EKSKLUZIVNI INTERVJU

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

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Dennis Hesseling se je Agenciji EU za sodelovanje energetskih regulatorjev (ACER) kot vodja oddelka za plin pridružil decembra 2012. Odgovoren je za dejavnosti agencije na področju plina v zvezi s kodeksi omrežij, infrastrukturo in spremljanjem trga. Je tudi predstavnik agencije pri Regulativnem odboru Energetske skupnosti.

Preden se je gospod Hesseling pridružil agenciji ACER, je bil kot vodja enote v oddelku za konkurenco pri nizozemskem uradu za konkurenco NMa (ACM) odgovoren za nadzor nad združitvami in uveljavljanje protimonopolne politike v nizozemski energetiki, telekomunikacijah in medijih. Še pred tem je od leta 2002 delal v oddelku za reguliranje energetike pri uradu NMa, kjer se je ukvarjal predvsem s plinsko problematiko. Od leta 2000 pa je bil kot poslovni svetovalec pri bruseljski organizaciji McKinsey & Company pristojen za strateško in operativno svetovanje poštnim podjetjem in bankam.

Gospod Hesseling je na Univerzi v Utrechtu na Nizozemskem doktoriral iz matematike. Dodatno se je usposabljal pri organizaciji McKinsey, na poslovni šoli IMD (Lozana) in v okviru nizozemskega programa za bodoče vrhunske javne uslužbence. V Romuniji, Bolgariji, Ukrajini, Turčiji in Vietnamu je usposabljal energetske regulatorje in organe, pristojne za konkurenco, v različnih afriških državah pa politične stranke.

1. Kdaj v svoji bogati karieri ste se prvič srečali s področjem zemeljskega plina in kaj je bil za vas največji izziv na tem področju?

Ko sem se leta 2002 pridružil nizozemskemu energetskemu regulatorju DTe, sem se moral najprej ukvarjati z uradnimi pritožbami deležnikov zoper odločitev, ki jo je DTe sprejel na področju distribucije zemeljskega plina. Glavni izziv zame je bilo dejstvo, da sem se pri nekaterih temah strinjal s stališči deležnikov, kar je pomenilo, da sem moral nastopiti proti

Mr. Dennis Hesseling joined the EU Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators ACER as Head of the Gas Department in December 2012. He is responsible for the Agency's gas activities regarding network codes, infrastructure, and market monitoring. He is also the Agency's representative to the Energy Community Regulatory Board.

Before joining ACER, Mr. Hesseling worked as Head of Unit in the Competition Department of the Netherland Competition Authority NMa (ACM), responsible for merger control and antitrust enforcement in the Dutch energy, telecommunications and media sectors. Prior to that, he worked in the NMa's Energy Regulation department from 2002 on, mainly on gas issues. From 2000 he worked as a management consultant for McKinsey & Company in Brussels, providing strategic and operational advice to postal companies and banks.

Mr. Hesseling holds a PhD in Mathematics from Utrecht University, the Netherlands. He received additional training at McKinsey, business school IMD (Lausanne), and the Dutch programme for prospective top civil servants. Mr. Hesseling trained energy regulators and competition authorities in Romania, Bulgaria, the Ukraine, Turkey and Vietnam, and political parties in various African countries.

1. During your very rich professional career, when was the first time you encountered the area of natural gas and what was your greatest challenge within its scope?

When I joined the Dutch energy regulator DTe in 2002, the first area I had to work on were formal complaints raised by stakeholders against a decision DTe had taken in the area of natural gas distribution. The main challenge was that I was of the view that on some topic stakeholders' views were correct, meaning I had to go against some of my colleagues who had nekaterim mojim sodelavcem, ki so sodelovali pri odločitvi. Nazadnje je DTe spremenil prvotno odločitev.

2. Kakšna je organiziranost agencije ACER? Katere so glavne naloge na izjemno pomembnem plinskem področju, ki ga vodite?

ACER je evropska agencija, ki si prizadeva za dokončanje popolnoma povezanega notranjega energetskega trga, na katerem trgovanje z električno energijo in plinom ter njuna dobava potekata v skladu z najvišjimi standardi celovitosti in preglednosti, potrošniki EU pa imajo korist od večje izbire, poštenih cen in večje zaščite.

