

Greenspan admits Iraq was about oil, as deaths put at 1.2m



The man once regarded as the world's most powerful banker has bluntly declared that the Iraq war was 'largely' about oil.

Appointed by Ronald Reagan in 1987 and retired last year after serving four presidents, Alan Greenspan has been the leading Republican economist for a generation and his utterings instantly moved world markets.

In his long-awaited memoir – out tomorrow in the US – Greenspan, 81, who served as chairman of the US Federal Reserve for almost two decades, writes: 'I am saddened that it is politically inconvenient to acknowledge what everyone

knows: the Iraq war is largely about oil.'

In *The Age of Turbulence: Adventures in a New World*, he is also crystal clear on his opinion of his last two bosses, harshly criticising George W Bush for 'abandoning fiscal constraint' and praising Bill Clinton's anti-deficit policies during the Nineties as 'an act of political courage'. He also speaks of Clinton's sharp and 'curious' mind, and 'old-fashioned' caution about the dangers of debt.

Greenspan's damning comments about the war come as a survey of Iraqis, which was released last week, claims that up to 1.2 million people may have died because of the conflict in Iraq – lending weight to a 2006 survey in the *Lancet* that reported similarly high levels.

More than one million deaths were already being suggested by anti-war campaigners, but such high counts have consistently been rejected by US and UK officials. The estimates, extrapolated from a sample of 1,461 adults around the country, were collected by a British polling agency, ORB, which asked a random selection of Iraqis how many people living in their household had died as a result of the violence rather than from natural causes.

Previous estimates gave a range between 390,000 and 940,000, the most prominent of which – collected by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and reported in the *Lancet* in October 2006 – suggested 654,965 deaths.

Although the household survey was carried out by a polling organisation, rather than researchers, it has again raised the spectre that the 2003 invasion has caused a far more substantial death toll than officially acknowledged.

The ORB survey follows an earlier report by the organisation which suggested that one in four Iraqi adults had lost a family member to violence. The latest survey suggests that in Baghdad that number is as high as one in two. If true, these

latest figures would suggest the death toll in Iraq now exceeds that of the Rwandan genocide in which about 800,000 died.

The Lancet survey was criticised by some experts and by George Bush and British officials. In private, however, the Ministry of Defence's chief scientific adviser Sir Roy Anderson described it as 'close to best practice'.

MACHREK: UNE ENERGIE REGIONALE INTERCONNECTEE





II est maintenant confirme que nous aurons un reseau electrique regional pour relier ensembles plusieurs pays du Moyen-Orient. Sera-t-il realise dans un avenir proche? Le Liban y sera-t-il inclus? Quels seront ses avantages et ses consequences sur notre territoire? M. Roudi Baroudi, un consultant independant en energie, actif dans le monde Arabe et les Etats-Unis explique:

Le reseau electrique regional comprend-il cinq ou six pays et comment sera-t-il execute ?

“A present, six pays, et non plus cinq sont deja relies ensembles (l’Irak, le Koweït, la Jordanie, la Syrie, la Turquie et le Liban). Ces connections electriques <latent du debut des annees 70 lorsque la Syrie et le Liban ainsi que la Syrie et la Jordanie ont ete connectes grace a un systeme de 66KV. II s’en est suivi, a la fin des annees 80, un lien Egypte – Jordanie avec une ligne aeriennne de 400 kW.

Des le debut des annees 90, des plans et plusieurs reunions des Ministres arabes de l’electricite ont mene a bonne fin un nouveau Plan Directeur reliant la Syrie a la Jordanie par une ligne de 400 kW et la Syrie a l’Irak avec egalement une ligne de 400 kW aussi bien que l’Irak a la Turquie et la Syrie a la Turquie. Les travaux pour etablir un lien libanais allant de Ksara a la sous-station de Dimas (Syrie) grace a deux lignes aeriennes de 400kW est en nette progression.

