

COMMUNICATING EUROPE

MAKING THE EU

UNDERSTANDABLE



3rd Training in Kyiv at “Communicating Europe – Making the EU Understandable” Summary on “European Energy Union – legislation, policy and EU institutions’ communication – case study of an energy legislation”

Lecture given by Pavol Szalai, Editor at EURACTIV Slovakia,
Kyiv, 15 September 2017

The lecture was divided into two parts. Part I dubbed “Energy Union and Nord Stream 2” focused on the current political and economic debate on the Nord Stream 2 project with particular attention paid to the role of Ukraine. Part II was a mini-simulation of communication on the revision of Security of Gas Supply Regulation from the point of view of EU’s three main institutional actors.

Part I started with the explanation of the five dimensions of the European Energy Union and their relation to Ukraine. Together with the attendees, I analyzed the link between the Energy Union and Nord Stream 2, both from the view of the European Commission and Gazprom. We looked into the arguments against Nord Stream 2 from the Visegrad Group and into their evolution between September 2015 and March 2016. Further on, I described the legal debate between national and European regulators as well as the political developments in Poland, Nordic states and in the United States. The shift in Slovakia’s attitude from defiance to accommodation deserved special attention. Finally, I described the Commission’s efforts to obtain a negotiation mandate on Nord Stream 2 together with efforts for a possible compromise solution involving Member States and European, Ukrainian and Russian companies. Building on the exchange held during the lecture, we then discussed various issues including the political vs. legal dimension of the Energy Union, its main actors, the role of non-EU countries, the objective vs. process logic and the relation with Nord Stream 2. Given the strategic importance of gas transit for Ukraine and the newsworthy topic of Nord Stream 2, the attendees participated actively asking questions and expressing their views.

Part II was dedicated to an interactive exercise whose main objective was to improve the understanding of the role of EU’s main institutions via a role-playing around a newsworthy issue related to the Energy Union and to Ukraine. Indeed, in the same week as the lecture took place, the revised Security of Gas Supply Regulation was approved by the plenary of the European Parliament and served as an excellent case study. First, I explained the political and legal context of the revision. Second, EU’s legal proceedings for a regulation were described and the attendees were divided into three groups representing the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. Third, the attendees read a text explaining the proposal for revision and the amendments presented by the three institutions. The participants were asked to draft a press release announcing their position to the revision. Fourth, the three groups presented their respective positions. Fifth, together we analyzed the differences in the communication matching the institutional identity of each actor. The mini-simulation, which consisted of group work as well as of individual participation, was accompanied by a lively debate.

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