

ELECTRICAL INTERCONNECTIONS IN THE FRAME OF A EURO-MED SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FUTURE: Towards concrete implementation

29-30 September 2016, Hotel Le Palace, Gammarth – Tunisia

Press Release

Under the high patronage of the Tunisian Ministry of Energy, Mines and Renewable Energy, OME organized jointly with STEG, on 29-30 September 2016 in Tunis, a conference under the theme: "ELECTRICAL INTERCONNECTIONS IN THE FRAME OF A EURO-MED SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FUTURE: TOWARDS CONCRETE IMPLEMENTATION"

The presentations and discussions were preceded by a high level opening session with the exceptional participation of the Tunisian Minister of Energy, Mines and Renewable Energies Mrs. Héla Cheikhrouhou, the representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) and Chairman of the Committee on Industry, Energy and Environment of the Tunisian Assembly of Representatives, Mr Ameur Larayedh, the Vice-President of OME and CEO of STEG, Mr. Ameur Bchir, the President of the OME, Mr. Bruno Lescoeur, the Deputy Secretary General of the UfM Mr. Jorge Borrego, and the Head of Unit of the Directorate General for Energy (DG ENER) of the European Commission Mr. Hans Van Steen.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Renewable Energy Ms. Hela Cheikhrouhou, after welcomed the participants, congratulated the OME for such an important initiative, underlining how energy is a key driver of cooperation and solidarity among countries of the Mediterranean region, and stressing how strategic is the role of the Tunisia-Italy interconnection to foster regional integration of energy systems.

President Lescoeur and the CEO of STEG Mr. Bchir put the accent on benefits related to transnational interconnections both in terms of mutual solidarity in the Mediterranean area and economic advantages of a more complete integration of energy systems across the region.

The objective of the conference was to discuss ways to strengthen the electrical interconnections as vector of solidarity, energy cooperation, inter-regional and intra-regional integration among Mediterranean countries, as clearly pointed out during the introduction to the conference by the Director General of OME, Dr Houda Ben Jannet Allal, which presented the regional energy perspectives discussing related challenges and opportunities with Mr. Ridha Ben Mosbah, Economic Advisor to the Presidency of the Tunisian Government.

Then the conference was articulated in three round tables respectively focusing on (i) regional and sub-regional electricity systems, a cross-cutting analysis, (ii) demand-supply unbalances and the role of interconnections, (iii) the Italy-Tunisia interconnection in the light of the experience of other interconnection projects. Many stakeholders took part actively to the discussion, as the Arab Union of Electricity (AUE), the Tunisian *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*, COMELEC, DG Energy of the European Commission, ELMED, ENEL, ENGIE, MEDTSO, ONEE, STEG, TERNA, TRACTEBEL, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the World Bank.

In this respect, the conference contributed to bring together and share point of views of different and diversified stakeholders, on the feedback from existing interconnections experiences and future projects, notably the Tunisia – Italy interconnection, which received support from donors, including the European Commission, that may include it in the list of Projects of Common Interest (PCI) given the strategic and structuring aspect of the project.

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