Je confirme que ce projet est d’un grand intent pour notre utilite nationale l’EDL et, ii est de plus avantageux pour le

Tresor. D'après les dernières statistiques le réseau régional ETISTL aura une capacité disponible de 2500 à 3000 MW ce qui pourrait représenter un coût de 1.2 à 1.6 milliard de \$ US. Les états membres de ce réseau interconnecté n'ont pas à engager et à investir dans des projets intensifs et coûteux. Ils pourraient utiliser leurs réserves communes de MW à travers ce réseau. Cela sera bien sûr ajouté aux autres avantages importants relevant de l'entretien périodique des équipements".

Quel est le statut du réseau électrique régional comparé au processus du plan régional pour le gaz? "Différent de l'électricité, le gaz ne doit pas être consommé immédiatement; il peut être entreposé pendant longtemps et être consommé quand on en a besoin. Cela réduit les avantages de transporter le gaz à travers des canalisations parce que d'autres modes de transport et de stockage sont possibles. Les véritables bénéfices résident dans les différences de coûts, la source d'approvisionnement étant un facteur déterminant.

D'un autre côté, le transport du gaz par canalisations est plus fiable. Quant à notre région, hélas, ni l'Est de la Méditerranée, ni le Moyen-Orient ne sont encore desservis par un réseau National International. Des canalisations multinationales traversant les différents pays n'existent pas non plus à ce stade. Je pense cependant, que tout comme le réseau d'interconnexion de l'électricité qui a commencé en 82 dans les pays du GCC, et plus précisément à Doha, celui des régions du Machrek et du Maghreb qui est encore en voie de réalisation, prendra presque deux décennies avant d'être achevé. Je n'y vois aucun problème et je suis sûr que dans 5 à 10 ans, les canalisations de gaz

US OFFICIALS VISIT EAST MED TO ASSIST WITH ITS EMERGENCE AS AN ENERGY POWER

US Secretary of State John Kerry visited Lebanon last week where he met with Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri. Kerry announced to Berri that the US will be providing Lebanon with a financial aid to ease the burden created by the Syrian influx of refugees to Lebanon. Lebanon is providing sanctuary to over a million and a half Syrian refugees, a reality that is tremendously affecting Lebanon and causing authorities a major concern.

The impact of the immigration is felt on a political, economic and security level. Kerry stressed on the importance of putting an end to the current political stalemate by electing a new President in the shortest delay. President Michel Suleiman's six-year term ended last month. Lebanese politicians failed to agree on a successor since. Berri in turn expressed its hope that the U.S. will play a 'fair and balanced role' in mediating the Israeli-Lebanese dispute over maritime boundaries. Berri added that the U.S. could potentially benefit from such efforts as they could be involved in Lebanon's offshore hydrocarbon explorations. Lebanon's seabed is believed to contain substantial amounts of natural gas.

Its first licensing round was postponed several times due to domestic political rivalries and is now scheduled to be opened in August 2014. Lebanon and Israel both claim a triangular area of 850 square kilometers as their own. Direct negotiations between the two countries are inconceivable due to the fact that Lebanon and Israel are in a state of war and that Lebanon does not recognize Israel.

The dispute gained importance after the discovery of substantial natural gas reserves in the Levant basin. Noble Energy discovered the Leviathan field and the Tamar field offshore Israel located respectively 130 and 80 kilometers west of Haifa with respective gross mean resources of 19 and 10 Tcf. Noble also made a successful encounter in Block 12 of Cyprus EEZ when it discovered the Aphrodite field, the third largest discovery in the deepwater Levantine Basin with a gross mean resources of 5 Tcf. John Kerry's visit to Lebanon follows Joe Biden's visit to Cyprus.

Biden met with the President of Cyprus Nicos Anastasiades to whom he stressed on the importance of Cyprus emerging as a net gas producer. The presence of the two senior U.S. officials in the Eastern Mediterranean Lebanon in the Eastern Mediterranean highlights the increasing importance of this region in the energy scene and Washington's pledge to help solve the various disaccords. The Russian annexation of Crimea reminded Europe of its pressing need to diversify its geographical sources of supply. The Eastern Mediterranean could play a role in strengthening Europe's energy security and the U.S. are investing efforts in this direction

Ambitious EU blueprint for energy union to loosen Russian grip on gas



The EU executive is to unveil radical and ambitious plans on Wednesday to establish a single European market in energy supplies, purchases and consumption, in an attempt to loosen the Kremlin's stranglehold on Europe's gas supplies.

