



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 13.10.2015
C(2015) 6742 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the Energy Union Package consisting of the Communication on "A Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy" {COM(2015) 80 final}, the Communication "The Paris Protocol – a blueprint for tackling global climate change beyond 2020" {COM(2015) 81 final} and the Communication "Achieving the 10% electricity interconnection target – Making Europe's electricity grid fit for 2020" {COM(2015) 82 final}.

The Framework Strategy for the Energy Union notably builds on the agreement on the 2030 Framework for climate and energy and the European Energy Security Strategy. Based on five mutually reinforcing dimensions, the Energy Union aims to address the three objectives of security of supply, sustainability and competitiveness, through a strong commitment by the EU institutions and the Member States to deepen integration, cooperation and coordination.

The Commission agrees with the Senat as to the importance of ensuring a secure energy supply which is a central element of the strategy. Nonetheless, the Commission believes that security of supply does not only rely on the diversification of suppliers and routes, but also on a more comprehensive approach that brings out the benefits of a truly integrated energy market, energy efficiency gains and a better exploitation of indigenous resources.

The Commission would like to recall that central initiatives included in the Framework Strategy aim at providing Member States with the necessary flexibility to choose policies that best match their national conditions, while at the same time ensuring progress towards a competitive, secure and sustainable energy system through more integration and cooperation. In particular, the Commission would like to stress that the implementation of the Energy Union will not affect a Member State's right to choose between different energy sources – including nuclear – and the general structure of its energy supply, in full respect of Article 194 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

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In order to ensure a more cohesive approach at EU and national level to meet common objectives and challenges – including with regard to renewable energy and energy efficiency – a new system of governance for the Energy Union needs to be developed and implemented. The Commission will bring forward this governance system over the coming months, in close dialogue with the Member States and other EU institutions.

The Commission agrees that the completion of a fully integrated and interconnected internal energy market is a top priority to ensure the achievement of our commonly agreed policy objectives. In this respect, the Commission would like to underline the importance of regional cooperation, in particular also in the framework of the Central and South-Eastern European Gas Connectivity initiative. The aim of this initiative is to advance the implementation of regional priority infrastructure to diversify and secure gas supplies through a joint approach which addresses natural gas diversification and security of supply challenges in Central and South-Eastern Europe. The Commission would like to thank Romania for its cooperative stance in the framework of this initiative.

This links directly to a central objective of the Energy Union: to further improve interconnections between Member States. More interconnections with third countries can also improve energy security. Already the first list of projects of common interest includes some links to third countries. Additional projects could be identified in the future either as projects of common interest or alternatively as projects of mutual interest for which the policy and – if needed – legal framework still needs to be explored and developed, as the Commission underlined in its Communication of 14 October 2013 on the Long term infrastructure vision for Europe and beyond {COM (2013) 711 final}.

With regard to market integration, the Commission welcomes the steps taken by Romania towards an enhanced cooperation with Member States in the North-Western and Central Eastern Europe regions. The successful implementation of a single day-ahead price coupling on the border with Hungary in the framework of the so-called 4M MC project represents an important milestone towards the completion of the Internal Energy Market and demonstrates the commitment of Romanian market participants towards meeting the European objective.

In so far as the ongoing international climate negotiations are concerned, the Commission welcomes the Senat's view that the Commission Communication on the Paris Protocol gives in its view a clear vision for the way ahead.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Senat and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*