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What role for renewable energy in the international law?

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Research question

To what extent renewable energy is in need of a legal global international/European framework in order to guarantee its contribution to sustainable development?

- International legal framework
- EU legal framework
- Case study: Central Asia
International framework

- Climate change negotiations / United Nations

- International Renewable Energy Agency / International Energy Agency

- World Bank / World Trade organization
European Union

- The EU needs to find energy alternatives to produce low-carbon energy to reduce GHG emissions

Internal energy policy: Renewable energy within the EU’s energy internal market

External energy policy: EU’s energy dependency

- The Lisbon Treaty: Art.194 TFEU (EU’s powers to develop an energy policy)
EU internal policy: Directive 2009/28/EU, Common framework for the promotion of energy from renewable sources

- Reduce GHG 20% below 1990 levels (30%-50%-80%) by 2020
- Improve energy efficiency up to 20% by 2020
- Increase the share of energy from renewable sources up to 20% by 2020
  - EU/national global progressive targets
  - Submission of National Renewable Energy Action Plan
  - Flexibility measures: Statistical transfers / Joint projects between member States & with third countries
EU’s external policy

• Fossil Fuel dependency 2009: EU only produces 48% of its energy needs & imports 52% (70% 2030)
  • Oil imports 83’5% (94% 2030)
  • Gas imports 64’2% (84% 2030)
• Few suppliers:
  • Oil: OPEC (35%), Russia (33%), Norway (15%)
  • Gas: Russia (34%), Norway (31%), Algeria & others (35%)
EU’s external policy


Central Asia: transit route for oil & gas + “The essential neighbours of the EU Neighbourhood countries” (EU Commission)
Co-operation EU / Central Asian States

- Access to reliable and affordable energy is a prerequisite for economic development and poverty reduction
- Economic development and poverty reduction is a prerequisite for stability of the region (“ring of EU’s friends”)
- The EU explicitly acknowledges the threat posed by conflicts over resources in Central Asia

- Authoritarian character of governmental regimes
- Weak legal, social & economic framework promoting alternative/renewable energy
- Trading gas & oil for water (hydro hegemony)
- Political distrust btw Central Asian States

- Great potential in solar power, wind power, biogas, small-medium hydro power stations
- Renewable energy as a component of the country’s modernization strategy

- Measures to promote the use of renewable energy as additional sources of energy: Large infrastructures v. Community based renewable energy projects
Provisional conclusions

- Lack of teeth & focus of international legal framework
- EU’s role in fostering a transition towards a sustainable energy model
  - Need of clear and stable regulatory framework (post 2020), linked to renewable resources availability & technological capacity and taking into account the social & economic environment + political will
- Energy dependency v. energy security
  - EU has a role to play in Central Asia development and Central Asia has a role to play in EU energy supply
  - The EU needs to double its efforts in an extremely difficult political setting
  - The EU Strategy for Central Asia lacks of genuine implementation and positive results (the “dark side of Europeanization”)
Thank you very much for your attention