

## **CER PRESS RELEASE –Friday 30 January 2009**

### **Energy Strategy for the future**

*Commission for Energy Regulation outlines key priorities for 2009 and commences development of strategy for coming years*

---

The Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) has held an event focusing on developing the necessary strategies for the sector to play its role in Ireland's economic recovery over the next 5 years.

The CER's second annual Open Day, in Croke Park, Dublin, brought together leading experts from Ireland and abroad to discuss the challenges facing the energy sector in 2009 and over the next five years. The Commission outlined the CER's work programme for 2009, followed by a debate on energy strategy in Ireland. The event was very well attended by industry and consumer representatives.

The Commission's work priorities for 2009 focus on ensuring an appropriate balance is achieved between the three pillars of energy policy; competitiveness, sustainability and security of supplies. The outlook for electricity and gas prices is positive for 2009, with continuing low fuel prices likely to result in lower consumer prices later in the year.

As well as price decisions, the CER's work programme<sup>1</sup> for 2009 includes the following;

- *The further development of the **Common arrangements for Gas** project to ensure the goal of an efficient single gas market is delivered by October 2010;*
- *Implementation of **Gate 3 Renewable Connections** with the aim of meeting Ireland's 2020 renewables target of 40% consumption from renewable energy sources;*
- *Progressing the Irish **Smart Metering Project** through the implementation and analysis of a number of trials aimed at determining customer behaviour and energy efficiency responses;*
- *Roll-out of **Gas and Electricity Safety Supervisory Bodies** for Registered Electrical Contractors and Registered Gas Installers, and commence full operation of Natural Gas Regulatory Framework.*
- *The Commission also welcomes the announcement by the EU Commission to provide €100million in funding to the **East West Interconnector** project. Interconnection with the UK will enhance Ireland's security of supply and allow for increased competition within the electricity sector. The Commission will continue to act in a monitoring role throughout 2009 to ensure the successful delivery of this project.*

The Commission is now embarking on a process to develop its strategic plan for the years 2010 to 2014. The Open Day provided the Commission with an opportunity to listen to the input of industry and consumer experts.

---

<sup>1</sup> The CER has chosen 10 key tasks for 2009 – Full details of all 10 can be found in the CER's work programme for 2009 as well as in the Commission's presentation at its Open Day, published along with this press release.

- Ignacio Perez Arriaga, a renowned international energy expert, provided a presentation setting the scene for Irish energy policy in an international context.
- This was followed by a roundtable discussion on the key challenges and priorities in the energy sector amongst a panel of experts from ESB, Bord Gáis, Viridian, the Irish Wind Energy Association (IWEA) and the National Consumer Agency (NCA);

A range of issues were discussed on the day including; the importance of ensuring the necessary network development is undertaken in a timely fashion to guarantee Ireland can meet its targets of 40% electricity coming from renewable energy by 2020; the importance of communicating with consumers on the various contributing elements to energy prices and the positive effects behavioural changes can have on demand side management; and, the key role innovation can play in helping to change the face of Irelands energy sector in the coming years.

Recognising the importance of public consultation in finding the correct balance between the needs of consumers and the need for secure, reliable and sustainable energy supplies, the Commission will publish a summary of issues raised at the Open Day. Interested parties and individuals can contribute further ideas over the coming weeks before the Commission commences drafting of CER's strategic plan 2010-14. The first draft will be published for further consultation in April 2009. It is the Commission's intention that with its stakeholders input, this strategic plan will serve as a blueprint for the sustainable development of a secure energy sector that places consumers at its core in the coming years.

The Commission encourages all interested parties to participate in this consultation process.

## **ENDS**

For further information, please contact:

Tara Scully  
 Tel: 01 – 4000800  
 Email: [tscully@cer.ie](mailto:tscully@cer.ie)

## **Note to editors:**

- The event was facilitated by David Taylor.
- Speakers at the event:
  - Michael G. Tutty, Chairman, CER;
  - Tom Reeves, Commissioner, CER;
  - Dermot Nolan, Commissioner, CER;
  - Ignacio Perez Arriaga (International Expert)
  - Maria Hurley (NCA)
  - Michael O'Sullivan (BGE)
  - Michael Walsh (IWEA)
  - Pat O' Doherty (ESB)
  - Tom Wilson (Huntstown Power)
- To view the slides from the presentations on the day and Commission's full Work Plan 2009, please visit [www.cer.ie](http://www.cer.ie)
- CER/09/023