The far-reaching scheme would also strengthen the power of Brussels against national energy regulators; boost consumer choice transnationally when buying electricity services; generate a bonanza in energy infrastructure investment; and integrate supply systems regionally and on an EU-wide scale.

The proposals for a European energy union are to be presented by Maroš Šefčovič, a vice-president of the European commission in charge of energy policy. He reached back to the founding days of the modern EU in the 1950s to find a parallel for the current blueprint.

"We see it as the most ambitious energy project since the coal and steel community. We want to start a process to integrate 28 energy markets into one energy union," Šefčovič told the Guardian.

The 19-page draft blueprint, obtained by the Guardian, demands that Europe speak with a single voice on energy policy, a role that would devolve to the commission and a proposal that is already running into fierce resistance among some national governments.

"We have to move away from a fragmented system characterised by uncoordinated national policies, market barriers and energy-isolated areas," says the document. "Achieving this

goal will require a fundamental transformation of Europe's energy system ... an energy union that speaks with one voice in global affairs ... a single energy market."

Years of tension with Russia and its Gazprom monopoly that supplies most of Europe's natural gas have come to a head with the east-west tussle over Ukraine. Brussels says Russia, the world's biggest gas producer, is using its energy supplies as a political weapon and for blackmail purposes.

As part of his proposals, Šefčovič also said the EU was committed to overseeing and funding root-and-branch reform of the highly opaque and corrupt Ukrainian energy sector.

The predominance of gas as a means of pressure in the Russia-Ukraine conflict was evident again on Tuesday, with Gazprom and its Ukrainian customer embroiled in a dispute over payments and deliveries.

Gazprom's CEO, Alexei Miller, announced that Kiev had not made its pre-payments for supplies on time and warned of "a complete cessation of Russian gas supplies to Ukraine in just two days, which creates serious risks for gas transit to Europe".

In an attempt to wean Europe off overwhelming dependence on Gazprom, Šefčovič said there would be a focus on building a new "southern corridor" pumping gas from the Caspian basin to Europe via Turkey. It would carry Russian gas, but could also include supplies from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Iraq and Iran.

Such plans have an ill-starred pedigree. The Russians recently scrapped plans for an alternative pipeline called Southstream running under the Black sea to Bulgaria and into central Europe. A previous western-backed scheme called Nabucco also bit the dust because of lack of investment and no clear guarantees of gas to fill the pipeline.

Šefčovič argued lessons had been learned. The southern

corridor, entailing investment of \$45bn (£29bn), “will be the biggest in world, and could be up and running by 2019”, he said. “Especially when you see the political games by Russia, it’s something we have to pay attention to.”

The commission document says in reference to Russia: “The political challenges over the last months have shown that diversification of energy sources, suppliers, and routes is important for ensuring secure and resilient energy supplies. Energy policy is often used as a foreign policy tool, in particular in major energy-producing and transit countries. This reality has to be taken into account.”

Germany is Gazprom’s biggest customer, buying around a third of its natural gas from the Russian monopoly. Six EU member states are 100% dependent on Gazprom for gas, and the union as a whole is the world’s biggest importer of energy. According to commission figures, it spent €400bn (£294bn) last year importing 53% of its overall energy requirements.

The proposals to be unveiled on Wednesday would need to be turned into several pieces of legislation by 2019 for the energy union to get up and running. They will run into problems in the European parliament, but greater resistance will come from some national governments.

Viktor Orbán, the pro-Russian Hungarian prime minister, hosted Vladimir Putin in Budapest last week, with energy issues at the centre of their discussions. He has already challenged the commission and vowed not to surrender sovereign national powers over energy policy. Some of Gazprom’s biggest clients, locked into long-term contracts, are major German energy firms and they are also certain to lobby Berlin against elements of the energy union.

