

**Урбан Руснак – Генеральный секретарь, Международная Энергетическая Хартия**

**Opening speech by the SG HE U. Rusnak at the World Energy Week**

*(5 October 2021, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan)*

**Dear colleagues and participants of the session,**

First of all, on behalf of the Secretariat of the International Energy Charter and my behalf, let me express my respect and gratitude to the Kazakh side for the hospitality provided and assistance in resolving all organisational issues.

For many years, the Kazenergy Eurasian Forum has established itself as a prestigious annual conference of the international energy industry aimed at the global energy agenda.

In addition, it is gratifying to note that Kazakhstan, having been awarded the right to host the World Energy Week this year, has attracted significant attention from the international community, which will eventually allow integrating joint goals and developing new mechanisms for the further development of world energy.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has made adjustments to our activities. Still, despite the former complexity of the situation, the Government of Kazakhstan has managed, in this difficult time for us, to successfully organize this high-level platform to promote regional dialogue .

This session is integrated and organised by the Secretariat of the International Energy Charter, jointly with the World Energy Council dedicated to new national initiatives in the energy system of Central Asia with the assistance of the Kazakhstan Association "KAZENERGY". This year, we decided to combine our annual meeting of the Task Force on Regional Energy Cooperation in Central Asia (RECA) with this platform.

This year is the 16th RECA meeting, where participants have the opportunity to exchange experience and discuss the implementation of regional projects, including the role of cross-border electricity trade in ensuring regional energy security.

The meeting program includes presentations on the proposed topics, and it will be interesting for all of us to learn about the current advances and changes in the energy activities of Central Asia.

Let me also note that several Central Asian countries have been active members of the Energy Charter Treaty since it had entered into force.

Thus, to date, the Energy Charter Treaty is the only legally binding document for international energy cooperation.

Over the past years, we have jointly managed to create the foundations for sustainable and secure regional energy trade in Central Asia.

I am sure that today the Central Asian countries have managed to build a foreign policy strategy aimed at further strengthening regional energy cooperation.

**Dear participants,**

Today, our goal is to ensure economic growth by strengthening mutual trust and developing mutually beneficial and equal cooperation in Central Asia.

Let me note that the Energy Charter process has a significant role in ensuring stable development at the regional level at the present stage.

The Central Asian countries play an essential role in the Energy Charter process.

We are still facing the difficult task of developing adequate mechanisms and rules for international cooperation in the energy sector, taking into account current changes:

- raising the requirements for improving investment climate;
- emergence of new players on the global energy markets;
- changing export strategies, including diversification of energy supplies;
- volatility of world oil prices.

In this regard, the ongoing modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty will make it possible to adapt the energy sector to the new realities. We are working with participating countries on implementing the set goals effectively.

In turn, this is confirmed by the joint communique of the 16th meeting of the EU – Central Asia Ministerial Conference, which was held at the end of 2020, where the active participation of Central Asian countries in the ongoing negotiations on the ECT modernisation process was particularly noted.

Let me emphasize that the priority areas of the Treaty modernisation process for the Central Asian countries today are transit of energy resources, investments, access to infrastructure and others.

Moreover, we welcome the desire of the Central Asian countries to follow the fundamental principles of energy transit, such as maintaining a balance of economic interests and obtaining unhindered access to new markets.

In addition, let me note that the ECT also contains the concept of "An Agreement on Economic Integration". In this regard, the Secretariat is currently working together with the parties to the Treaty in defining the role of an "Regional Economic Integration Organisation".

**Dear colleagues,**

Today's focus is on energy security issues, the role of traditional energy resources and new alternative energy sources.

Through constructive dialogue, we have significantly broadened the scope of mutually beneficial cooperation in the energy sector. Countries have made significant achievements in developing traditional energy sources and have now started to implement renewable energy projects.

We are now faced with the fact that renewables are a major trend in world energy.

The European Union (EU) is investing heavily in development of alternative energy. Today, this is corroborated with the introduction by the EU's Carbon Border Adjustments, i.e., the "Green Deal" , which aims to achieve carbon neutrality up to 55% by 2030.

Central Asian countries have considerable potential for wind and solar energy. We believe that large-scale implementation of this type of projects will benefit the current energy consumption patterns and will contribute to a gradual reduction of the carbon footprint in the electricity generation system.

It should be noted that global climate change and the Paris Agreement have already reoriented the investment process towards "clean" technologies. In fact, today, many international development institutions have already vetoed the funding for coal generation and other technologies with a significant negative impact on the environment.

**Dear colleagues and participants of the session,**

I am sure that today's joint work with you will contribute to strengthening regional cooperation and help us assess the existing problems.

Summing up, I would like to wish all participants fruitful work, success and also express my gratitude to the Kazakh side for its cooperation and invitation to participate in this undoubtedly important event.

**Thank you for your attention!**