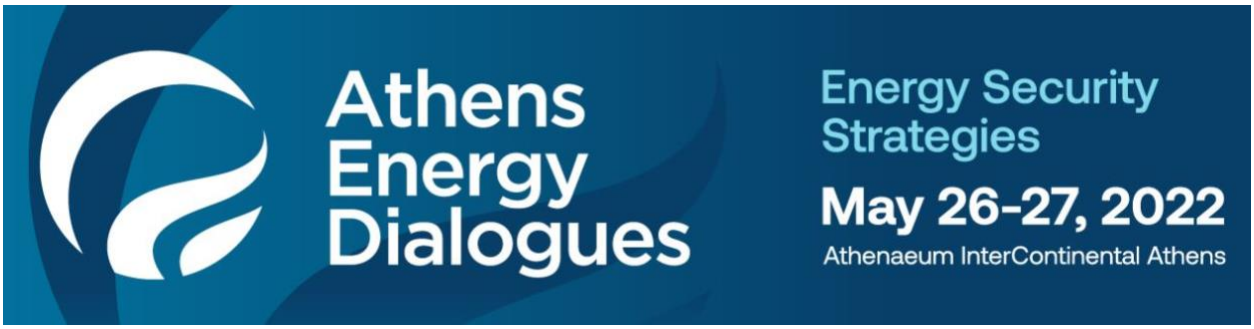


Δελτίο Τύπου

R. Baroudi (CEO Energy & Environment Holding): "Key" to Europe's energy independence, Eastern Mediterranean deposits of hydrocarbons and offshore wind farms

Αθήνα, 27.05.2022 – "Climate change and market instability are the two main parameters in recent years for the global energy market," highlighted Mr. Roudi Baroudi, CEO of Energy & Environment Holding at his speech on the second day of the 10th Athens Energy Dialogues conference on May 26-27.

According to Mr. Baroudi the goal is a new energy mix that is both environmentally sustainable and economically viable.

Another crucial point is that reliability of cleaner and greener sources are not yet sufficient to fully meet demand, and getting there will require years of planning, investment, and construction. If we take existing technologies offline before newer ones can replace them, the resulting shortages will cause prices to spike, driving up the cost of living and causing whole economies to collapse. On the other hand, if we wait too long to decarbonize the global economy, climate change threatens to inflict even greater damage.

The Russian invasion to Ukraine has changed the geopolitical status quo, according to Mr. Baroudi.

The war in Ukraine, has exposed not only Europe’s dangerous over-reliance on natural gas and other energy imports from Russia, but also the extent to which disrupting that relationship could wreak havoc around the world. Ever since Moscow launched its invasion in late February, the European Union has been hesitant to impose sanctions on Russia’s energy industry because it lacks other alternatives, and it lacks those alternatives because of a years-long hesitance to maintain a sufficiently diverse basket of sources and suppliers.

The continent also suffers from inadequate regasification capacity, which means it cannot fully replace piped gas from Russia with seaborne loads of LNG from other countries.

Mr. Baroudi highlighted that there are solutions for all of these problems, and some are already under way.
“Europe could also bolster its energy security by helping to develop the increasingly promising gas fields of the Eastern Mediterranean, the output of which could then be linked by undersea and/or overland pipeline to the European mainland. The utility of these and other moves would also be significantly enhanced by building new storage facilities for both LNG and conventional gas, which would make Europe a lot more resistant to future supply disruptions,” said Mr. Baroudi.

But most importantly in the long term, Europe needs to seize the opportunity presented by the great potential for offshore wind energy in the Mediterranean, since making full use of this potential – just in the coastal waters – could generate at least some 500 MILLION megawatts of electricity: in other words, the same as the entire global nuclear industry.

The Mediterranean region – including both its EU and non-EU components – can and should be a huge part of this drive for a dual resiliency against economic and environmental challenges alike. European investments in MENA countries’ energy output makes sense for several reasons, including lower labor and other construction costs, as well as more diversified – and therefore more reliable – energy supplies.

About a week ago, the European Commission outlined a new plan to end Europe’s dependence on Russian gas, one that envisions spending of more than 200 billion Euros over the next five years. That is a significant number, but now the plan needs to be funded.

This means that not just the EU itself but also the European Investment Bank, the World Bank, and the IMF – all need to open up their vaults. Needless to say, the private sector would do well to get in on the action as well.

Unfortunately, it is too late to prevent war in Ukraine. But the faster Europe moves effectively to end its reliance on Russian gas, embraces closer partnership with its Mediterranean neighbors, and achieves the full independence of its foreign policy, the sooner it can help to restore the peace – and prevent similar calamities in the future.

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