

Accelerating Central European renewable deployment through targeted dialogue and cooperation

The Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA) cordially invites you to join this interactive format closed-door workshop updating national renewable energy plans and sharing ideas and best practices to unlock their full potential.

Date: 9 June 2023

Time: 9:00-15:00

Venue: Tatra Hotel | Bratislava, Slovakia

Exclusive invitation-only closed session. The event will be held under Chatham House Rule.

This technical-level workshop is being organized to promote dialogue and explore synergies around the development of domestic and cross-border renewable energy projects between Austria, Czechia and Slovakia. Especially during this period of energy crisis and market uncertainty, all forms and formats of clean energy cooperation should be pursued to provide citizens with the most timely, secure, resilient, affordable, and sustainable energy resources; and it is integrated large and small-scale renewable energy solutions that checks all these boxes.

Austria is an EU leader in the clean energy transition with a natural westward orientation for energy dialogue and cooperation, whereas Czechia and Slovakia are typically grouped into the Visegrad format within the Eastern bloc of new member states that have not made much progress in developing renewable energy resources over the past decade. Nonetheless, they face common challenges and bottlenecks felt across the EU to speed up deployment of clean technologies to alleviate the energy crisis and meet more ambitious 2030 climate targets.

Structure of interactive discussion

9:00-9:35 Registration & coffee

9:35 – 9:40 Welcome speech by Tomas Strazay, Director of Slovak Foreign Policy Association

9:40-10:50 Session 1: Accelerating EU RES deployment to match new policy urgency and ambition

From COVID-19 to Russia's war in Ukraine and the US Inflation Reduction act, the promotion of renewable energy sources (RES) is at the heart of the EU's consensus crises response strategy. NextGenerationEU, REPowerEU and the EU Green Industrial Plan all promote the domestic production and rollout of RES across the continent. At the same time the EU has recently agreed to a new renewable energy target of 42.5% by 2030 under the revised Renewable Energy Directive (RED III), which is a central pillar of the 'Fit for 55' Package.

Yet on the ground changes and implementation remain slow. For example, according to EU legislation, permit granting for renewable energy projects should not exceed two years but on average this is being exceeded in almost all cases in EU member states, typically four and five for solar and wind respectively. Like other clean technology sectors, there is also a critical skills shortage of installers and project developers.

Finally, by June 2023 member states will have to produce a revised draft National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) some four years after submitting the first version, a time during which there have been major developments under the European Green Deal and subsequent 'Fit for 55' measures.

How are member states keeping pace to meet more ambitious EU 2030 targets?

Chair:

- **Alzbeta Gavalcova, Junior Expert, Slovak Foreign Policy Association**

Keynote:

- **Simon Lacena, Director, Climate Change Mitigation Department, Ministry of Environment, Slovakia**
- **Radana Leistner Kratochvilova, Director, Department of Support for a Low-Carbon Economy Transition, Ministry of Environment, Czech Republic (ONLINE)**
- **Bernhard Fuernsinn, Expert, Department of Renewable Energy Generation, Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, Austria**

Key discussants:

- **Pawel Czyzak, Senior Energy & Climate Data Analyst, Ember**
- **Jonathan Bonadio, Senior Policy Advisor, SolarPower Europe**
- **Kristina Mojzesova, Analyst, Institute of Environmental Policy**

10:50-11:20 Coffee & networking break

11:20-12:30 Session 2: Optimizing wind and solar through market design and grid development

Intermittent wind and solar PV energy present unique challenges and opportunities that most Eastern bloc countries perceive as disruptive to the centralized baseload system, and thus have been slow to embrace. Steep cost declines over the last decade, however, favouring the economics of utility-scale wind and solar PV projects vis-à-vis nuclear and natural gas power plants on a levelized cost of energy basis, have begun changing these attitudes – along with the urgency to meet renewed EU climate targets. Still, for intermittent renewable sources to benefit the power system, the electricity market design and long-term strategy must incentivize investment into corresponding energy storage and demand side response.

How are grid operators planning and keeping pace with EU and national 2030 targets both domestically and cross-border?

Chair:

- **Nolan Theisen, Senior Expert, Slovak Foreign Policy Association**

Keynote:

- **Lukasz Kolinski, Head of Unit, Renewables and Energy System Integration, European Commission (ONLINE)**

Key discussants:

- **Jan Lacko, Expert, SAPI**
- **Peter Simko, CEO, PowereX**
- **Tomas Simovic, Head of Strategic Projects, Trading Department, Slovenske elektrarne**
- **Martin Horvath, Vice-President, Regulatory Office for Network Industries**

12:30-13:40 Networking lunch

13:40-14:50 Session 3: Unlocking corporate and community decarbonization initiatives to drive innovative renewable energy models

There is tremendous promise in corporate sourcing of renewable energy and formation of local energy communities to help pave the way for the clean energy transition that remains largely untapped in Central Europe. Policy uncertainty and regulatory barriers are the most cited challenges for companies seeking to procure clean energy while citizen renewable energy communities (RECs) require more citizen awareness, engagement, and structure.

How can national governments better foster corporate investments into renewable technologies and help galvanize energy communities?

Chair:

- **Veronika Oravcova, Senior Expert, Slovak Foreign Policy Association**

Key discussants:

- **Rastislav Horvat, Representative, Local Action Group Liptov**
- **Lucie Sebkova, Association for Community Energy**
- **Viktor Bukovszki, Senior Sustainability Consultant, Advanced Building and Urban Design**