Paris Energy Club
Autumn Meeting

Thursday 13 November 2025

Summary minutes of the meeting

Session 1: Energy Politics Across the Atlantic: Green Deal vs. Drill, Baby, Drill

The return of Donald Trump to the presidency has significantly reshaped the parameters of transatlantic energy relations. The Trump II administration is characterized by an assertive pursuit of energy independence, expanded reliance on fossil fuels, and a retreat from regulatory constraints. Such priorities stand in marked contrast to the European Union's Green Deal agenda and its institutional commitment to rapid decarbonization. The European Union advances an accelerated timetable for decarbonization, while the United States under Trump emphasizes traditional energy dominance.

This duality produces an uneven pattern of convergence and divergence across specific policy domains. However, Member States within the Union also perceive the Trump administration's policies through distinct national energy interests. Some governments prioritize affordable American LNG, whereas others highlight the costs of weakened climate ambition. Nevertheless, structural interdependencies in energy security continue to link the two partners.

The energy world is split between "PetroStates" (i.e., the US, Russia, Saudi Arabia) favoring fossil fuels and "ElectroStates" (i.e., EU nations, China) advancing renewable energy technologies such as solar, EVs, and batteries. The US focuses on increasing fossil fuel production and exports to maintain geopolitical influence, while Europe depends on US LNG to reduce reliance on Russian gas. China dominates clean energy industries, holding control over critical minerals and battery production.

The US administration emerging energy narrative, supported by Chris Wright, US Energy Secretary, emphasizes addition rather than transition - rejecting notions like peak oil, reaffirming support for America's "beautiful clean coal," resisting global carbon-tax frameworks such as the IMO's NZF, and defining energy broadly to include all traditional and alternative resources except wind and solar.

With the Turnberry Agreement, President Trump has used tariffs to pressure countries into buying US LNG considering their massive investments in their capacity. The question is whether Europe can afford to swap reliance on Russian pipelines for reliance on US tankers especially if future energy demand remains uncertain. Even if the initiative AggregateEU supports a more coordinated purchase of natural gas at European level, it is still challenging to forecast demand in the long run.

Additionally, Qatar, another key LNG exporter, has issued warnings against stringent EU sustainability regulations that could disrupt gas supplies to Europe. A potential way out for Europe is to consider China as a supplier of LNG as they design a new industry for exports. But Europe would need to design a stable strategy to support its credibility and attract foreign investors. One participant stated that Europe should consider collaborating with Canada, Australia, and Japan to reduce its dependence on China.

One participant indicated that rising global dependence on natural gas creates new vulnerabilities, including pricing fluctuations due to industrial users or cold weather, impacts on electricity prices, shipping route bottlenecks, health, safety, and environmental hazards.

Questions were also raised regarding the ability of the US to manage its new LNG strategy. Over the past decade, affordable US LNG exports have facilitated a global shift from coal and mitigated the geopolitical risks of fossil fuel imports from Russia and the Middle East. Today, the US is the world's leading producer of natural gas and largest LNG exporter.

"PetroStates" may cling to pricing power and fossil revenues, but "ElectroStates" are capturing the commanding heights of industrial technology and green influence. Both camps are internally fractured, but it is the scale, speed, and state coordination - especially in China - that may ultimately determine the balance of power in the post-hydrocarbon global order.

World Energy Outlook 2025

Sizing the opportunity of IEA's 2025 World Energy Outlook released just the day before the meeting of the Paris Energy Club, the participants discussed main findings of the new edition up to 2050.

One of the notable new features of 2025 WEO edition is the return of the Current Policies Scenario (CPS), which had been discontinued since 2019. According to this scenario, global oil demand will not peak in the 30s but will continue to grow until 2050. For the IEA, the CPS provides a contrasting perspective, essential to illustrate the consequences of political inaction. By bringing this scenario back to the forefront, the IEA highlights the dangers of maintaining the status quo: without accelerating decarbonization and the energy transition, energy security (even on critical materials dominated by China) and climate issues will become critical. If current policies remain unchanged, the world could face a temperature rise of nearly 3°C by 2100, incompatible with international climate targets.

