Energy markets received high attention ever since the energy transition was set into motion and even more in the last months due to recent geo-political developments and the rapid increase in extreme weather events linked to global warming. Competition law is sometimes perceived as being an obstacle to the efficient handling of a crisis, but is it so? Can it rather be a tool to be wisely used in combination with others to maximise the use of scarce financial resources while preserving market dynamics that guarantee economic growth and prosperity?

Time seems ripe now for a GCLC conference with a focus on this sector but conscious that addressing energy-relevant topics increasingly requires a holistic approach due to the intersection with energy policy and regulation. There are many angles under which the interplay between energy policy and competition law can be examined: security of supply and the solidarity principle within the EU, public service obligations and other forms of state intervention (market-based regulatory measures vs state aid), long-term agreements and other forms of cooperation to face an energy crisis, essential facilities and gatekeepers, unbundling and vertical integration, among others. Every topic should be discussed in the light of the current unprecedented geo-political developments and the equally unprecedented urgency to accelerate the decarbonisation. This is a major, probably unique, challenge for our societies.
**DAG 1**

09:00-09:30  Registration

09:30-09:40  Welcome Address

Federica Mogherini  
Rector, College of Europe

09:40-10:00  Keynote Speech

Margrethe Vestager  
Executive Vice-President, European Commission  
Commissioner for Competition

10:00-10:15  Q&A Session

10:15-10:20  GCLC Best Thesis Award

10:20-10:30  Presentation of the Conference

Massimo Merola  
BonelliErede; College of Europe and GCLC

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Panel 1 – The new EU energy dilemma

Chair:  Adina Claici  
The Brattle Group; College of Europe and GCLC

10:30-11:45  This panel takes stock of the current developments in the EU energy sector. Both gas and electricity markets are facing unprecedented challenges. The EU was already set off on an irreversible path to decarbonisation, however the recent geopolitical developments and the need to ensure security of supply make the equation more complex. How best to reconcile these two key objectives?

Panellists:  

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11:45-12:15  Coffee Break

Following the introductory session, for the rest of the day we will explore more in detail how the two policy objectives of energy transition and security of supply can be reconciled with three key operational EU priorities: affordability of energy prices, accelerating the roll-out of EU energy infrastructures and solidarity/cohesion. The objective is to understand where and to what extent competition policy may play a role in achieving these three priorities.

Panel 2 – Affordability of energy prices for households and enterprises

Chair:

12:15-13:15 This panel will discuss from two perspectives (market design and consumer protection) the following topics: EU regulatory intervention to address high energy prices and possible reforms of the wholesale electricity market design, national regulatory interventions, State aid measures, and control of undertakings’ behaviours (with a focus on cooperation and retail pricing).

Panellists:

13:15-14:30 Lunch

Panel 3 – Accelerating the efficient roll-out of EU energy infrastructures

Chair:

14:30-15:30 This panel will discuss how EU policies may contribute to accelerate the deployment of energy infrastructure in an efficient and coordinated manner. The following topics will be covered: EU coordination through State aid rules (e.g., hydrogen corridors, global supply chains), stranded assets, essential
facilities, permitting, foreign direct investment control, recharging infrastructure

Panellists:

15:30-16:00 Coffee break

Panel 4 – Solidarity among Member States

Chair:

16:00-17:00 This panel will discuss how to preserve the level playing field in the energy transition. Topics will include EU funding (Recovery and Resilience Facility and REPowerEU), nationalizations, the external dimension of preserving a level playing field (e.g., foreign subsidies, carbon border adjustment), phasing out of the EU’s dependence on Russian fossil fuels, the EU response to US subsidies

Panellists:
DAY 2

In the second day we aim to discuss whether existing competition tools are suitable to address the new and ever-changing challenges of the sector. We will then gather the views of enforcers concerning next steps and main takeaways.

Panel 5 – Legal toolbox currently available to face the EU energy dilemma

Chair:

9:30-10:30 This panel will discuss the interplay between regulation and competition law and recall the EU competition tools generally used to address the challenges of the energy markets

Panellists:

Panel 6 - EU Competition tools: a fitness check of their appropriateness to solve the EU energy dilemma

Chair:

10:30-11:45 In the state aid area, the panel will discuss whether the CEEAG is still fit for purpose, the future of the TF Ukraine, and IPCEI. In addition, the panel will debate on the relevance of sustainability in antitrust and merger control assessment, as well as on other forms of cooperation that may alleviate the energy crisis. Further topics include: standard settings, interoperability, smart grids and EV integration

Panellists:

11:45-12:15 Coffee break
Panel 7 – Concluding enforcers’ panel

Chair:

12:15-13:30 EU and national officials will draw the conclusions of the event and discuss potential future actions

Panellists:

FURTHER INQUIRIES

[.....]
Email: info.gclc@coleurope.eu
Website: http://gclc.coleurope.eu