Agencija je bila ustanovljena leta 2010. Je razmeroma majhna institucija EU, ki ima približno 100 zaposlenih. Razdeljena je na šest oddelkov, sodelavci pa so iz skoraj vseh držav članic EU. Med njimi jih največ prihaja iz Slovenije. Delovni jezik je angleščina.

Glavne naloge oddelka za plin so tri: razvijati in spremljati izvajanje tržnih pravil za povezovanje plinskega trga EU (t. i. kodeksi omrežij), podpirati naložbe v plinsko infrastrukturo in spremljati delo sodelujočih operaterjev prenosnih plinskih omrežij prek evropskega organa ENTSOG ter spremljati razvoj trga po EU in Energetski skupnosti.

3. Katere naloge agencije ACER na področju plina so bile po vašem mnenju do zdaj uspešno izvedene? Kako so prispevale k evropskemu trgu s plinom in koristile evropskim uporabnikom plina?

Prvi kodeksi omrežij so nedvomno prispevali k večji usklajenosti po EU in boljšemu povezovanju trga EU s plinom. Ti kodeksi se nanašajo na pravila o tem, kateri produkt zmogljivosti bi morali operaterji prenosnih omrežij ponuditi na trgu in kako bi bilo treba to storiti (mehanizem dodelitve zmogljivosti), kako se izogniti pogodbeni prezasedenosti in kako jo obravnavati (načela upravljanja prezasedenosti), pa tudi na uporabo tehničnih standardov in medobratovalnosti (medobratovalnost in izmenjava podatkov) ter načine, kako spodbujati tržni režim izravnave odstopanj (izravnava). Najnovejši kodeks omrežja je v zvezi s tarifami za prenos (usklajene tarifne strukture) in je še preveč nov, da bi lahko že do zdaj imel velik vpliv, saj so se strani ravno začele ukvarjati z njim.

Na splošno so ti kodeksi – poleg posebnih vplivov – tudi zagotovili veliko večjo preglednost na trgu EU s plinom, vloga operaterjev prenosnih omrežij glede na igralce na trgu se je spremenila, poleg tega pa vsi akterji zdaj govorijo isti jezik. Enako velja za naše letno poročilo o spremljanju trga, ki je ključni

worked on the decision. In the end, DTe made corrections to its original decision.

2. What is the organisation of the ACER agency like, and which are the main tasks of the extremely important area of gas, which you lead?

ACER is a European Agency that fosters the completion of a fully integrated internal energy market, where electricity and gas are traded and supplied according to the highest integrity and transparency standards, and EU consumers benefit from a wider choice, fair prices and greater protection.

ACER was established in 2010. It is a relative small EU institution, with about 100 people working there. It is organised into 6 departments, and colleagues come from almost all EU Member States. The working langugae is English. Slovenia is the best represented MS among ACER staff.

The main tasks of the Gas Department are threefold: to develop and monitor the implementation of market rules supporting EU gas market integration (so-called Network Codes), to support the investment of beneficial gas infrastructure and to monitor the work of the cooperating gas TSOs through their European body ENTSOG, and to monitor market developments across the EU and the Energy Community.

3. In your view, which key ACER tasks in the area of gas have been successfully realised so far, and how have they contributed to the European gas market as well as benefited European gas users?

The first Network Codes have clearly contributed to more harmonisation across the EU and to better EU gas market integration. These codes concern rules about which capacity product should be offered by TSOs to the market and how this should be done (Capacity Allocation Mechanisms - CAM), about how to avoid and deal with contractual congestion (Congestion Management Principles – CMP), the use of technical standards and interoperability (Interoperability and Data Exchange –IOP), and how to foster a market-based balancing regime (Balancing – BAL). The latest network code, on transmission tariffs (Harmonised Transmission Tariff Structures – TAR) is too recent to have had much effect yet, parties have just started working on it.

In general, apart from the specific effects these codes have had, they have also ensured that there is much more transparency in the EU gas market, that the role of the TSO vs. market players has changed, and that all actors speak the same language. The same is true for our annual Market Monitoring dokument o napredku pri povezovanju energetskega trga EU.

