



# Women in Energy Stories

## Share your story in *The ICER Chronicle*

Share your professional expertise by submitting an article on regulatory issues or tell your story for the Women in Energy Story section. Stories can be about anything relevant to Women in Energy (WIE), such as challenges women faced in their careers; pioneering work they have undertaken; obstacles they have overcome, and the lessons that can be shared.

### **Interested in submitting a story to *The ICER Chronicle*?**

Submit your paper (as a Word document) to [chronicle@icer-regulators.net](mailto:chronicle@icer-regulators.net).

## Watch Women in Energy Interviews

### **Maia Melikidze:**

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNgvozCGsNU>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkYKU8v11Cc>

### **Gulefsan Demirbas:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mr0rppWBQBE>

# The Story of the Newcomer

*Silviya Deyanova, E-Control*

I am currently employed as audit expert in the Tariffs Department of the Austrian energy regulator. Describing what I do and where I work to those unfamiliar with the energy business has always been a challenge. I usually say, in my department we calculate the tariffs, even though the work hidden behind this statement is a complex process that attempts to balance the interests of consumers and the interests of network distribution companies. Since I only started working at the Austrian energy regulator less than a year ago, my story will be that of a newcomer.

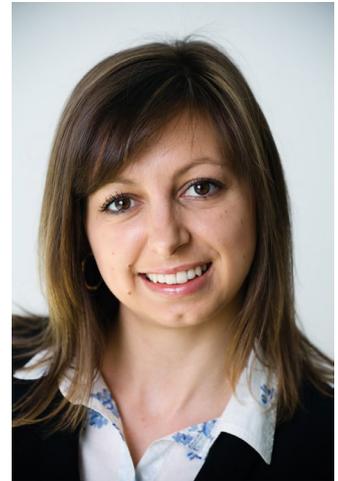
October 2013: I remember it was my first accounting lecture at Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration. I entered a classroom, looked around and one thing caught my attention, there were almost only women present in the classroom. Being curious about the matter, I started counting and found that out of 30 people attending the class, 23 were women. This astonishing figure made me reanalyze some of my earlier experiences, such as my first energy management lecture at the University of Vienna, which I attended just about a year before. Back then I did not count the people, but now I am quite certain that of about 50 students in the classroom—more than 70 percent—were men.

October 2015: After I obtained my master's in finance and accounting, I started working at a huge auditing company where I was in charge of auditing energy and utility companies in particular. During this time I had the opportunity to learn a lot and, most importantly, to find out what I really enjoy doing. The actual moment of realization happened when I was auditing one of the biggest DSOs in Vienna. I got so involved with the work that I realized I should focus on the energy sector as much as possible. However, at the time it was very tough to leave financial auditing and completely change career goals.

January 2017: My first audit in the role of the energy regulator was very exciting. I was visiting a small DSO south of Vienna. I entered the conference room where the meeting took place and, somewhat surprisingly, I was the only woman there. All the executives of the DSO were staring at me when I started introducing myself. Maybe they did not take me very seriously at that moment, but by the end of the meeting they were more than surprised and I was able to get all the answers I needed for my audit. My first audit as part of the Austrian energy regulator made me realize how important communication skills are. As a regulator, one should be able to negotiate, to demand information, and at the same time to get the best out of each situation. Since I am a foreigner working for the Austrian energy regulator this has not always been easy for me, but I am constantly working on improving my cultural and communication skills.

Today: I still count myself as a newcomer at the Austrian energy regulator. I have a long and exciting path in front of me, but I will commit my efforts and I will work with the goal of enriching my knowledge.

Work-life balance: In this early stage of my career in energy regulation I have to devote a lot of my time to working, reading, and improving my knowledge of the market and the technical aspects of the business. Time management is extremely important in this case. Until now I have been able to organize my time so that I work hard but still have time for my friends and family. Living abroad does not make this easier, as in order to see my family I need to fly 1,000 kilometers, hence planning



is essential, but I know that all my loved ones support me and understand that what I do is very important for my future and for my happiness.

My success: I have always had my 5-year plans. The first one started when I was in high school. My goal was that five years later, I would speak German well and would live in a German-speaking country. I achieved both.

The second five-year plan started when I had already moved to Austria. The plan was to be done with my studies and to have stable job in five years' time. I achieved this as well.

My new five-year plan is to become an expert in the energy field and build my future family. Well, I have five years to achieve this and I will do my best, so that in five years I can look back and I can say: ACHIEVED.

My mentors and inspiration:

During the last years I have met many inspiring people and I have learned a lot. At the beginning of my career, as a part of the world of accounting and auditing, I developed precision and attention to detail and gained a lot of professional knowledge. However, I must say I am very grateful I was able to enter the world of energy, as the people I met on the way not only taught me about technical and energy-specific matters, but also gave me very valuable insights for my personal growth and development.

