support the Palestinian Regulator where required. PERC's CEO Mr Hamdi Tahboub particularly welcomed the expertise and tools offered by MEDREG to promote the establishment of net metering and the evaluation of mega generation projects based on RES in Palestine. He stated:

"Thanks to MEDREG's upcoming support and capacity building initiative, PERC's staff is hoping to be able to aim for a challenging RES target, applying specific recommendations and guidelines".

Laying the ground for deeper energy cooperation and integration in the Mediterranean region, Mr. Santos and Mr Tambone also took the occasion of their country visits to discuss MEDREG's latest activities with representatives of the European Union (EU) delegation in Jerusalem.

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***MEDREG** is the Association of Mediterranean Energy Regulators which benefits from European Union's financial support and which brings together 25 regulators from 21 countries, spanning the European Union (EU), the Balkans and North Africa.

Mediterranean regulators work together to promote greater harmonization of the regional energy markets and legislations, seeking progressive market integration in the Euro-Mediterranean basin.

Through constant cooperation and information exchange among members, MEDREG aims at fostering consumers rights, energy efficiency, infrastructure investment and development, based on secure, safe, cost-effective and environmentally sustainable energy systems.

MEDREG acts as a platform providing information exchange and assistance to its members as well as capacity development activities through webinars, training sessions and workshops.

The MEDREG Secretariat is located in Milan, Italy. For more information, visit www.medreg-regulators.org

** TAIEX is the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission.

*** USAID is the lead U.S. Government agency that works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential.