

Mediterranean Energy Regulators Gather to Accelerate the Energy Transition

On 15 June, the Presidents of the energy regulatory authorities from Mediterranean countries convened in Rhodes (Greece) to address bottlenecks, challenges, successful projects, and best practice towards the energy transition in the Mediterranean region. The gathering, attended by **HE. Dr. Walid Fayad, Minister of Energy and Water of Lebanon**, aimed to foster collaboration and exchange practical solutions to expedite the decarbonisation of the energy sector in the region.

Situated at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, the Mediterranean region holds a strategic position to lead the green energy transition. Southern Mediterranean countries have the potential to trade renewable and low-carbon energy, such as Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia which could export wind and solar energy to Europe, while Egypt aspires to become a regional natural gas hub, reinforcing the security of supply of its EU and Mediterranean neighbours. Renewable gases, and in particular hydrogen, are also gaining momentum in the region, as part of the solution for a decarbonised economy.

Mr. Abdellatif Bardach, President of MEDREG and the Moroccan National Electricity Regulatory Authority (ANRE), welcomed the participants, and acknowledged that:

“The Mediterranean energy market has the potential to attract greater investment from around the world, given its extent and interconnection predisposition. Moreover, our region holds enormous potential in terms of renewable energy and new vectors, particularly green hydrogen. In this perspective, only a fully independent energy regulator can ensure the transparency and the neutrality needed to exploit this valuable opportunity”.

In his keynote speech, **Assoc. Prof. Athanasios Dagoumas**, President of the Greek Regulatory Authority for Energy, Waste and Water highlighted that:

“The Greek Regulatory Authority for Energy, Waste and Water has been steadily focused on the notion that a coherent, forward thinking, and resolute regulatory framework is a fundamental element for the advancement of the energy transition, both on a national as well as on a regional level. We have been working intensively in bringing its forward-thinking mentality into practice, in order to equip the domestic energy market with a framework that can protect and advance competition, facilitate further RES integration into the system, and advance consumer protection during the transition period. To facilitate these objectives, we have generated a cluster of progressive approaches and practical tools that promote clarity of information, positive incentivisation, ex-ante monitoring, and consistency in goal-asserting.

It is our firm belief that such elements are valuable also regarding regional cooperation within the spectrum of an extended regional organisation like MEDREG. We are grateful that MEDREG is an important pillar of the European Union's policy on enhancing regional cooperation, strengthening institutional capacity and facilitating energy systems and market integration. Regulatory developments are strongly related with network developments, facilitated by numerous funding initiatives, which both enable the exploitation of resources in Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa and the development of networks for meeting demand needs in Europe. MEDREG has a crucial role as a regulatory and institutional bridge in the region.

We, at the Greek Regulatory Authority for Energy, Waste and Water, are therefore, resolutely engaged in MEDREG's common objectives regarding the development of a coherent and resolute regulatory

framework on a regional level that will effectively promote the energy transition in the Mediterranean region”.

Representing the European Commission, **Mrs. Milou Beerepoot** (DG NEAR), stated that:
“The European Commission continues to place energy at the core of its partnership with Southern Neighbour countries and therefore increasingly seeks opportunities of mutual interest, with concrete positive impact for the populations. Beyond our vibrant policy dialogue, we have recently enlarged our scope of financial instruments by deploying guarantee schemes that aim at crowding-in private investors. But in order to encourage these massive investments, the business environment must be empowered through more comprehensive regulatory frameworks that shall then better attract new financial sources. This is in particular where we continue relying on MEDREG’s role and expertise for our Mediterranean region”.

The high-level workshop took place on the eve of **MEDREG’s 35th General Assembly meeting, which welcomed a new member - the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of The Republic of North Macedonia-** enlarging the geographic scope of the Association and bringing the number of members to twenty-eight, with a new vision and perspective of enlargement of the Association. By extending membership to new countries, MEDREG can foster a more inclusive approach to address regional challenges and exert a greater collective influence to shape energy policies, advocate for regulatory convergence, and guide the energy transition in the Mediterranean region.