

GCC and EU experts discuss on the Clean Energy opportunities and challenges in the GCC region

Press Release:

On Tuesday, 17 January in Abu Dhabi fruitful discussions took place at the **Forum on Clean Energy Opportunities and Challenges in the GCC region**, which was co-organised by the **UAE Ministry of Energy, the Gulf Cooperation Council Secretariat General, the EU-GCC Clean Energy Network and the DG Energy of the European Commission**. The event was organized on 17 January alongside the WFES series of events, and was a back to back event to the EU Energy Day Workshop organized by the European Commission. As both the GCC and the EU regions work towards an energy plan, which ensures energy security, affordability and sustainability, the objective of the event was to share the lessons learnt and challenges faced for the mutual benefit. The event gathered more than 110 prominent clean energy experts, policy makers, academics, diplomats both from GCC and EU region. Focus of the day's discussions was on solar energy, which has become cost effective over the years. (photos 5,6). The event was held immediately after the EU Energy Day workshop "Transitioning the Electricity Sector" organized by the European Commission.

"To further the collaboration between GCC countries on key energy sector challenges and opportunities, the GCC electricity and water collaboration committee has formed the renewable and new energy team to focus on developing partnerships as well as experience and knowledge sharing, especially with our counterparts from the EU." noted **H.E. Dr. Matar Hamed Al Neyadi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Energy of UAE** at his opening speech. (photo1)

In their addresses, both **Dr. Behjat AlYousuf, Interim Provost of Masdar Institute** and **Hamza Kazim Vice President Operations and Finance of Masdar Institute** stressed the importance of ensuring EU and GCC funding for R&D partnerships that will strengthen the local capacity to support the clean energy strategies in the region. *"Masdar Institute played a vital role during the first phase of the EU-GCC Clean Energy Network, which is promoting and collaborating on clean energy awareness, research, and joint conferences between these two regions. Because of our support the EU has committed to a second phase, based at Masdar Institute. The EU has created this consortium and provided the funding through the second phase. Now there is a call to the GCC to match if not exceed their commitment into the future."* said **Dr. AlYousuf**. (photo 3)

"There are tremendous opportunities to learn from the regional approaches taken within the EU and GCC to support the integration of renewables" said **Mrs Paula Abreu Marques, Head of Unit of Renewables and CCS at the DG Energy of European Commission**, *"the EU-GCC Clean Energy Network provides a unique platform to get experts together and foster collaborations"*. (photo 2)

Patrizio Fondi, Ambassador of the EU in the UAE highlighted the importance of EU GCC cooperation through instruments like the Network and confirmed the support of the European Union in relevant initiatives.

Commenting on the Forum, **Mr. Frank Wouters, Director of the EU GCC Clean Energy Network**, said: *"Europe and the Gulf countries have developed their economies and societies based on an energy relationship that is almost 100 years old. The rapidly shifting energy paradigm, characterised by decarbonisation, digitisation, decentralization and democratization of our energy system requires new thinking and new approaches, but can be equally benefitting. The EU GCC Clean Energy Network is the bridge towards mutually beneficial clean energy partnerships."*(photo 4)

The event featured numerous presentations and interactions, providing insight in the topic by high level experts including from the Ministry of Energy of UAE, the GCC Secretariat General, the DG Energy - European Commission, the EU GCC Clean Energy Network, the Electricity and Water Authority of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Masdar Institute, the Kuwaiti Institute for Scientific Research, the Ministry of Electricity and Water of Kuwait, KACARE, the Saudi Electricity Company, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), CENER, the Abu Dhabi Transmission and Despatch company, BELECTRIC Gulf Limited, Baringa Partners and others. Discussions highlighted the importance of regional and international partnerships in developing clean energy strategies for a sustainable future.

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Photo 1

H.E. Dr. Matar Hamed Al Neyadi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Energy of UAE at his opening speech

On the panel from left to right: Frank Wouters (EU GCC Clean Energy Network), Dr Mohammad AlRashidi (GCC Secretariat General), Paula Abreu Marques (European Commission)



Photo2

Mrs Paula Abreu Marques (European Commission)



Photo3

Dr. Behjat AlYousuf, Interim Provost of Masdar Institute



Photo 4

From left to right:

Frank Wouters, Director of the EU GCC Clean Energy Network /

Dr. Mohammad F. Al Rashidi, Director of Electricity & Water, Economic Affairs, GCC Secretariat General /

Mrs. Paula Abreu Marques | Head of Unit, Renewables and CCS, DG Energy, European Commission /

H.E. Dr. Matar Hamed Al Neyadi | Undersecretary, Ministry of Energy of UAE

Dr. Behjat AlYousuf | Interim Provost of Masdar Institute

H.E. Patrizio Fondi | EU Ambassador in the UAE





(photos 5,6)

views of the audience

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About the EU GCC Clean Energy Network

The EU– GCC Clean Energy Network was created as a response to the interest in the EU and in the GCC for cooperation on clean energy matters. The Network, which is being funded by the European Union, focuses its activities on five areas, namely renewables, energy demand-side management & energy efficiency, clean natural gas, electricity interconnections, and carbon capture & storage.

The overall objective of the Network is to enhance EU-GCC energy relations by joint initiatives for cooperation of mutual interests in the area of clean energy technologies, including through joint initiatives such as workshops, roundtables, exchanges of expertise and best practice training and seminars.

More at www.eugcc-cleanenergy.net