

**Opening address by John Chadjivassiliadis, Chairman of IENE,
in the 9th SEEED, Thessaloniki, 29 and 30 of June 2016
*“The Quest for a New Energy Balance”***

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of IENE I wish to welcome you to the 9th South East Europe Energy Dialogue in Thessaloniki.

The special theme of the Dialogue this year is the **“Quest for a New Energy Balance”** signifying the rebalancing now taking place in the global and regional energy markets with new challenges in the energy sector, towards the sustainable development.

Emphasis is placed on energy security as the European Energy Union will ensure that Europe has secure, affordable and climate-friendly energy. It is stated that “Wiser energy use while fighting Climate Change is both a spur for new jobs and growth and an investment in Europe's future”.

Renewables and natural gas will become the main energy sources during the 21st century, while electricity and natural gas systems main energy carriers, towards zero or low CO2 emissions. Further expansion of their use and domination during the 21st century should be expected. Both of these energy sources are considered critical to infrastructures for the economy and our modern society and thus, the security of energy supply is of high priority.

In our region, the SE Europe, the gas system is a new energy carrier in comparison with the electricity system and natural gas as a new energy source is characterised by poor or lack of infrastructures. The penetration rate of natural gas in the region is much lower than in other European countries, due to the region's infrastructure deficit. Therefore, an expansion of the gas infrastructures and storage and LNG facilities with diversification of suppliers is absolutely necessary for an increasing market in the region.

Significant amounts of natural gas, with supplies coming mainly through imports, are used for power generation, in parallel with high penetration of renewables. The advanced technologies and the high efficiency of gas in power generation are very attractive for the investors. Moreover, new gas uses in transport and shipping should be considered.

Today, we are moving towards a more interconnected Europe and a single European market. Thus, more and stronger interconnected transmission lines

are needed in the region for the balance of power generation and demand and for the operation of the market.

The vision for clean electricity will be based on the high penetration of renewables in power generation. Our region has a great potential of renewables and their penetration progressively into the electricity networks is a big challenge. New concepts and innovative technologies should be introduced in the electricity networks towards the networks of the 21st century to integrate and manage the high penetration of renewables.

In IENE, by organizing this “SE Europe Energy Dialogue” we aspire to contribute to a high level fruitful discussion on the region’s key energy issues. The main objective is the exchange of information and ideas, networking and the development of co-operation for the tackling of the increased global and regional energy and environmental challenges.

From our site, we wish a constructive dialogue with fruitful results for a better future of the economy and the society in the region.