

LESSONS LEARNED — SESSION IV: THE IMPORTANCE OF ENERGY LAW ASSOCIATIONS IN ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF ENERGY SECURITY

VIII Conference — European and Western Balkans Cooperation in Energy Law

Belgrade, June 12, 2026 · Anđelka Todorović, Secretary of UPES and Partner at Wolf Theiss

Moderator: Mr. Vuk Stanković, vice-president of UPES

In this panel, we addressed the **key topic of today's conference – Energy Security**, and what energy associations can do about it.

The key factors impacting energy security today were rightly mentioned by Ms. Gallagher. Some years ago, the biggest impact came from technology shifts and the introduction of renewables. Today, these are global events and violent conflicts affecting the world. On top of this, we have the natural changes occurring around us, such as rising population numbers and climate challenges.

There is a clear impact of all these factors on energy security and the clearest impact on consumers as energy prices are going up.

Energy associations are a natural forum to openly discuss how to address these challenges.

Today, we have had the opportunity to hear from **three such associations, a mix of old and new**, and coming from different backgrounds. Starting from **Ireland**, where there is a history of the association's activity, through **Bosnia** where the association is just beginning to form. Differences in legislation are clear, both in their maturity and the challenges the legislators are dealing with. The legal environments are different, from Ireland where there is activity at the level of the highest court with precedents being formed around wind projects, to Bosnia's public discussions being a mere procedural step.

The main point brought up by Ms. Lepotic Kovacevic from **a Serbian perspective** is that the sectoral legislation and the legislation on different levels, the laws and the bylaws, do not always talk to or refer to each other, they do not use the same terminology, making it difficult to understand how to obtain the solution when these are taken together.

Looking at Serbia and Bosnia, we can add on top of that the process of harmonization with the EU acquis. Our countries are dealing not with a fixed, but with a moving target.

So, what do we do about this? The simplest and most important message I believe came from Ms. Gallagher: **we spend time together and we discuss**. It sounds simple, but having an open and educated discussion is a much-needed instrument in addressing these challenges.

What is important is that we do this with integrity. As mentioned by Ms. Lepotic Kovacevic, we are a group of experts, not just from law, but many different fields. UPES is proud to foster discussion between lawyers, engineers, economists and professionals of other professions, who do not always speak the same language.

Rather than advocacy from an interest-based perspective, we have the tools and skills to look at a problem and propose a solution for it.

Finally, as well underlined by Mr. Marinković, we are not just professionals in a narrow field. We live in these countries and we know what it is like to experience energy security or insecurity. Are you

even from the Balkans if you have not played cards or "*ne ljuti se čoveče*" with your family under candlelight in the 90s?

To summarize this panel, and to offer my own perspective, associations absolutely have the power to influence policy, but what is important is should we do it and how we do it is.

Speaking practically, we speak policy – this is our superpower, and we have the capability to recognize the needs of the communities we serve and to propose solutions. We can do that by:

- creating a forum for open and respectful discussion;
- identifying challenges and proposing solutions, with professional integrity;
- preparing written guides for all stakeholders on the basis of our expertise.

Thank you.