



**Presentation of the priorities of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU  
in the area of energy policy**

**before the**

**Industry, Research and Energy Committee of the European Parliament**

**Temenuzhka Petkova, Minister of Energy**

**Brussels, 23 January 2018**

Mr Buzek,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Colleagues,

I have the honour to present to the European Parliament in its capacity as co-legislator the main priorities of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the field of energy. Before addressing the details, I would like to assure you that we are assuming the Presidency of the Council of the EU with a sense of responsibility. Our Presidency will be guided by the desire to achieve compromise and consensus solutions in the best interests of all European citizens.

For us, dialogue with the European Parliament is of key importance to achieving working solutions in European policies, including energy policy.

As a Member State holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU, we are facing a number of challenges, in particular in the decision-making process in the energy sector. These are decisions that will have a profound impact on the economy and consumers in each country.

After the significant progress achieved by Estonia, we are looking forward to intensive collaboration with the European Parliament on most of the files in the energy package “Clean energy for all Europeans”.

A successful outcome to the negotiations is inconceivable without the establishment of close and active cooperation between the co-legislators. In this context, we are looking forward to maintaining constant contact with you in order to jointly find compromise working solutions and to achieve real beneficial results for European citizens.

The negotiations will be based on the principle of building an Energy Union that provides secure, reliable, affordable and low - carbon energy for all Europeans. We are convinced that the Energy Union can be sustainable only if it reflects the specificities of individual Member States and is based on equality, a non-discriminatory approach and technological neutrality. We consider a the achievement of a balanced compromise, in compliance with those principles, to be possible.

I believe we can agree that the energy package presented by the Commission at the end of 2016 is unique in its nature and ambition. We therefore expect the process towards achieving a balance between the positions of the Member States, on the one hand, and the European Parliament, on the other, to be a serious challenge for our Presidency. However, I can assure you that we will do our utmost to maintain the pace of the discussions and achieve the greatest possible progress in the negotiating process with the EP.

In negotiations with the EP, we will aim to keep the integrated and parallel approach which ensures that the interrelations between different policies are taken into account in the files entailed in the Package.

As regards the Regulation on Governance, the RES Directive and the Energy Efficiency Directive, we are ready to start trilogues with the EP within a short period after the adoption of the relevant mandate in plenary last week. We look forward to intensive and fruitful discussions with the European Parliament on these issues and I can assure you that we will not spare any effort or commitment in order to reach mutually acceptable solutions.

We hope for and will work to achieve maximum progress and the successful completion of the negotiations on this first sub-package.

Concerning the design of the electricity market, taking into account the fact that the European Parliament also needs some time to reach an agreement, we will use this period to achieve a general approach on the ACER Regulation. We are ready to start negotiations on this sub-package too at the earliest opportunity.

As regards the Gas Directive, the Bulgarian Presidency aims to consolidate the positions of the Member States to the greatest possible extent, aiming at a common position of the Council.

Our country will work actively to develop the potential for regional cooperation through the construction of the missing infrastructure so as to guarantee the security of energy supply. Energy security in South-East Europe would be enhanced by the creation of a 'Balkan' European gas hub, which is also supported by the European Commission. Interconnectivity is vital to securing energy supply in South East Europe and hence throughout the territory of the European Union.

We will work actively and devotedly to complete interconnectivity in the region of the Western Balkans, fully aligned with the priorities of our Presidency and of the European Energy Union.

The diversification of sources and routes, as well as the development of the regional electricity market design are a main priority for us. I can assure you that this is a consistent priority and will be maintained after the end of the Bulgarian Presidency, and it will translate into real actions and results. We believe that the creation of a competitive energy market with equal treatment for all projects is a precondition for ensuring energy security and for ensuring that European citizens have affordable and reliable energy at a fair price.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you once again that regarding the energy sector, Bulgaria will work for a successful and fruitful partnership with the European Parliament. With your support we will achieve progress in the negotiation process with which we can all be satisfied.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am ready to answer your questions. I have outlined the main emphases in the Bulgarian Presidency's work in the field of energy. Nevertheless, this is far from exhausting the variety of issues and details that are important for the European citizens and the prosperity of the EU. I would like to assure you once more that the Bulgarian Presidency, in dialogue with the European Parliament, will do its utmost to reach compromise and mutually acceptable solutions for our common progress in the energy sector in order to contribute to a more secure, prosperous and innovative Europe.

Thank you for your attention!