

The Energy Community DSO for gas Coordination Platform – 10th meeting

Minutes of the Meeting, 26 November 2020, 09:30-12:30, WebEx

As the previous meeting on 20 May 2020, the 10th DSO Platform meeting was organized virtually, due to the measures against the spread of the corona virus, and their implications to traveling limitations.

22 participants were present, representing the gas distribution system operators (DSO) from Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Serbia, together with the Energy Community Secretariat (ECS) and USAID representatives. Ms. Cegir, an ECS representative, chaired the meeting.

The first part of the meeting was dedicated to the **update on 2020 activities**: related to gas in the Energy Community (secondary legislation implementing the various aspects of the Third Energy Package, the Treaty Amendments dealing with reciprocity and MS-CP interfaces, decarbonisation agenda with a focus on methane emissions and hydrogen) and related to gas distribution in the Contracting Parties.

Many different activities have been happening at the gas market in Ukraine: in 2020 an unbundled and certified TSO started with its operation; DSOs functional unbundling was in focus; discussion and determination of balancing responsibilities and tolerances, cancelation of the PSO regulated prices for households fostering the need for smooth supplier switching and adequate supply of last resort, preparation to switch to energy units underlying still unsolved issues of reference measurement conditions, development of a new methodology for determining the losses in the distribution network, discussions on a DSO role in regards the maintenance of internal gas networks in the multistore buildings and finally, preparing for decarbonised future by pilot hydrogen projects launched by RGC.

In Georgia, main focus in 2020 was on unbundling, both of the TSO and DSOs, still at political and regulatory level, rather than on companies' level. The representative of Socar Georgia expressed the readiness, welcome by all DSO-g members, to share positive and successful experience in significant decrease of losses in a relatively short period at one of the next meetings. Georgian DSO will consult the Secretariat how to implement unbundling in practice in the next period (by end of 2021).

Unbundling, i.e. restructuring was also an important 2020 topic in Moldova, both for the TSO, but also at DSO level whereas 12 DSOs of Moldovgaz plan to merge in 1 DSO. Losses in the distribution network were also an issue, solved via discussions between ANRE and Moldovagaz, facilitated by ECS and by drafting new methodology. Moldovagaz has joined Oil and Gas Methane Partnership (OGMP) 2.0, demonstrating the voluntary dedication to address methane emissions, using the reporting framework as other 162 gas companies within UN initiative.

In Serbia, the biggest DSO, Srbijagas, launched the project of developing SCADA for distribution network. It has positive experience related to reducing losses, and to the introduction of technical standards (via IGT & DVGW project), including those related to the maintenance of internal gas networks in buildings.

USAID/Tetrattech representative, greet the group, briefly referring to the ongoing project in Ukraine, "Energy Security" with several project' lines focused on gas distribution.

Within the Part 2, Ms. Cegir presented the **activities related to methane emissions**. that the present year was a year of raising awareness about methane emissions. The Secretariat joined Methane Guiding Principles (MGP), followed the development on the EU strategy on

methane emissions, deepened the cooperation with GIE and Marcogaz organising joint trainings, promoted OGMP 2.0 reporting framework encouraging the gas companies from the CPs to join, disseminated to the gas companies all information on relevant reports and events. Among all those activities aiming to raise awareness and spread the knowledge, the core of internal ECS project on methane emissions is development of the report, which was a part of the work plan within the DSO-g TF on losses a year ago. The report aims to provide first assessment of the methane emissions by the gas operators in the Contracting Parties. The assessment will be based on the Marcogaz' methodology and questionnaires (as it was done for the EU and submitted to the EU regulatory gas forum in 2019). So far, 20 DSOs from Ukraine, and 1 DSO from Georgia submitted the data (along with 5 TSOs and 1 SSO from the CPs). It is expected that at least 1 more TSO and 1 more DSO will submit the fulfilled questionnaires by the end of the year. This report is meant as the starting point, base line in the dealing with methane emissions, thus it will include proposals for follow up. One of the follow ups will be presentation of the report to the Regulators, since one of the triggers for entire internal project was in the TF on losses and in discussions on the losses in the distribution networks in Ukraine and Moldova. Other possible follow ups might include adjustment of the reporting framework, leakage measurement, Leak Detection and Repair (LDAR) practices and plans to decrease of methane emissions.

After launching the **e-platform for gas DSOs** (<http://ecdsog.org>) in April this year, and the first wave of joining, the platform mainly served as an "info desk" where relevant documents and links were uploaded. The aim, to serve as a discussion platform, has not been yet reached. The participants gave valuable proposals how to strengthen direct communication between gas distribution system operators on different topics: cancellation of parallel ways of communication (like e-mail invitations etc), introduction of actual hot topic questions which require prompt reactions, avoiding too general topics which provoke slow or no reactions. The advice will be followed promptly – this MoM will be disseminated by e-mail (for the last time), together with repeated instructions to join the e-platform.

The discussion on **work plan for 2021** was the last part of the meeting. The formats of work were discussed (regular meetings, discussion forums at the e-platform, establishment of TFs, webinars on particular topics) as well as possible topics (country/company specific presentations, follow ups of methane emissions report, maintenance, TSO-DSO split and share of responsibilities, gas quality and hydrogen acceptance, smart metering...)
The final work plan 2021 will be discussed and determined by future communication via e-platform.