Na področju infrastrukture je agencija sprejela zavezujočo odločitev o čezmejni delitvi stroškov pri povezovalnem plinovodu med Poljsko in Litvo, pri katerem se nacionalni regulatorji v regiji niso mogli dogovoriti glede delitve stroškov. To je značilen projekt, pri katerem nacionalni pristop ne zadostuje, saj sicer projekt na splošno koristi vsem, vendar večina stroškov nastane na Poljskem, glavne koristi pa imajo baltske države. Projekt se zdaj začenja izvajati.

4. Katere prihodnje naloge in projekti na področju plina, ki ga vodite v agenciji, so uvrščeni med prednostne in kateri so njihovi ključni cilji? Katere morebitne težave pričakujete?

Nova uredba o zanesljivosti oskrbe s plinom je pomemben zakonodajni akt, v katerem so predvidene nove naloge agencije. Zlasti se bomo morali ukvarjati z možnostmi povratnega toka, za katere se je izkazalo, da so pomemben in razmeroma poceni način za izboljšanje povezovanja trga na tistih delih, kjer bi plin običajno tekel le v eno smer. Za izziv bi se pri tem lahko izkazale obstoječe pogodbe, sklenjene pred začetkom veljavnosti pravnih zahtev EU.

Poleg tega bomo še naprej spremljali izvajanje kodeksov omrežij, za kar je potrebnega veliko časa. Potreben je kompromis med odprtim in preglednim procesom, ki vsem vključenim stranem, vključno z deležniki, ponuja različne možnosti, da zagotovijo svoj prispevek, in hitrostjo, s katero tak proces prinese rezultate. Trenutno je precej običajno, da mine pet let od takrat, ko je tema izbrana z evropskega seznama morebitnih tem, do takrat, ko se začne njeno izvajanje v različnih državah članicah. Vmes se lahko trg že bistveno spremeni. Izziva, kako se tega lotiti, še nismo rešili.

Konkretneje, naslednji večji korak bo ocena tarifne metodologije operaterjev prenosnih omrežij, ki se je bomo lotili prvič. To je občutljiva tema, za katero pričakujem, da bo pritegnila veliko pozornosti in razprav.

Nazadnje, splošna tema, s katero se ubadamo, pa so orodja, ki so nam na voljo. Na nacionalni ravni regulatorji regulirajo operaterje prenosnih omrežij, za evropsko raven pa to ne velja. Agencija ACER ne more organu ENTSOG naložiti ničesar. Lahko edino izdaja mnenja, poročila in priporočila. Čeprav imamo na splošno dober delovni odnos z organom ENTSOG, pa spoznavamo tudi omejitve, ki jih prinaša taka ureditev.

Report, which is a key document to show how EU energy market integration advances.

In the field of Infrastructure, the Agency took a binding cross-border cost allocation decision in the case of the Gas Interconnector Poland – Lithuania, where the national regulators in the region could not agree on how to split the costs. This is a typical project where a national approach is insufficient, since, while the project overall is beneficial, the majority of the costs are made in Poland, while the benefits are mainly in the Baltic States. The projects is now being implemented.

4. Which future tasks and projects in the gas area that you lead at the Agency are a priority and what are their key goals? Which potential difficulties do you encounter?

The new Gas Security of Supply Regulation is an important part of legislation which foresees new tasks for the Agency. In particular, we will have to work on reverse flow possibilities, which has shown to be an important and relatively low-cost way to improve market integration in parts of the market where traditionally gas would only flow one way. Here, legacy contracts from before the time of the EU legal requirements can be a challenge.

Apart from that, we will continue our work on monitoring the implementation of the network codes, which takes a lot of time. There is a trade-off between having an open and transparent process with various opportunities for all parties involved, including stakeholders, to provide their input, and the speed at which such a process delivers. At the moment, there can easily be 5 years between a topic being picked from the European list of potential topics, and the start of its implementation in the various Member States. In the meantime, the market can have changed significantly. It remains a challenge how to deal with that. More concretely, the next big step will be the assessment, for the first time, of all TSO tariff methodologies. This is a sensitive topic and I expect it to draw significant attention and discussions.

Finally, a generic issue we are facing is the tools which are at our disposal. While at national level the regulators (NRAs) regulate the TSO, the same does not hold true at European level. ACER cannot instruct ENTSOG to do anything; the best it can do is issue Opinions, Reports and Recommendations. While overall we have a good working relationship with ENTSOG, we also experience there are limitations to what such a set-up can deliver.

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5. Kako ocenjujete prihodnji razvoj oskrbe s plinom v Evropi? Kakšno je po vašem mnenju delovanje evropskega trga s plinom?

