

Round Table

**Priorities for the Bulgarian Energy Sector until 2050**

31 October 2017

*Opening Remarks of Mr. Thorsten Geißler*

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to today's conference on behalf of the Konrad Adenauer foundation.

I thank the Center for the Study of Democracy and its director Ognian Shentov for the excellent cooperation that we enjoyed when preparing this conference.

I also welcome the other experts that will take the floor today. Thank you for your participation!

Our topic is "Priorities for the Bulgarian Energy Sector until 2050: European Perspectives and Strategic vulnerabilities".

I will not talk about Bulgaria's energy policy; there are experts among us who know much more about this topic than I.

I will confine myself to making a few remarks about the European Union's energy policies.

They are driven by three main objectives:

- The EU strives for secure energy supplies to ensure the reliable provision of energy whenever and wherever it is needed. Secure energy supplies are a condition for a well working economy, for jobs and prosperity.
- The EU wants to ensure that energy providers operate in a competitive environment that ensures affordable prices for homes, business and industries.

The EU wants our energy consumption to be sustainable, through the lowering of greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, fossil fuel dependence. Unlike some country the EU does not ignore science, we know that the continued use of fossil fuels and thus of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions is a cause of global warming. We don't want to live at the expense of future generations.

We are facing a lot of challenges that we must tackle. These include rising global demand and the scarcity of fuels like crude oil. A particularly pressing issue is our dependency on energy imports. In fact the EU currently imports over half of its energy at a cost of € 350 billion a year.

In order to achieve its goal the European Union therefore

- Adopted in February 2015 a European Energy Union Strategy that will ensure secure, affordable and clean energy for EU citizens and EU businesses by allowing a free flow of energy across national borders within the EU, and bringing new technologies and renewed infrastructure to cut household bills, create jobs and boost growth.
- Has released a European Energy Security Strategy which presents short and long-term measures to shore up the EU's security of supply.
- Is building a resilient and integrated energy market across the EU – the internal energy market. To this end, new pipelines and power lines are being built to develop EU-wide networks for gas and electricity, and common rules are being designed to increase competition between suppliers and to promote consumer choice
- Supports the domestic production of energy, including the development of renewable energy sources. I must in this context mention that there is a political consensus in Germany that nuclear power is not the right answer.
- Promotes energy efficiency

- Ensures safety across the EU's energy sectors with strict rules on issues such as the disposal of nuclear waste and the operation of offshore oil and gas platforms.

To pursue these goals within a coherent long-term strategy, the EU has formulated targets for 2020, 2030, and 2050.

We will today also talk about the EU's Energy Roadmap 2050 which analyses a series of scenarios on how to meet the target of achieving an 80% to 95 % reduction in greenhouse gases compared to 1990 levels by 2050. I am sure that among others the Konrad Adenauer Foundation will organize conferences in 2050 to evaluate the results of this Energy Roadmap. It is, however, highly unlikely that I will be able to attend such a conference.

But today we will also discuss the steps that can and should be taken in the near future.

The Council of the European Union has adopted the 18-month Programs for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, prepared by the Estonian, Bulgarian and Austrian Presidencies and the High Representative, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Council. In these programs the Energy Union is an important topic. In two months Bulgaria will take over the EU presidency and I am convinced will set its own accents regarding this important topic.

Let me thank each of you for her or his participation in this conference on behalf of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

Thank you for your attention.