If done right, the Energy Union could be enormously beneficial to the region in terms of boosting economic growth, promoting energy security, completing the internal market, and encouraging investment. What needs to be done to make this a reality is well known, and has been known for a number of years. What has been lacking, however, is the shared will to make it happen.

It is therefore encouraging to see that since the Energy Union Conference in Riga, the seeds of collective action have been planted. There seems to be an acknowledgement emerging, that trust among member states is crucial – trust that is opening the door to the implementation of energy policy goals and recommendations including:

- incentivising usage of gas infrastructure
- increasing energy efficiency, in particular of buildings and transportation
- completing and reforming an internal electricity market with stronger grids and interconnections, and the flexibility resources necessary to integrating large shares of variable renewables, and
- a more consistent and effective approach to funding, particularly for innovative research and development.

Those key elements can go a long way to fostering energy security across the entire region – we must all acknowledge that no country is an island. Local and national challenges and barriers may remain, but it is vitally important to seize this opportunity, work with business and industry, and build upon today’s momentum. The time is ripe for planning concrete steps toward the actual implementation of an effective, efficient, sustainable and regionally integrated Energy Union.