Agencija sama ne pripravlja napovedi v zvezi z oskrbo s plinom, zato se moram zanašati na delo drugih, na primer Evropske komisije in Mednarodne agencije za energijo. Na splošno se pričakuje, da bo kratko- do srednjeročno povpraševanje po plinu v EU ostalo nespremenjeno ali da se bo malo zmanjšalo. Obenem se pričakuje zmanjšanje domače proizvodnje plina, kar pomeni, da bomo morali več uvažati. Glavni dobavitelji bosta verjetno ostali Rusija in Norveška, pri čemer bo utekočinjeni zemeljski plin omogočil večjo diverzifikacijo oskrbe. Enako velja za Transjadranski plinovod in morebiti nov plin iz Črnega morja ali Sredozemlja.

Če želi plinski sektor srednje- do dolgoročno še naprej prispevati k izpolnjevanju evropskih potreb po energiji, pa bo moral zmanjšati svoj profil CO_2. Trenutno je v preskusni fazi več možnosti, na primer »iz elektrike v plin« (pri čemer se presežna energija iz obnovljivih virov uporablja za ustvarjanje sinteznega plina), vtiskavanje vodika v plinsko omrežje in povečana uporaba bioplina. Vsem je skupna prednost, da bi se lahko še naprej uporabljala sedanja plinska omrežja.

6. Kako ste se z družino privadili na življenje v Sloveniji? Kaj vas v tem okolju najbolj navdušuje, kaj pa najbolj pogrešate?

Ljubljana je zelo prijazno mesto za življenje – in tudi zelo prijetno mesto za otroke. Zelena je in varna, narava pa je krasna; otroci so postali precej dobri smučarji. Možnost, da se pozimi vsak konec tedna odpraviš na smučišče, je za nas, ki prihajamo iz ravninske države, pravo razkošje. Po drugi strani pa so priložnosti za zaposlitev za zakonce tukaj precej omejene. Enako velja za prometne povezave z drugimi državami (razen z avtom), ki so lahko tudi precej drage.

7. Imate kakšen nasvet za današnje nosilce razvoja na področju plina in oskrbe z zemeljskim plinom v Sloveniji in Evropi?

Predvsem vam svetujem, da bodite zelo pozorni na evropske okoljske in podnebne cilje ter odprti do ljudi z drugih področij. Bil sem že na preveč plinskih konferencah, na katerih so se plinarji pogovarjali o tem, kako krasen je plin in kako da drugi tega ne razumejo. S takim odnosom panoga ne more priti prav daleč.

5. How do you asses the future development of gas supply in Europe and the activity of the European gas market from your point of view?

The Agency does not do its own forecasting of gas supply, so I have to rely on the work of others, such as the European Commission and the International Energy Agency. Overall, the expectation is that gas demand in the EU will remain flat or decrease somewhat in the short to medium term. At the same time, domestic production is expected to decline, meaning more import will be needed. Russia and Norway are likely to remain the main suppliers, with LNG providing more supply diversification. The same holds true for TAP and potentially new gas from the Black Sea or the Mediterranean.

In the mid to long term, if the gas sector wants to continue to contribute to the European energy needs, it will need to diminish its CO_2 profile. Several options are currently in test phases, such as power-to-gas (using excess renewable electricity to generate synthetic gas), the injection of hydrogen into the gas grid, and the increased use of biogas. All of these have the advantage that the existing gas grid can continue to be used.

6. You and your family live in Slovenia, how did you get used to life in Slovenia? What delights you most in this environment and what do you miss the most?

Ljubljana is a very friendly city to live in, and also a very child-friendly place. It is green and safe, and the outdoors are great; the kids have become pretty good skiers. Being able to ski every weekend during winter is an exceptional luxury for people coming from a flat country! At the same time, job opportunities for spouses are rather limited, and the travel connections to other countries (apart from by car) are limited as well, and can be expensive.

7. Do you have any advice or thoughts for today's actors of development in the areas of gas and natural gas supply in Slovenia and in Europe?

My main advice would be to keep a close eye on the European environmental and climate goals, and to be open to people from outside the gas world. I have been at too many conferences where gas people speak to other gas people about how great gas is, if only the outside world would realise it. Such an attitude will not get the industry very far.