

IBERIAN WORKSHOP ON RENEWABLE POWER INTERCONNECTIONS

On June 30, 2021, took place the second Iberian Workshop on renewable power interconnections between Portugal and Spain, led by Unify Spanish partner SEO/BirdLife.

Justification within the project

The initial purpose of this kind of event was to organize various exchange visits between both partners to build a better shared CSO knowledge of key cross-border decarbonization issues and jointly evaluate links to NECPs.

Originally, the idea was to carry out a face-to-face CSO 'exchange visit' in which project staff from ZERO and SEO/BirdLife could hold meetings with key institutions in each country, allowing both NGOs to learn more about the work currently undertaking by these entities in terms of renewable power interconnections and the state of play of interconnections between countries.



Final structure of the workshop

Due to the pandemic and the resulting mobility restrictions, the Iberian workshop has finally become a closed event, carried out through a virtual platform in both languages and with simultaneous translation, since this format has allowed the joint participation of key institutions and competent entities in the issue of renewable power interconnections from both countries.

The moderator, Miguel López, Organization Director at SEO/BirdLife, welcomed all attendees, briefly introduced the participants, and explained the scheduled agenda to start the workshop. First, Ana Márquez, Coordinator of Unify at SEO/BirdLife, made a quick first intervention to introduce the project and contextualize the workshop within it. Following, Eduardo González, representative of the Spanish Office for Climate Change (OECC), presented as an introductory intervention the legal framework and the objectives of renewable energy and power interconnection established in the Spanish NECP.

After this introductory bloc, it was the turn for the key institution's representatives, with a 10 minute-round of intervention as follows:

- » Miguel Rodrigo, representative of the Institute for Diversification and Energy Saving – IDAE, to talk about renewable energies and the Spanish electricity market.

- » Madalena Lacerda, representative of the Portuguese Renewable Energy Association – APREN, to talk about renewable energies and the Portuguese power market
- » Miguel de la Torre, representative of the Spain Power Grid – REE, to talk about renewable electrical interconnection data with Portugal
- » João Afonso, representative of the National Energy Networks – REN, to talk about renewable power interconnection data with Spain

Following all the interventions, the idea was to leave 30 minutes to hold an exchange roundtable among the attendees under the following topic: ES-PT renewable power interconnection as a key vector for a sustainable, just, and global energy transition and the achievement of climate objectives in both countries. Since the interventions took longer than initially planned, this dialogue block was reduced to one strategic question launched by the moderator to the speakers: main lines of action in the short and medium term, and how can they be accelerated.

Some of the answers from the speakers in relation to priority actions were: the incorporation of all agents in the energy markets; the increase the flexibility of the power system at the local level; environmental processing of power interconnections Spain-Portugal; coordinated planning and conducting joint studies beyond 2026; raising awareness and actively involving local entities that often create opposition to cross-border interconnection projects.

Event closing

To summarize and conclude this workshop, David Howell, Head of Climate and Energy at SEO/BirdLife highlighted the relevant information and data shared by the participants from both sides of the Iberian border. On one hand, the interventions showed the potential of carrying out transnational initiatives to join forces in a common pathway towards the decarbonization of the Iberian economies, working together to fulfil energy objectives and accelerate the energy transition in both countries with the deployment of renewables and the extension the renewable power interconnections. On the other hand, there is still some obstacles and difficulties to effectively reach the level of renewable power interconnections needed between Portugal and Spain, that need to become a priority issue to overcome and improve in the coming years for both countries.

Thanking the presence of all attendees and their active participation, this informal and intimate exchange, short but very profitable, has helped us to understand where we are in terms of renewable energy and renewable power interconnections and where we must work together, take firm steps forward and support each other to successfully achieve the established energy goals.

Workshop presentation

- » Taller ibérico de intercambio ES-PT sobre interconexiones eléctricas 100% renovables by Ana Márquez (SEO/BirdLife)

Speakers presentations

- » Objetivos en renovables e interconexiones eléctricas del plan nacional integrado de energía y clima 2021- 2030 by Eduardo González (OECC)
- » Los retos del horizonte 2030 by Miguel Rodrigo (IDAE)
- » Energías renováveis e o mercado energético portugués by Madalena Lacerda (APREN)
- » Datos interconexión eléctrica para integración RES con Portugal by Miguel de la Torre (REE)