

Good afternoon

Ladies and Gentleman

It is a great honour for me to have been invited, together with my colleague Correia de Campos, to host this lunch time discussion.

I would like to welcome our co-hosts from REN - Redes Energeticas Nacionais, and the different colleagues from the Parliament, and the Commission who have found time in their busy schedules to attend this event.

The purpose of this lunch is to discuss the funding and the regulation environment of the European Energy Infrastructure strategy.

I should also like to consider the impact of new and emerging technologies such as smart grids and energy storage solutions, and the relevance of research and technological development in these areas.

This meeting is particularly timely given that the European Parliament is currently elaborating priorities for energy

infrastructure for 2020 and beyond. Mr. Correia de Campos is the rapporteur of this important report.

Secondly, the European Parliament is at the moment preparing the reports on the next Framework Programme on Research and Innovation, the Horizon 2020. I am the rapporteur of the Specific Programme Implementing Horizon 2020 - The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020). The energy plays an important role on Horizon 2020 and the discussion today will certainly contribute to the improvement of the H2020 Programme by providing important inputs in the area of energy.

Thirdly, we are also preparing the new European Financial Perspectives. It is of course important that we ensure that energy is properly taken into consideration when drawing up the post 2013, budget. In this respect we are currently discussing the Connecting Europe Facility to promote the implementation of priority infrastructures in energy, transport and ICT with a single fund of 40 billion euros, of which 9.1 billion euros for the energy sector and the Project Bond Initiative, acting as a catalyst to re-open the debt capital market as a significant source of financing in the infrastructure sector.

And finally, I am also working as shadow rapporteur on the energy supply and international cooperation report which, together with Mr. Karins' report on the Intergovernmental Agreements in the field of Energy, will build up the external dimension of our internal energy market. In my proposal there is a strong emphasis on the Atlantic boarder and the Peninsula Iberia as a gas hub for the EU.

I am particularly looking forward to hearing REN's input. I am sure that you will have a valuable contribution to theses questions.

Well, that is enough from me. Let me now introduce Mr. João Conceição, from REN.

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