Oil and natural gas demand is expected to continue to grow until 2050. Should such prospect materialize, higher upstream investments (around 25 Mb/d of new oil projects by 2035) and higher prices (approximately 10% higher than in the STEPS- Stated Policies Scenarios - for oil in 2035) are needed in order to maintain market balance.

Electricity demand is expected to grow at much faster than overall energy use in all scenarios. Such development will require many conditions to be met to make electricity supply secure and affordable, among which the development of energy storage at reasonable cost.

In all scenarios, renewables are the fastest-growing energy source, led by solar. Most of the energy demand growth - 80% - comes from regions with abundant sunshine.

Drastic policy shifts in the US are having an impact, with 30% less installed renewable energy capacity projected by 2035 in this year's STEPS compared to last year's, and 60% fewer electric vehicles (EVs) on the road. The Trump Administration has slashed support for clean energy in the US, notably by removing tax credits for wind and solar power.

The momentum behind renewable energy and EVs make a peak in global fossil fuel demand highly likely over the coming years. Under STEPS, global demand for both coal and oil peaks around 2030, while demand for gas peaks by 2035. Historically, wind and solar have grown faster than previous iterations of this scenario, as technological progress outpaced policy.

The IEA is clear that despite having the word "current" in its name, CPS is not business as usual. It assumes that governments do not enact their stated policies and clean technology deployment flatlines.

In the net zero scenario, no new coal, oil, and gas fields are needed, and some close early. While some countries are deprioritizing emissions goals, the WEO shows that renewables are not just the green choice but the safe, cheap choice, particularly for net importer countries.

Session 2: Public Acceptance as a Pillar of Energy Transition

The session discussed the critical role of public acceptance in the energy transition, emphasizing how opposition to energy projects - whether fossil fuels, nuclear, or renewables - can significantly delay or block developments. Resistance to such projects stems from environmental, community, economic, political, and equity concerns, such as disruption of ecosystems, land use conflicts, fears of job losses, and distrust in developers.

For renewable energy projects, opposition often arises due to factors such as land use impacts, noise, visual changes, and inadequate community benefits, particularly in rural or marginalized areas. To address these challenges, there is a need for equitable benefit-sharing, inclusive participation, and effective communication strategies. It stresses that the energy transition is not just a technical issue but a societal one, requiring a focus on societal values, behaviors, and ethical considerations. Engaging communities early in the process and emphasizing social sciences are key to ensuring successful adoption of renewable energy systems.

Examples of local project acceptance were also discussed ; closure of the Groningen gas field in the Netherlands due to earthquakes, as well as the map of protest votes in France, which overlaps with the map of renewable energy projects perceived as rural industrialization for the benefit of cities.

It was also highlighted that investment in networks (interconnections, storage) remains critical for reaping the full benefits of renewable energy installations. The panel discussions also underlined the need of having a global approach to climate change mitigation : given the marginal cost of addressing global warming in advanced economies, it would be reasonable to invest in nations where emissions are much higher.

Session 3: The Revival of Nuclear Energy: Challenges and Opportunities

Amid the global energy transition and shifting geopolitical order, Western countries are reconsidering nuclear power with China and Russia taking the lead in global nuclear expansion. Although US nuclear output is projected to grow, the sector faces major hurdles: uncertain construction plans, regulatory ambiguity, and unclear policy direction under the Trump administration. Still, rising electricity demand from the tech sector—along with partnerships between major digital companies and small modular reactor (SMR) developers—could accelerate a US nuclear resurgence (e.g. Google and NextEra Energy restart the Duane Arnold nuclear power plant in Iowa). One participant indicated that combining nuclear power with AI and digital twins could offer a winning formula.

Europe, where nuclear energy still provides 24% of electricity, is constrained by cautious EU-level policies and regulatory barriers, despite proactive national strategies and strengthening industrial capabilities. The formation of the EU Nuclear Alliance signals greater coordination, with France at the political center but struggling to rebuild its weakened industrial base. Unlike in the United States, Europe's stagnant electricity demand makes investment decisions more difficult, even as system reliability concerns grow.

