



16+1 Business Forum | Conference | Fair

Over the course of three days, more than 400 participants, ministers, official delegations and ambassadors from China and Central and Eastern Europe, high-level representatives of the European Union, industry representatives and key executives met in Bucharest during the **First Edition of the 16+1 Business Forum, Conference and Fair**. Organized by the **Romanian Energy Center (CRE)** under the auspices of the **Center for Dialogue and Cooperation on Energy Projects (CDCEP16+1)** in collaboration with the National Energy Administration (NEA), China Electricity Council (CEC) and the Energy Power Planning and Engineering Institute (EPPEI) of People's Republic of China, the event welcomed the support of the Romanian Ministries of Energy and Foreign Affairs.

The 16+1 Energy Forum attempted to complement the existing political agenda with a business approach, bringing together decision makers, political elites from China and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and key representatives of the business communities, towards a clean, affordable and available energy future. On this occasion, political representatives of 15 CEEC and China met with companies representing a wide range of fields of the energy sector: electricity (production, transport, distribution, and supply), oil and gas, nuclear, coal, hydro power, renewable energy sources, energy services and technology producers as well as legal services. The agenda covered these thematic areas from the point of view of energy security, climate change, costs, safety and energy efficiency.

The overall atmosphere of the 16+1 Energy Forum was positive towards increasing the cooperation between the CEE region and China. Leaders highlighted the huge cooperation potential between the two regions, opportunity which should not be missed and capitalized upon in the aftermath of this event. "Further advancement of the 16+1 cooperation is conducive to more balanced cooperation between China and Europe and can bring new vitality into the development of global economy", stated **H.E. Mr. Nur Bekri, Vice Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission and Administrator of the National Energy Administration, P.R. China**. Constructive dialogue among all stakeholders should be encouraged, with best practices to be made available for interested parties. Together with governments, companies are also keen to develop an effective dialogue. Further cooperation would entail market analysis and overview regional and national legislative particularities. A very important trigger for deepening the dialogue is the research of regulatory and legal aspects and procedures across the CEE markets. CEE companies have been invited to share relevant information with their Chinese counterparts, so to progress on this initiative.

The event placed high expectations on the Center for Dialogue and Cooperation on Energy Projects. Top executives from both regions consider that cooperation between China and the CEE region will be more powerful through projects like CDCEP 16+1, which is a good mechanism of communication and engagement and a useful investment platform. Overall, CDCEP 16+1 is considered to having a huge potential for new projects and collaboration, yet a few obstacles have been identified, among which language barriers, currency risks and the PPA payment guarantees.

Another important element and subject for debate was the topic of financing and investment. Whilst all agreed that investments and network development is important, also for improving the

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relationship with the customer, a clear message was sent in the sense that the investment climate is hard to be predicted for the next years. Infrastructure is on the wish list of governments with clear focus being directed towards diversification of transport routes and sources (e.g. Black Sea for Romania). Investments are also required for developing new technology in order to increase production and efficiency. Chinese companies communicated their strong interest in investing both time and money and their commitment to further develop the relationship with companies from Romania and the CEE region.

“The 16+1 project is expected to bring win-win situations for investments and financial aid, an initiative linking the Chinese dream with the dreams of people of other countries and act as an innovative model for friendly cross-region cooperation”, declared administrator Nur Bekri. Further, according to His Excellency, the CDCEP 16+1 initiative draws the blueprint for future practical energy cooperation, aiming to build a road of cooperation, hope and mutual benefit by promoting the connectivity of policy, infrastructure, trade, finance and people to people contact.

Speakers and participants extensively covered the topic of technology, innovation and transfer of know-how, as well as training. Companies stated their openness in sharing their best practices and experience, the technology transfer occurring frequently between regions (migrating technology). The Chinese energy technology is on top position in the world, thus their experience and lessons learned bringing benefits to the CEE countries, especially regarding RES and nuclear power. Promotion of mutual knowledge and identification of new ways of cooperation are key takeaways of this 16+1 Forum.

All of the above are crucial in building strong relations with the consumer, which is placed at the center of the future energy sector. Energy should be available everywhere and to everyone. Participants believe that regional cooperation is advantageous for consumers as it lowers prices, increases security and improves the quality of services. The scope is to address vulnerable consumers and mitigate energy poverty. Also, Participants also encourage customers to engage with their energy providers.

Overall, participants expressed their willingness to identify common points and subjects and that Chinese companies will find serious partners in the CEE region. **Mr. Corneliu Bodea, President of the Romanian Energy Center** and host of this first edition of the 16+1 Business Forum, Conference and Fair assured the audience that the event represents the first step of the thousand miles journey, the beginning of the activity holding many opportunities ahead on the road towards cooperation and dialogue between CEEC and China. Moreover, the Chinese delegation offered a valuable insight on doing politics in China, namely the resilience of Chinese companies which are willing to continue the process of developing projects. “Our chance is to build on medium and long term”, further declared Mr. Bodea.

Furthermore, administrator Bekri proposed that the Chinese-CEEC cooperation focus on three main aspects: enhancing mutual understanding, strengthening strategy coordination and building model projects. “**Firstly, to enhance mutual understanding**, Central and Eastern European countries lack systematic knowledge about China’s energy development and its capability. Likewise, China is willing to learn more about the energy policies and markets in Central and Eastern European countries.



Therefore, we should promote dialogue and communication between governments, businesses and think tanks from both sides in areas like energy policies, technology innovation, project development and standards alignment by making good use of the CDCEP16+1. As a result, we can enhance mutual understanding and lay solid foundation for expanding practical cooperation. **Secondly, to strengthen strategy coordination**, China and Europe have reached important consensus on the “Belt & Road” Initiative and European Development Plan, international production capacity cooperation and European Investment Plan, “16+1 cooperation” and China-Europe cooperation. In the energy field, NEA of China has published *Vision and Actions on Energy Cooperation in Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road* with seven cooperation focuses including promoting policy communication, trade facilitation, energy investment cooperation and connectivity of energy infrastructure. China is willing to strengthen energy development strategies coordination with other countries so as to achieve common development and prosperity. **Thirdly, to build model projects**, China has complete and mature energy industrial system, technology and equipment manufacturing capability and full industry chain advantages; Central and Eastern European countries are now at a critical time of energy development and infrastructure improvement, so two sides have high cooperation complementarities. China is willing to work with Central and Eastern European countries to build more model projects in the fields of nuclear power, grid inter-connectivity, clean coal, hydro and solar power based on our advantages and industrial features so as to carry out deeper, wider bilateral and multilateral cooperation.”

The wellbeing of citizens, industrial competitiveness and economic development need clean, efficient and available energy, uninterruptedly supplied. The global trends, as well as implicit challenges, which highly impact the way energy is being produced and delivered to our consumers and businesses can be met through partnership, by working together and building a common pool of know-how and institutional capacity, mutually beneficial. Energy is a global issue with regional solutions. CDCEP 16+1’s main goal is to create a dynamic communication and advisory platform, aimed to openly bridge the two regions and their energy policies and markets. Hosting the event was an honor for Romania and offered hope that our country is capable of maintaining regional dialogue on energy related issues as well as developing regional cooperation with China.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Bodea stated that “this was the first step of a longer journey, a first step that we will consolidate together”.

With clear and firm objectives in mind and openness for this cooperation format, CDCEP16+1 closed the First edition of the 16+1 Business Forum, Conference and Fair, looking at a bright future ahead.