

## Energy Security 2011 - Challenges of the Hungarian EU Presidency

On Friday, 7 May, the conference „Energy Security 2011 – Challenges of the Hungarian EU Presidency” was held at the Art’otel in Budapest. The event was organized by the *ICDT* and the *Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy (CEID)*, and was financed by the *National Civil Fund (NCA)*. Hungarian and international experts of the topic gathered at the half-day event to discuss the priorities of the energy security issue for the Hungarian EU presidency, scheduled for the first half of 2011. The debate aimed at analyzing the prospective challenges and the possible solutions in order to better prepare for the period.

The overall conclusion of the conference was that fostering competitiveness, sustainability and cooperation between the EU and the V4 countries are crucial for decreasing the energy dependency. The lecturers agreed that the energy security issue should be detached from security policy and an affordable level of security of supply should be assessed. The event excited a considerable interest, attracting nearly a hundred participants and a number of media appearances.

The conference was opened by *Dr. István Gyarmati*, President and CEO of the *ICDT* and *Mr. Balázs Somogyi*, Director of GE Energy Infrastructure. *Mr. Jiří Schneider*, Program Director of the Prague Security Studies Institute, presented the experiences of the Czech and Swedish presidencies in his keynote speech and suggested a gradual integration of the EU’s energy market.

The first panel focused on the role of EU presidencies regarding the energy security issue. *Ms. Edit Herczog*, Member of the European Parliament’s S&D fraction, highlighted the importance of the international climate treaties and the new, innovative energy infrastructure investments. *Ms. Kitti Nyitrai*, of the European Commission’s Security of Supply and Networks Unit at the Directorate-General for Energy, presented the challenges of the upcoming Energy Infrastructure Package, while *Dr. Nick Sitter*, Head of the Department of Public Policy at the Central European University, analyzed the policy tools for the different terms of energy security and compared the issues of the Belgian, Spanish and Hungarian presidencies.

*Dr. Anita Orbán*, Special Advisor of the *ICDT*, moderated the second panel, which examined energy security as a theme during the Hungarian EU presidency. *Mr. Dániel Antal*, Chairperson of the Energy and Environment Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce in Hungary, demonstrated the adaptation of risk management in the issue of energy supply. *Dr. András Deák*, Research Director of the Center for EU Enlargement Studies at the Central European University, emphasized the difficulty of reconciling the interests regarding the improvement of the EU’s deficient energy security plans. *Dr. Miklós Hegedűs*, Managing Director of GKI Energy Research and Consulting Ltd., warned against distrust of Russia and questioned the grounding of certain efforts of the EU. According to *Mr. László Varró*, Vice President for Strategy Development at MOL Plc., the greatest challenge for the EU is to improve competition on the energy market.