

*First Young European Leadership delegation
at the St. Gallen International Energy Forum*



Press release

In Brussels, 15 December 2014

For the first time ever, Young European Leadership (YEL) was present at the 7th St. Gallen International Energy Forum (IEF). For a day and a half, the YEL delegation was able to share its views on the future of Europe's energy policy among 150 legal experts, academics, policy-makers and young professionals. On November 27 and 28, this group discussed the outlook of pan-European energy needs and the EU Internal Energy Market. These were discussed in sessions relating to the five topics of the Forum: Energy Europe and its neighbors, The EU Internal Energy Market, Shale Gas, Energy Dispute Resolution and Swiss – EU energy relations.

The delegation of YEL sponsored by the IEF organization, was composed of four young Europeans, between the age of 24 and 26, from the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK and Greece and that are active as legal or policy-oriented young professionals in the field of oil & gas and renewables.

The delegation gained deeper insight in the most pressing energy issues, as they attended the Forum and interacted with the speakers. The entire delegation had an intense debate with Prof. Alan Riley of City University London, about the effects of Shale Gas and the viability of alternative methods of energy production like wind and solar energy.

Kevin Mendeszoon, lead delegate, was especially glad to engage with Mr. Ruben Vermeeren, Policy Officer on the EU Internal Energy Market, European Commission, and to discuss with him the completion of the EU energy single market, shale gas and energy issues under the TTIP EU-USA trade agreement. In this regard, Kevin Mendeszoon expressed concerns over possibly less quality-regulated energy entering the EU if this agreement were to go into effect.

The delegation in its entirety had high expectations of the EU-Russia relations debate between Mr. Fabrizio Barbaso, former Deputy Director General of DG Energy, European Commission, and Alexei Ispolinov, Professor and Head of International Law Department, Moscow University. EU worries over its energy dependency and Russia's shifting energy focus to Asia were broadly discussed. Later when asked about the importance of an energy union, in an interview by YEL delegate Eleni Papanikolaou, Mr. Barbaso stated that "we are moving towards an energy union, [...] more and more we understand, after [...] a number of crises, that we need to build an efficient energy system, able to cope with all challenges."

YEL delegate Alexandre Moor, a mechanical engineer by training and currently a climate change consultant, appreciated to hear the high level speeches on Energy Dispute Resolution from the Hon. Judge Mr. Arabadjiev, Court of Justice of the European Union, and other arbitration experts. "I learned a lot about this topic, of which I knew very little, but this has given me great insight into the purely legal side of energy disputes."

The Forum was highly informative and triggered the delegation to think about today's difficult issues as this was well illustrated by YEL delegate Linn Taylor on the Swiss-EU discussion: "Despite well-advanced negotiations in aligning the Swiss energy policy to EU regulation, the agreements are stalled because of the EUs determination to confer the Swiss to the overarching institutional powers. The outlook on an energy agreement between Switzerland and the EU to date is rather unpromising."

The IEF was experienced as an eye-opening conference that helped the YEL delegation garner a deeper understanding of the issues and progress made in the European energy market.



About Young European Leadership

Young European Leadership (YEL) is an international nonprofit and nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering young leaders and future decision makers from Europe and beyond. YEL aims to inspire these leaders from all backgrounds to shape the future of Europe, fostering innovative solutions to local and global challenges. To realize its mission YEL organizes engaging events and makes international conferences accessible to its members. Thereby YEL provides direct opportunities for young people to connect with senior decision makers and experts to raise their concerns and present innovative solutions.

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