“The EU has energy rules set at the European level, but in practice it has 28 national regulatory frameworks. This cannot continue,” says the document. The commission demanded a say

when individual EU governments strike energy agreements with third countries.

Other new measures are planned to increase the energy efficiency of the bloc's ageing housing stock, which have the potential to slash the need for Russian gas imports, according to research papers.

The EU's renewable energy directive will also be updated, with an eye on targets announced in the 2030 package for a 27% clean energy market share by the end of the next decade.

Framing the climate debate in energy security terms may not be enough to win over countries such as Poland and the UK, which held out against giving Brussels a say in their energy decisions during last October's 2030 debate.

"While we agreed to cost-effective 2030 EU-level targets for renewables and energy efficiency, we were clear, and member states agreed, there should be no binding national targets in either area to give countries greater flexibility to meet their climate goals," a British government spokesman said. "We expect all future EU legislation to fully reflect that agreement."

The commission, however, plans to bring forward a new electricity market design later this year to coordinate capacity mechanisms that integrate renewables and gas at the regional level.

A quicker deployment of smart grids is also foreseen. This would allow consumers to set appliances such as washing machines and boilers to run at times of low demand and lower cost.

"It means gradually leaving the comfort of regulated prices which offer no motive for consumers to change behaviour," Šefčovič said of the planned "new deal for energy consumers". Progressively, it is planned to allow consumers to moderate

their energy consumption and sell energy back to the grid.

New interconnections between countries are also expected to lower electricity prices, while an integrated European energy market would allow consumers to buy from energy companies across borders.

“Consumers in one member state should be able to buy their energy freely and simply from a company in another. This requires the further adaptation of the current national regulatory frameworks,” says the blueprint.

“The commission will seek the phasing-out of below-cost regulated prices by 2016. It will encourage member states to establish a road map for the phasing out of all regulated prices.”

Battle for oil rests not on flags but on obscure UN panel

The international battle for Arctic territory may look like a Wild West brawl but the real fight for supremacy is more likely to revolve around legal arguments and seismic data than showdowns between ice-breakers or submarines.

As Canada unveils plans for a military base and Russia drops a titanium flag on the seabed, lawyers say the real centre of action is an obscure United Nations-hosted body known as the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

The commission is the global authority that will determine how much territory the big five Arctic seabed claimants – Canada, Russia, the US, Denmark and Norway – will be able to bag for

oil exploration and other uses.

Robert Volterra, a partner at Latham & Watkins, the law firm, says cases pleaded by states at the commission over the coming years are likely to have more impact on the Arctic's future than "symbolic" flag-planting intended for Russian domestic political consumption.

"There is a consistent body of public international law," Mr Volterra says. "It's not like the age of discovery, where the European voyager went out and said: 'I claim this land on behalf of the Queen of England or the King of Spain.'"

Lawyers and scientists say Russia's latest Arctic mission was most significant for the opportunity it provided to gather more geological and geophysical data to support its quest to extend its territorial rights. Russia and Norway have lodged claims for territorial extensions with the continental shelf commission; marine lawyers expect Canada and Denmark to follow suit.

The commission, which is made up of scientists and legal experts, is responsible for implementing the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos), the key international agreement in this area.

Unclos gives countries the right to exploit the seabed up to 200 nautical miles offshore, with the option of an extension if they can prove to the commission that the continental shelves emanating from their coasts go farther still out to sea.

States must make these claims for extra miles within 10 years of applying the treaty, which means Canada has until 2013 and Denmark until 2014 to launch a case.

The complication with Unclos is Washington's reluctance – not for the first time – to submit to UN authority by ratifying a treaty approved by much of the rest of the world.

Lawyers say this creates a dilemma for the US. While it retains autonomy by staying out of the treaty, this potentially limits its seabed claims to the 200-mile limit allowed it under customary international law.

Politicians in Washington have stepped up a campaign to persuade the US Congress to embrace Unclos and so ensure that Washington has a say in the adjudication of Arctic disputes.

President George W. Bush has called on the Senate to ratify the treaty to “secure US sovereign rights over extensive marine areas, including the valuable natural resources they contain”, as well as giving Washington formal negotiating rights.

