

March 16:30

Preparation: [REDACTED]

### General information:

Your meeting takes place at the request of the Energy Charter, which is an international agreement establishing a multilateral framework for cross-border cooperation in the energy industries signed by the EU and 51 countries. It is organising a **high level Conference** in May to give new momentum to the Charter, including its geographical expansion further than its traditional European base.

The Commission would view **favourably the geographical expansion of the Energy Charter to the Southern Mediterranean**. This is an area that the Charter is targeting, and where energy insecurity contributes to the instability of the region. The Charter can help favour investments in energy sector by establishing common rules.

NB **The ENP consultation paper** underscores the need to increase the focus on energy in bilateral relations under ENP, not only in terms of connections but also energy security and energy efficiency in neighbourhood countries.

In the east, **the Energy Community** – which brings together the EU and countries from the South-East Europe and the Black Sea region – is the set up we use to spread the whole energy *acquis* to these countries. The Energy Community and the Energy Charter are perfectly compatible – but the Energy Community does not have members in the South, and has no intention to do so.

Given that the Energy Community does not cover the south, interesting to explore how we can work with the Charter secretariat to improve the investment climate in the energy sector with the Southern neighbours – by extending a rules based approach, but one which does not involve taking on the whole EU energy acquis.

You might want to ask about the ongoing reports that Italy would like to withdraw from the Energy Charter (which would be a major blow). Mr Rusnàk will be accompanied by Ernesto Bonafé, Senior Expert on Transit, from the Secretariat.

### Objectives of Mr Rusnàk

- Mr Rusnàk has indicated that he would like to discuss the role and potential of the Energy Charter in Central Asia and the Caucasus, particularly in the context of the post-INOGATE project.
- Ask about the possibility of the Commission funding Energy Charter activities, particularly in energy efficiency. We are sceptical about such projects.

### Key messages for the Commissioner

- The Commission supports the Energy Charter, including its expansion into new geographical areas South of the Mediterranean. These countries could benefit from the rules-based approach to the energy sector, which would help attract investment.
- Rule out role for Energy Charter Secretariat in the post-INOGATE programme. We are already working with the International Energy Agency as the leader for this programme.
- We are sceptical about small capacity-building projects covering energy efficiency due to high overhead costs – but keen in general to step up our efforts in this area

**Annex 1** Speaking points; **Annex 2** Defensives; **Annex 3** Specific background; **Annex 4** CV