

CONFERENCES AND REPORTS

The 4th Annual “Energy Transitions” Conference, Joensuu 3rd to 4th March 2016, University of Eastern Finland in Joensuu

The 4th Annual “Energy Transitions” Conference was held from 3rd to 4th March 2016 at the University of Eastern Finland in Joensuu. The Annual Conference was jointly organised by the “Energy Law Research Forum” and the “Political Economy of Energy in Europe and Russia” in order to address a wide range of both legal and economical questions of mutual EU – Russia energy relations. As such, the Conference followed the previous successful conferences dedicated to the same topics, being held in the past in Joensuu (2015, 2014 and 2013), Brussels (2011), Cambridge (2010) and Moscow (2009). It is a matter of fact, that the venue of the last four gatherings is more than symbolic: The capital of Finnish Carelia is situated only 80 km away from the EU – Russian borders and at the same time halfway between Helsinki and St. Petersburg. Further, the Centre for Climate Change, Energy and Environmental Law, which has been established at the University of Eastern Finland several years ago, dedicates its research inter alia to the EU – Russian energy relations.

Despite a relative remoteness of the venue, the Annual “Energy Transition” Conference attracted more than 60 participants from more than 20 countries. The target of both the “Energy Law Research Forum (ELRF)” and “Political Economy of Energy in Europe and Russia (PEEER)” has been always to bring together researchers in energy law from leading universities and to establish a working community of researchers through which the latest developments in energy law can be shared and discussed. In respect to this, it is no surprise that speakers from number of outstanding European (University of Oxford, European University Institute, Queen Mary University of London) and Russian (St. Petersburg State University, Moscow State University, Moscow State Institute of International Relations) universities were taking part as presenters at various sessions in Joensuu this year.

The keynote presentations were held by **Prof. Angus Johnston** (University College, University of Oxford) and by **Prof. Andey Konoplyanik** (Russian Gubkin State Oil & Gas University). While the first was dealing with various legal aspects of the term “energy transitions” in his speech (stating inter alia, that the EU Energy Law has been in a state of perpetual “transition” since the 1990s), the second speaker pointed out most recent points of mutual EU – Russian energy relations in the area of gas supply and their legal aspects from the point of view of the Russian Federation. Most current territorial changes in the region of the Black Sea became matter of discussion in this regard and their legal impact on future gas transit to the EU was matter of very intensive debate.

The panels of the 4th Annual “Energy Transitions” Conference were dedicated to various issues of the mutual energy relations, including external aspects of the recent regulatory developments in the EU Energy Law, upstream petroleum regulation developments, most current issues related to the Energy Charter Treaty and regulation of the natural gas markets.

What the external aspects of the recent legal and regulatory developments concerns, interesting presentation on the challenges arising from the current legal framework were made by **Dr. Raphael Heffron** (Queen Mary University of London) and by **Att. Gokce Mete** (University of Dundee), who shared her experiences from international negotiations under the Energy Charter Secretariat in the last years, in particular in relation to the EU relations with the states of Central Asia (in particular Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan). Further, **Dr. Andrei Belyi** (Centre for EU-Russia Studies, University of Tartu) contributed with the Russian perspective on the external policy of the EU in the area of the energy security and **Dr. Anna Marhold** (Tilburg Law School) spoke about restrictive practices in energy trade and their consistency with WTO law with reference to the mutual EU – Russian energy relations. At least but not at last, several presentations were dealing with the mutual relations in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy. Author of this report made a presentation on legal issues aris-

ing from the use of new nuclear technologies under the development in both the EU and Russian Federation. **Mrs. Pallavi Pal** (University of Tampere) made a presentation on Russian nuclear energy diplomacy in the EU member states.

Very interesting discussions were held in all panels, presenting different views of current problems of the mutual energy relations. Despite differences of views and interpretations, all discussions were held in a friendly atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.

At last, but not at least, it must be mentioned, that selected contributions presented at the previous conferences were published by Intersentia Publishers (Cambridge) as “EU Energy Law and Policy Issues”. The last collection was published in 2014. In the past, the articles published in the collection of papers were quoted not only in internationally recognised legal journals, but also in some decisions of the ECJ. The international community of researchers in energy law is now looking forward to the next issue of “EU Energy Law and Policy Issues”, which will present another collection of interesting papers presented at the 4th Annual “Energy Transitions” Conference.

Jakub Handrlica*

Scientific conference “Legal Aspects of Migration – Legislative Challenges”¹

Current migration wave pouring into Europe has raised many questions. The discussions so far have been dedicated to effective solutions of causes and consequences of this migration wave but mainly from economic, social and ethical point of view. Legal aspects, however, often remain unnoticed. Nevertheless, the legal aspects of ongoing migration shall not be underestimated for suitable legal framework and its proper application on the EU level as well as national level could play a decisive role in effective dealing with migration.

Responding to discussions encompassing recent migration a conference organized by the department of EU law and the department of administrative law was held at Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Law, on the 19 February 2016. The aim of the conference was to stimulate academic debate and propose solutions to necessary legislative changes which are connected with migration. The conference was ceremonially started by the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Law, **Professor M. Tomášek**, who gave a warm welcome to everyone and emphasized the role of academia. After him spoke **Dr. P. Mlsna**, Deputy Minister of the Interior for Public Administration and Legislative. In his speech he underlined the significance and difficulty of legal aspects of migration. He thoroughly analysed Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of the 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece and relevant case-law concluding that there is a strong reluctance to respect the law in the field of migration on the part of Member States. Finally, the first session was concluded by **Dr. J. Michal**, the head of the European Commission Representation in the Czech Republic. He discussed three questions: (i) time context of the migration crisis, (ii) Dublin regulation and (iii) the way out. He contended that the possible solution to migration crisis lies in reformation of the so-called Dublin system for so far only a few Member States have carried the burden of dealing with thousands and thousands of asylum claims. The morning session was followed by two specialized panels.

* JUDr. Jakub Handrlica, Ph.D., Department of Administrative Law and Administrative Science, Faculty of Law, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. Authors participation at the 4th Annual “Energy Transitions” Conference was financed from the research project PRVOUK 06 “Public Law in the Context of Europeanisation and Globalisation”.

¹ The present report was created under research projects of Charles University in Prague PRVOUK 04 “Institutional and normative changes of law in European and global context” and PRVOUK 06 “Public law in context of Europeanisation and globalization”.