But the treaty once rejected by President Ronald Reagan continues to repel some conservatives, who see it as an attempt to subordinate US sovereignty to supranational entities.

Doug Bandow, a former administration official who took part in negotiations on the treaty on behalf of Mr Reagan, has argued that it would establish “what looks like a second UN”.

Tourists rush for last glimpse of vanishing wilderness

When Russian explorer Artur Chilingarov planted the Russian flag on the seabed of the North Pole last week he established Russia as a “great Arctic power” and the Arctic as a great tourist destination, **writes Isabel Gorst in Moscow.**

As the globe warms up, tourists are heading north to catch what might be a last glimpse of what Russians call “the ice cap of the world”.

Valery Chumakov, the general director of Tour Land, a Moscow-based travel agency specialising in extreme tourism, said all cabins on ice-breaker cruises from Spitsbergen to the North Pole were fully booked this year.

“We have begun taking reservations for the 2008 season,” he said.

Tour Land’s two-week icebreaker cruise to the North Pole costs \$21,000 (£10,380, €15,300).

Ten years ago there were 35,000 visitors a year to Spitsbergen, the largest and most popular of the Arctic Ocean’s islands, but last year there were 70,000.

Glacial formations cover 60 per cent of the ocean’s five main islands and 150 small ones, while temperatures tip 6°C on average in July.

Mikhail Muravyov, the general director of Ultra Travel, a Russian tourist agency, said: “Interest in Arctic tours is awakening as the climate warms. We don’t know when the ice will melt, so people want to seize their chance.”

الإجراءات التصحيحية لوضع قطاع الطاقة ضرورية منعا لرمي إنتاج النفط في سلة الهدر والمحاصصة

اعتبر إقرار مجلس الوزراء المرسومين المتعلقين بتقسيم المياه البحرية الخاضعة للولاية القضائية للدولة اللبنانية الى مناطق على شكل رقع، ودفتر الشروط الخاص بدورات التراخيص في المياه البحرية ونموذج اتفاق الاستكشاف والانتاج، الانجاز الاول للحكومة اللبنانية. ويشكل إقرار هذين المرسومين عملاً تنفيذياً لا بد منه تمهيداً لإطلاق الاجراءات الآيلة الى بدء عملية الاستكشاف والانتاج.

تزامنت عملية إقرار هذين المرسومين مع العديد من التحاليل

والتقارير التي تحدثت عن المراحل التالية وكيفية تعامل الجهات الرسمية والادارية اللبنانية مع هذا القطاع الحديث الولادة. وفي هذا السياق، يعتبر الخبير في شؤون النفط والغاز رودي بارودي أنه قبل استخراج النفط والغاز واستفادة الشعب اللبناني من عائداتهما، لا بد من اتخاذ الإجراءات التصحيحية لوضع قطاع الطاقة في لبنان، لا سيما تنفيذ القوانين الصادرة وإجراء التعيينات للهيئات والمجالس الإدارية وإيجاد الشركات الوطنية التي تعنى بشؤون النفط والكهرباء وغيرهما، حتى لا يرمى إنتاج النفط في سلة مهترئة من الهدر والمحاصة.

