PRESS RELEASE

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GCC and EU experts sharing policies and practices for electricity interconnections and renewables integration

The **EU-GCC Clean Energy Technology Network** and **the GCC Interconnection Authority** (GCCIA) organised a two-day **high level workshop on Electricity Interconnections and Trading** in Manama, Bahrain on **21 and 22 May 2017**. The meeting aimed to seek the views of key stakeholders on the actions that would be of greatest value to the EU and the Gulf region in promoting interconnections, renewables integration and market trading. Furthermore, the workshop has been an opportunity for policy makers and technical experts from the GCC and EU Countries to learn from each other in supporting, deploying, and implementing large scale renewable projects.

During the opening ceremony, addresses were made by **H.E. Shaikh Nawaf Bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa**, GCCIA Chairman and CEO of Electricity and Water Authority in Bahrain, **Ms Lucie Berger** Head of Trade Section at the EU Delegation to KSA and the Gulf. H.E. **Mohammed Al Mahrouqi** CEO of the Oman Public Authority for Electricity and Water also participated in the workshop providing an insight in the Oman strategy and planning for renewables and the power sector, Mr. **Frank Wouters**, Director of the EU GCC Clean Energy Technology Network and **Mr. Ahmed Ali Al-Ebrahim,** CEO of GCCIA chaired two panel discussion sessions. During the 2nd day, **H.E Dr. Abdullah Al-Shehri**, Governor of Electricity & Co-Generation Regulatory Authority (ECRA) in Saudi Arabia highlighted the institutional and regulatory frameworks requirements for creating GCC energy trading market.

The meeting gathered more than 45 distinguished experts from the EU and the GCC, representing at a high level the European Commission, the GCC IA, the EU GCC Clean Energy Technology Network, the GCC Secretariat General, the Electricity & Co-Generation Regulatory Authority of KSA, the Ministry of Energy of UAE, ENTSO-E, EUROPEX, Dii, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, Masdar Co, ACWA Power, Poyry, Nord Pool as well as other leading public and private sector representatives.

''With growing consumption of electricity and water being the highest in the world, as a result of increased industrial development and population growth, the GCC states have affirmed the need to look for alternative sources for energy to fuel their economies. In a major shift in power sector policy, by 2030 the GCC region aims to replace up to 50 % of its dependence on traditional fossil fuels with eco-friendly Nuclear and renewable energy, coupled with reforms of government-based subsidies on fuel, thus providing multi-billion savings to all GCC states over the next 20 years'' H.E. Shaikh Nawaf Bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, GCCIA Chairman.

"Increased electricity co-operation and trading between countries can enhance energy security, bring economy-of-scale in investments, enable greater renewables penetration and allow synergistic sharing of complementary resources. Europe has a lot of lessons learnt and practices to share from its electricity interconnections experience and from the design and operation of its internal electricity market. The EU GCC Clean Energy Technology Network is a mechanism that can facilitate this interaction and exchange among the two regions" said Lucie Berger representing the EU Delegation.

"The European electricity system and market allows customers to purchase green electricity across borders, a key element of a smart, cost-effective and resilient energy system. The EU GCC Clean Energy Technology Network is ready to work with the GCCIA and other key stakeholders in the Gulf to transfer the European learnings and best practices to the GCC." notes Frank Wouters, Director of the EU GCC Clean Energy Technology Network.

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