

PRESS RELEASE

Energy: The EU, Italy and the Balkans get closer in 2020

the second edition of the Know-How Exchange Programme (KEP) project on the issues of energy integration in the Balkans was concluded today in Rome with the regulators of Italy, Albania, Montenegro and Serbia. Saglia: "there are further prospects with the entry of Bulgaria and Northern Macedonia in 2020"

Rome, 27 November 2019 - With the last of the 4 technical seminars and the closing ceremony, today the second phase of the KEP Project (Know-How Exchange Programme - central European Initiative Support for Strengthening Energy Regulatory Authorities in the Western Balkans) was concluded in Rome, announcing that for 2020 a new phase has been financed that will also include Bulgaria and the Republic of Northern Macedonia.

The project, launched by ARERA (The Italian Regulatory Authority for Energy, Networks and Environment) as part of the CEI/EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) Programme - at the request of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) and the International Organization, the Central European Initiative (CEI) - envisaged technical cooperation with the regulators of Albania, Montenegro and Serbia.

Focused on the implementation of market coupling mechanisms in the countries of the Balkans, in order to promote the creation of a regional electricity market and its integration with the single European market (within the framework of the *Western Balkans 6 Process*), the project has developed from 2017 to today through specific ARERA resolutions and periodic meetings in the different countries. The final phase of the project focused on the concrete measures that Balkan regulators will have to take to comply with the EU regulatory framework on capacity allocation.

The InCE - intergovernmental forum for regional cooperation, made up of 10 EU members and 8 non-EU members, which represents an opportunity for non-European member countries belonging to the Balkan area to acquire Community standards - announced on this occasion that for 2020 the new request for funding was approved and that Northern Macedonia and Bulgaria will be included in the project, considering that the existing coupling project between these two countries could provide further opportunities for exchange in the Balkans.

Representatives of the Ministries of Economic Development and Foreign Affairs, embassies, network and market operators of the beneficiary countries and representatives of the financial world participated in the closing ceremony, which was opened and concluded on behalf of the ARERA board by Clara Poletti and Stefano Saglia.

For Stefano Saglia "a new phase of the project, confirmed today for 2020, will consolidate the results achieved thus far and, with the participation of Bulgaria and Northern Macedonia, will provide further prospects in the energy field for the Balkans. The interconnection cable between Italy and Montenegro, recently inaugurated, is the symbol of a new integration of the Balkan and European energy markets that can only be enriched by continuing information exchange projects, such as KEP."