

**WELCOME SPEECH
DR. ANDREAS POUILLIKAS
CHAIRMAN
CYPRUS ENERGY REGULATORY AUTHORITY**

4TH REGULATORY AUTHORITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAAC) MEETING

**WEDNESDAY 17 MAY 2023
CERA's PREMISES, 20 AYIAS PARASKEVIS,
2002 STROVOLOS, NICOSIA, CYPRUS**

Dear distinguished guests, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a true pleasure for me to welcome you to the 4th RAAC meeting, which also marks the first meeting after the assumption of the Vice-Chairmanship of RAAC by CERA.

It is also an honour for us to welcome the EMGF Secretary General, Mr. Osama Mobarez as well as the representatives of National Regulatory Authorities from the member countries of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) and to have the pleasure to exchange views and experiences on the challenges of the natural gas market in the East Mediterranean Region.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Eng. Karem Mahmoud and his team for their effort and hard work towards the completion of RAAC activities and for the excellent work done under his position as RAAC Vice-Chair.

The Mediterranean region due to its geographic location, has long been an important area for natural gas market, and with recent developments, it is poised to play an even greater role in meeting global energy demand.

One of the key factors driving the development of the natural gas market in the East Mediterranean region is the growing demand for energy. As economies in the region continue to grow, so does the demand for energy, including natural gas.

Another driver of the natural gas market in the East Mediterranean region is the discovery of new gas reserves which creates new opportunities for exploration and production activities. This has also led to the need for development of new infrastructure, to support the transportation and export of natural gas.

In 2021, the European Commission presented the Fit-for-55 package of measures aimed at revising EU legislation to align with the goal of climate neutrality by 2050, including the intermediate target of a net reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

In 2022, the European Commission issued the REPowerEU plan, which aims to reduce the EU off Russian fossil fuels by 2030, based on the full implementation of the Fit-for-55 package, but foreseeing additional interventions for natural gas, the increase in the participation of renewable gas fuels, including hydrogen, the acceleration of energy saving and the electrification of a greater part of the final consumption.

Therefore, it is an opportunity for the Southeast Mediterranean region countries:

- to become, in short to medium term, electricity and natural gas exporters to the European Union, and
- to become, in long term, pioneers towards hydrogen economy and turn into exporters of sustainable energy to the European Union.

To achieve all the of the above, the role of National Regulatory Authorities is crucial in order:

- to enhance our cooperation and commit to the achievement of common goals on sustainability, market integration and security of supply,
- to pursue and amplify the implementation of energy market reforms and develop gradual harmonization of energy policies and regulatory frameworks towards the longer-term goal of creating a common energy market,
- to promote the development and adoption of the best regulatory practises and techniques allowing to facilitate gas trading in the East-Med Region,
- to engage on more sustainable energy strategies, policies and systems by encouraging energy conservation and energy efficiency on both supply and demand sides and by the substantial increase of renewable and other low carbon energy sources, and
- to establish adequate and flexible regulatory frameworks for improving the investment climate, in particular to ensure the

diversification of energy sources, reinforce interconnections and support energy efficiency technology deployment and best practices.

Over the course of this meeting, we will explore the latest developments, policies and innovations in natural gas market. I encourage all of you to actively participate in the discussions and share your insights. Together, we can help shape the future of the natural gas market in the East Mediterranean region and beyond.

Once again, welcome to this important meeting, and I look forward to a productive and enlightening exchange of ideas.

Thank you for your attention.

Dr. Andreas Poulikkas
CERA Chairman