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Mediterranean Regulators Lead Discussions on the Future of Gas and Renewable Energy Developments

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On 6 November in Brussels, MEDREG held its energy Forum entitled “At the Forefront of Pro-active and Resilient Energy Regulation”, which saw the participation of nearly 80 key energy experts who exchanged on gas and renewable energy developments in the Mediterranean region through a pro-active dialogue.

Representatives of international institutions, regulators, industry and academia underlined the fundamental synergy between gas and renewable energies to shape the developments of Mediterranean energy markets and the energy trade routes, agreeing on the importance of a fruitful collaboration between Regulatory Authorities to ensure the creation of a regulatory framework able to accommodate the changes to come.

Mrs. Henrike Trautmann, Head of Regional Programs Neighbourhood South from the European Commission, stated that “*regional dialogue is the raison d’être for EU policy support*”, underlying the “*vital role of MEDREG as a technical and functional cooperation platform that manages to overcome the political differences affecting the region*”.

Decarbonisation, digitisation, innovation and new technologies emerged as crucial elements from the panellists’ exchanges, claiming that they require a new dynamic conception of the energy markets, only implementable through a more flexible regulatory architecture.

Meanwhile, panellists called for additional interconnections as a way to increase the flexibility of the energy system, the integration of variable renewables and foster market integration and energy security. There are currently 82 power interconnections between the EU and ten of its neighbouring countries, only two of which currently serve as the sole link connecting Europe to North Africa, between Spain and Morocco, with a combined Nominal Capacity of 1.4 GW.

As for the role of gas, speakers like IRENA stated that it is a fundamental energy source for decarbonising critical sectors such as the cement industry and the shipping sector, while regulators urged to move towards the creation of a common regional gas network code, using the collaboration platform offered by MEDREG.

In addition, the role of consumers as protagonists of the electricity market was emphasised by Mr. Stefano Besseghini, President of the Italian Regulator ARERA, stressing that widespread supply of information is the fundamental condition for greater consumers’ participation and empowerment to make enlightened choices.

From an industry perspective, Laurent Théry, International Director of GRTgaz, stressed that regulatory harmonisation and convergence of standards are the primary condition for encouraging investment in the gas sector, while energy transition must be affordable and cost-effective. The example of the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TAP) megaproject, that will bring 31 bcm/y from Turkey to Italy by 2026, clearly expresses the link between regulatory solidity and investment security.

Aware of the profound differences existing between the northern and southern shores of the basin, MEDREG President, Ms. Güleşan Demirbaş recalled that the primary aim of the organisation is to create a shared and concrete regulatory framework between the members, inspiring technical and institutional cooperation in the energy sector, fostering transfer of knowledge and best practices.



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The Forum underlined the lively discussions going on today in the Mediterranean on the evolution of the national and regional energy sector and showed how MEDREG favours a regulatory fertilisation process in this strategic sector among the regional regulatory agencies. Focusing on the regional regulatory harmonisation and collaborative actions between the EU and Southern countries, Mediterranean regulators will work to continue providing the added value of sound regulation to the regional energy policy debate.

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MEDREG is the Association of Mediterranean Energy Regulators, which brings together 27 regulators from 22 countries, spanning the European Union (EU), the Balkans and North Africa. Mediterranean regulators work together to promote greater compatibility of the regional energy markets and legislation, seeking progressive market integration in the Euro-Mediterranean basin. Through constant cooperation and information exchange among members, MEDREG aims at fostering consumer rights, energy efficiency, infrastructure investment and development, based on secure, safe, cost-effective and environmentally sustainable energy systems. MEDREG acts as a platform providing assistance to its members as well as capacity development activities through webinars, training sessions and workshops as well as personalised hands-on initiatives. The MEDREG Secretariat is located in Milan, Italy.

MEDREG is co-funded by the European Union.

For more information, visit www.medreg-regulators.org

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