فالقانون 462/2002 الخاص بتنظيم قطاع الكهرباء أصبح بالتعريف قانوناً نافذاً وغير منفذ حتى تاريخه إذ لم تنشأ الهيئة الوطنية لتنظيم قطاع الكهرباء ولم يصدر مرسوم تأليف إدارة الهيئة، بل استعيص عن ذلك بتعديل القانون 462/2002 وبطريقة مؤقتة ولمرتين متتاليتين، الاولى بالقانون 775/2006 والثانية بالقانون 288/2014 بهدف ايلاء صلاحية الهيئة الى مجلس الوزراء بصورة مؤقتة لحين تعيين أعضاء الهيئة واضطلاعها بمهامها. ومن هنا عبّر بارودي عن إستغرابه لهذا الأمر، إذ أصبح تعديل القانون في مجلس النواب أسهل من تعيين خمسة اعضاء لهيئة بمرسوم يتخذ في مجلس الوزراء (15 سنة) من تاريخ نفاذ القانون حتى بداية سنة 2017. أما القانون 181/2011 فقد استدعى حضور رئيس الجمهورية العماد ميشال عون الى مجلس النواب، عندما كان نائباً، طلباً لإقراره، مما يشير الى الاهمية القصوى التي كان يعطيها لإقراره. ويضيف بارودي: "تنفيذ القانون 181/2011 جاء متعثراً ومنقوصاً، فالمشاريع الكهربائية التي تضمّنها لُزِمَت في معظمها او هي قيد التلزم إلا ان النتائج المرجوة لم تحرز لا في المواعيد التي حددت لها، ولا كهرباء 24/24 في عام 2015، واللبنانيون ما زالوا يعانون من التقنين القاسي ومن تعدد الفواتير والتكاليف المضاعفة لتوفير الكهرباء". كذلك لم يعيّن مجلس إدارة لمؤسسة كهرباء لبنان خلال مهلة أقصاها شهران، من تاريخ صدور القانون في 5/10/2011 كما نصّت الفقرة 9 من القانون، واستمر الأمر كذلك حتى تاريخه. ويشير بارودي الى عدم إتخاذ الاجراءات اللازمة لفصل قطاعات الإنتاج والنقل والتوزيع في "مؤسسة كهرباء لبنان" حتى يمكن مشاركة القطاع الخاص في تحمل أعباء جزء أو كل من قطاعي الإنتاج والتوزيع، بالإضافة الى عدم العمل على إنشاء شركات مخصصة وفقاً لأحكام القانون 462/2002. وتبقى تعرفه بيع الطاقة للعموم هي ذاتها منذ العام 1994 وهي متدنية كثيراً عن الكلفة رغم المحاولات المتكررة للزيادة والتي

كانت تعطل من السياسيين وتدخلهم الدائم في الإدارة، إضافة الى الهدر الفني المقدر بـ 15% من الطاقة المنتجة مع وجود هدر غير فني تُقدره "كهرباء لبنان" بـ 23,5% وهو في الواقع أكثر من ذلك بكثير بحسب بارودي نتيجة التعديلات المتزايدة على الشبكة وعدم قدرة المؤسسة على قمعها كلياً. وبالحدّث عن رفع حجم الانتاج، يشير الى انه وبسبب المناكفات السياسية لم تتمكن الدولة من إضافة ميغاواط واحد على الشبكة رغم تبدل العهود والمسؤولين عن إدارة القطاع والمحاولات المستمرة والتي باءت جميعها بالفشل مع إستمرار مشكلات الصيانة وتشغيل معامل الانتاج والشبكات ومحطات التحويل، مؤكداً ان المؤسسة تتعامل مع هذا الموضوع بالقطعة وليس ضمن خطة متكاملة العناصر والأهداف.

انطلاقاً من هذا الواقع، يعتبر بارودي ان الدخول في تجربة التنقيب وانتاج النفط والغاز قد يشكل صدمة سلبية على الحكومة والدولة اللبنانية ما لم يتزامن مع استمرار التوافق السياسي حيال هذا الموضوع، على ان يتم العمل بشفافية مع وجود قضاء مستقل وفاعل وإحياء دور أجهزة الرقابة والمحاسبة لمنع الفساد في مختلف أجهزة الدولة، لا سيما قطاع الطاقة، الذي تبنى عليه آمال وعود. ويقول: "إذا لم يجر إصلاح قطاع الكهرباء وتأهيله ليصبح جاهزاً للاستفادة من الكميات المرتقب إنتاجها من الغاز والنفط، نصبح كمن يضع ثروتنا الوطنية في سلة لا قعر لها، وخصوصاً إذا لم يتم توسيع صلاحيات هيئة إدارة قطاع البترول من هيئة استشارية الى هيئة فاعلة وقادرة على إدارة القطاع بخبرة وشفافية ومسؤولية وطنية، لتحقيق المصلحة العامة وليس تسهيل عملية المحاصصة وتوزيع الناتج على جيوب وحسابات بعض النافذين".

