

UK Presidency Targets Energy Liberalisation as Top Priority

The 4th Annual EU Energy Law Workshop was held on 22-23 September 2005 by the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies of the European University Institute. The opening speech was delivered by, Ms Sue Harrison, from the UK Department of Trade and Industry and a representative of the UK Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The speech set out the priorities and events that lie ahead for the EU energy sector in 2005. Four of them are especially important:

- Liberalisation. Two key reports will be presented and discussed at the meeting of the Council of Energy Ministers on 1 December. They concern progress in establishing an internal energy market (a benchmarking report from DG Transport and Energy) and distortions of competition in the electricity and gas markets (a report from DG Competition based on an ongoing sector enquiry). This subject is a major plank in the Lisbon Agenda and a key priority for the UK. The aim is to revitalise the liberalisation effort, to focus on how to make the market structure more competitive and to discuss whether further legislation is required.
- The EU and Russia. The EU plans to hold a meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council on 3 October, which will for the first time specifically focus on energy issues. The idea is to give political direction to the work of four thematic groups, as well as providing recommendations for action to promote closer collaboration between the EU and Russia. Given the EU's growing dependence on Russian gas, this relationship has an obvious importance.
- The Balkans. A key date is 25 October when the Energy Community South East Europe Treaty is to be signed. This Treaty has been concluded with all the relevant South East European countries and is intended to extend the single market in energy to SE Europe, but just as important is designed to provide stability for investment and encourage cooperation within the region. It should also enhance security of supply for the EU and for SE Europe.
- Climate change and sustainability. Two initiatives on energy efficiency are to be discussed at the Council of Energy Ministers on 1 December. One is a new directive on end-use efficiency and energy services. Agreement will be sought on a second reading text with the European Parliament. The other is an energy efficiency green paper. There will be a debate to inform the Commission follow-up action plan and to promote linkages between environmental and energy policy agendas.

For further information on the Workshop please contact [Elisabetta Spagnoli](#).