As far as nuclear fuel is concerned, current uranium production is no longer sufficient to meet global demand. Stockpiles and secondary sources are being depleted, and because uranium-producing countries are not the same as uranium-consuming countries, the entire nuclear fuel cycle has become highly internationalized. Although identified recoverable uranium resources—about 8 million tonnes—could meet projected demand until around 2050, even under high-growth scenarios, doing so will require significant investment. By 2090, meeting demand would require mining nearly all known global uranium resources, including those in the highest-cost category.

The limited number of companies providing uranium conversion and enrichment services also presents a major vulnerability. Rising global demand and geopolitical tensions further expose weaknesses in the nuclear fuel supply chain. At the same time, the emergence of small modular reactors (SMRs) and advanced reactor designs—many of which depend on specialized fuels—is reshaping fuel requirements. Planning must therefore consider the unique needs of these new technologies.

After more than two decades of stagnation, more than 40 countries integrate nuclear energy in their strategy, and approximately 70 GW of new capacity is under construction. Investment in both large reactors and SMRs is

accelerating, driven by concerns over energy security and growing electricity demand from energy-intensive sectors such as data centers. SMRs have become symbols of hope for a broader nuclear revival in the West, encouraging innovation and investment. SMRs success, however, will depend on Europe's ability to harmonize regulations, develop financing tools, and involve industrial end-users. At the same time, Europe must prioritize extending and optimizing its current reactor fleet to reduce costs. Ultimately, the future of Western nuclear power—large reactors and SMRs alike—will hinge on strong public-private partnerships especially regarding CAPEX (e.g. South Carolina's state-owned electric and water utility selects Brookfield to complete 2 AP1000s at VC Summer), sustained innovation funding, and transforming nuclear construction into a more standardized, industrialized process (e.g. such as AP1000 design for large reactors in the U.S.) to ensure predictable, cost-effective project delivery. Still, the best subsidy remains the size of the market.

In this evolving landscape, nuclear fuel reprocessing and recycling play an increasingly important role in enhancing long-term sustainability and supply resilience.

Session 4: Climate Finance at the Crossroads: Bridging the Global Financing Gap

The session went through a detailed overview of the challenges and opportunities in financing clean energy transitions, with a particular focus on emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs).

Global energy investment is projected to reach $2.2 trillion in 2025, with a significant portion directed toward clean energy technologies. However, this growth is heavily concentrated in developed economies, especially China, while EMDEs - most notably in Africa - continue to lag far behind. Although EMDEs account for 60% of the world's population, they receive just 20% of global clean energy investment. Africa's share is even more disproportionate: only 2%, despite being home to 20% of the global population.

High financing costs - often twice as high as in advanced economies - represent a major barrier to clean energy deployment in EMDEs. These costs make up the largest share of overall project expenses in these regions. International financial institutions currently provide about $32 billion per year for energy projects, more than 70% of which support clean energy. Yet mobilizing private capital remains extremely difficult, particularly in the least developed countries where private investment levels are minimal.

Several successful approaches demonstrate how new financing structures can unlock clean energy investment:

1. Viet Nam has issued green bonds for rooftop solar projects, supported by partial guarantees and technical assistance;
2. Nigeria has established InfraCredit to provide local currency guarantees, effectively mobilizing substantial funding for clean energy projects through blended finance mechanisms;

To bridge the financing gap and accelerate clean energy transitions in EMDEs, the following actions were highlighted as essential:

- implement strong enabling policies to attract both domestic and international investment;
- engage local institutional investors and promote knowledge-sharing initiatives;
- use aggregation models to pool smaller, riskier projects into investment-ready portfolios;
- deploy guarantees and risk-mitigation tools to encourage greater private sector participation.

The most recent remarks proposed augmenting the efforts of multilateral investment banks with sovereign wealth funds. Meanwhile, Africa is facing challenges as the rest of the world pressures it to curtail its oil and gas activities, despite the fact that this is its primary source of revenue. Faced with these challenges, Africa intends to establish its own bank to fund all of these energy projects.

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