



V4 Think-Tank Platform - Working Group “Energy Security”

Opinion on the Communication of the European Commission “The Future Role of Regional Initiatives”

- V4 Think-Tank Platform Working Group “Energy Security” welcomes the Communication of the European Commission on the Future Role of Regional Initiatives which rightly emphasizes growing importance of regional approach in developing EU energy policy. Enhanced regional cooperation would have positive impact on the process of setting up EU gas and electricity markets, as well as on ensuring security through increase in regional resilience to potential supply disruptions. Obviously, there is a need to combine top-down approach as exemplified by subsequent liberalization packages with bottom-up activities as reflected for instance by strengthened energy cooperation between Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia in the framework of Visegrad Group (V4).
- Current informal character of gas regions should be preserved, but certain modifications are needed with respect to existing and proposed composition. The Communication does not envisage a region, where all four Visegrad countries could join their efforts. Thus, having in mind regional plans to develop cross-border infrastructure, ownership structure of energy industries within the region and the need for harmonizing regulatory policies it is important to ensure that all V4 countries belong to one region with participation of Romania and Bulgaria, and with Croatia as an observer. Such a step would reflect achievements of V4+ cooperation, and would help to improve coordination of V4 projects using already existing institutions and mechanisms. Moreover, these achievements have already been appreciated by the Commission in its initiative to establish of High Level Group based on energy cooperation of V4+ countries to devise an action plan for North-South gas, oil and electricity interconnections. Common opportunities, risks and challenges require common framework to be set up.