وتبقى الانظار ايضاً نحو أهمية تطبيق أحكام المادة 6 فقرة 2 من القانون رقم 132/2010 الخاص بالموارد البترولية في المياه البحرية والتي تنص على مشاركة الدولة من طريق انشاء شركة بترول وطنية، والتي لم تنشأ حتى تاريخه، مع اقتراح الاستفادة من خبرة وتجربة اعضاء هيئة إدارة قطاع البترول الحاليين في انشاء وتسيير أعمال شركة بترول وطنية، بالاضافة الى انشاء الصندوق السيادي الذي سيتولى إدارة الأموال الناتجة من إنتاج النفط والغاز بشكل شفاف ومدروس.

أما عن الضجة الإعلامية التي تدور حول موضوع النفط من طريق التشكيك في الشركات العالمية المدعوة للمشاركة في المناقصات، أو عبر إطلاق التوزيعات الطائفية والمذهبية للبلوكات المعروضة للمناقصات، فيعتبر بارودي أن الشركات المدعوة للمناقصات هي شركات دولية يحكمها قانون صارم يمنع عليها الدخول في السمسرات أو دفع الرشاوى

وتخضع لرقابة دولية صارمة وتتعرض للعقوبات الشديدة من المؤسسات الدولية في حال ارتكابها أي من هذه المخالفات.



Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly



Mr. Hans-Gert Pöttering, president of the European Parliament at the opening of the plenary session of the Euromed parliamentary assembly in Tunis 17 March 2007.

Russia's Putin, Italy's Renzi discuss energy projects: Tass

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi discussed possible joint future energy projects in a phone conversation on Tuesday, the Tass news agency reported, citing the Kremlin press service.

There were no details on what projects were discussed. Putin also offered Renzi help dealing with the aftermath of Italy's earthquake, Russian news agencies reported.

Southern Mediterranean offers 'hope' for European energy supply

Parliament has hosted the second Euro-Mediterranean rendez-vous on energy amid rising energy supply security concerns.

Gilles Pargneaux, a member of parliament's delegation to the parliamentary assembly of the union for the Mediterranean, said the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and the UN climate change conference taking place in Paris at the end of the year "are forcing us to rethink the question of energy in Europe".

Speaking after a conference on strengthening energy ties between Europe and the countries bordering the Mediterranean, the French deputy highlighted that "53 per cent of our energy comes from third countries and six member states depend entirely on Russian gas imports".

Yet he added, "if there are concerns linked to the east, there is hope linked to the South".

There are currently five projects in the pipeline to share gas and electricity supplies between southern Europe and northern Africa, with interconnections being established to link Sicily, Italy and Spain to Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

"If there are concerns linked to the east, there is hope linked to the South" – Gilles Pargneaux

André Merlin, CEO of Medgrid – a consortium of companies which aims to develop such interconnections – said "an essential component of the energy union is to create links between Europe and southern Mediterranean countries".

He explained that "the main interest is to export conventional

electricity from Europe to the south and renewables from the south to Europe”.

Each project will cost between €300m and €900m and is expected to become profitable by 2020.

They have yet to be included in the commission’s list of projects of common interest, but Merlin said he was still holding out hope for EU funding.

Jerzy Buzek, chair of parliament’s industry, research and energy committee recently told the Parliament Magazine how crucial the energy union is for Europe, explaining that job creation and growth will come about “only if we are able to provide secure, affordable and sustainable energy”.

The key, he said, is “a true energy community for Europe founded on a common energy market, common energy-oriented research and a common voice for the EU in relations with our external suppliers”.

The MEP described Maroš Šefčovič, commission vice president in charge of the energy union, as “the institutional product of this overarching importance placed on energy policy”. Prior to Šefčovič’s nomination, there was no EU official in charge of the energy union.

Buzek added that this role is vital “not only for the prosperity of our citizens, but for the wellbeing of the EU at large”.

The former parliament president stressed that “a truly interconnected market is the key to more affordable energy, not only for businesses, but also for citizens” and that it could be “an excellent exit strategy from the economic crisis”.