INTRODUCTORY NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: delegations
Subject: "South East Europe Energy Conference: Energy without Frontiers - from National to Regional Approach" (Sofia, 30 November 2010)
- Information from the Bulgarian delegation

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Bulgarian delegation on the above.
Under "Other business" on the agenda for the "Energy" part of the EU "Transport, Telecommunications and Energy" Council meeting on 3 December 2010 in Brussels, Belgium:

**Energy conference on South-East Europe "Energy without Frontiers - from national to regional approach", 30 November 2010, Sofia, Bulgaria - prior information from the Republic of Bulgaria**

On 30 November 2010 on the initiative of the Republic of Bulgaria, an international energy forum will be held in Sofia on the subject of "Energy without Frontiers - from national to regional approach" with the participation of high-level government representatives from the countries of South-East Europe (SEE), EU Member States and other countries. In the desire that the initiative will become a broad-based platform for discussion, directors of the Energy Community Secretariat and of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), representatives of the European institutions, as well as high-level representatives of various organisations, countries, private companies in the energy sector and other interested parties have been invited to take part in the event.

In the context of consolidation of the integration of the national energy markets into a common European liberalised and competitive market, the aim of the energy conference is to give active support to cooperation in South-East Europe and to make the process of planning and developing the energy infrastructure in the region an integral part of that region.
As part of the conference, it is planned to hold a meeting of ministers from the SEE countries, during which Bulgaria will launch an initiative on the joint elaboration of a ten-year plan for developing networks for electrical energy and natural gas in the region in accordance with the European legislative acts on the liberalisation of the EU's internal market. The accent will be on the possibilities for setting up a European fund for energy infrastructure and on strengthening the cooperation between the EU and the international financial institutions in order to secure investments and financial means for developing the necessary infrastructure on the basis of the ten-year plan. An important element is the need to foster cooperation between the Regulatory Board of the Energy Community and ACER on the coordination of measures on establishing a specific regulatory framework which contributes to the effective functioning of the integration of the regional market. During the meeting a joint declaration will be adopted on the basis of the agreement reached.

A further priority for the successful implementation of the initiative is the proper functioning of the common regional platform - the energy community which can provide support at regional level to the States' efforts to achieve security of supply and to develop an integrated energy market in South-East Europe. In order to speed up the work on implementing the proposed initiative, the first meeting of the working groups set up will take place at the beginning of 2011 in Bulgaria and the steps for launching the process will be set out.

In addition to the planned ministerial meeting, the programme for the energy conference also includes four thematic sessions in the framework of which it is planned to hold general discussions on ways of guaranteeing energy security: the security of energy supplies in the SEE; the energy infrastructure of the SEE - an integral part of the common European infrastructure; nuclear energy - option for the SSE; renewable energy sources - possibilities for greater energy independence.

The proposed initiative may also serve as a unique basis for a prior exchange of views at regional level on the proposals submitted by the Commission mid-November 2010 on the priorities for the EU's energy infrastructure in the next two decades.