A couple of months ago, I attended a regulation seminar where I met a girl from Madagascar doing her PhD in electrical engineering in France. When she introduced herself in the auditorium she said that she felt insecure about her future career opportunities in energy, even though in my opinion she was one of the most prominent attendees in the whole seminar. My advice to her and to all young women who pursue a career in energy is not to be afraid. Energy regulation is changing very quickly and there are many strong women who are leaders in the market. They prove that energy is no longer exclusively a man's world, as we all work for a common goal contributing the best of each of us, regardless of gender. Therefore, to succeed, make achievable short-term plans, commit yourself, and achieve them.

---

### **Silviya Deyanova**

Silviya Deyanova started her career as financial accountant and auditor. Only a year ago she joined the Austrian regulator and currently works in the Tariffs Department as audit expert for gas and electricity distribution system operators. Originally from Bulgaria, she has lived in Austria for six years. Silviya holds two master's degrees: one in finance and accounting from Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration and one in energy management from the University of Vienna.

# Growing through Change

*Anne Hoskins, Chief Policy Officer at Sunrun and former Commissioner, Maryland Public Service Commission*

In 2013 I was appointed to fill an unexpired term on the Maryland Public Service Commission. As that term ended in mid-2016, I wrote an article for ICER, as I looked forward to exploring my next challenge. Now two years later, ICER has asked me for an updated version.

The year 2016 was a time to reflect on the varied positions I had held over my career: energy regulator, energy utility executive, telecommunications lawyer, and governor's policy advisor. I was facing my sixth career transition since I graduated from Harvard Law School, consistent with the experience of an increasing number of professionals in today's economy. In the world of state regulators, the average term for a Commissioner is 3 years—so while regulators often strive to provide consistency and rationality in utility regulation, they must be comfortable with change and uncertainty in their personal lives.

I find career changes both exciting and daunting, but always fulfilling. With each move, I have made new relationships, grown an ever-expanding network of diverse friends and colleagues, and had the opportunity to live in new places. As a mother and wife, I have also always considered the impact of my new opportunities (and related moves) on my husband and our four kids. But in 2016, my move was even more monumental because it coincided with my youngest child's graduation from high school. For the first time, I did not need to worry about finding a good school or about how my children would manage in a new environment. It was strangely liberating. I have gained so much from parenting and would not trade it for anything, but there is no denying that balancing work and family requires tremendous energy. I saw the beginning of a new chapter, one in which I could concentrate even more energy

and attention on my professional career.

It's an exciting time to work in the energy field. Perhaps presciently I attended a "women in solar energy" workshop in the spring of 2016 and was amazed to find a room filled predominantly with women younger than 35. They spoke about the tremendous growth underway in their companies, but also about the "ceilings" some of them were seeing. I thought about the importance of ensuring that the new energy economy, spurred by technology and creativity, would embrace the value of diversity and fully engage the large pool of talented young women graduating from business, law, and engineering schools. One of the challenges mentioned by some of the young women was a lack of mentorship and sponsorship. This is where I believe women of my generation need to step up and provide support to younger women who are striving to build careers in the energy industry. Young women need to be encouraged to take chances and to make time to network and build relationships, both within their organizations and beyond. Most of the opportunities I have had in my career came to fruition not just because I was qualified and worked hard, but because I used my networks from previous jobs, college, graduate school, law school, and politics. In fact, women of all ages need to embrace networking as an essential element of career development and not view it as something unseemly or extraneous.

The ICER Women in Energy network provides a valuable mechanism for mentorship for women regulators. During my first year as a commissioner, I



signed up for the WIE mentorship program. To my great benefit, I was assigned to work with another new commissioner and we decided to mentor each other. She became a trusted adviser and friend, and someone I could call at any time to work through a challenge.

It was due to networking with another long-time woman colleague that I learned of the opportunity to serve as Chief Policy Officer at Sunrun after my term expired. Sunrun is the leading residential solar and storage provider in the U.S., and is led by a dynamic woman CEO, Lynn Jurich. The timing and opportunity was perfect for me: I negotiated my new position as I dropped my son off at Syracuse University and headed to the West Coast the following month to join Sunrun. I am now leading a dynamic, committed policy team—that includes many young women who remind me of the young women I met in 2016—and helping to pave the way for a cleaner, more diversified energy sector across the country.

As I look back now at my time as a commissioner and NARUC member, one of my most meaningful initiatives involved my role as Chair of NARUC's International Relations Committee. I focused on supporting the work of NARUC's excellent professional international relations staff and sought ways to engage a broader range of commissioners in NARUC's international activities. I encouraged fellow commissioners to pursue exciting opportunities to make contributions beyond their own states by participating in NARUC's international activities. I also shared my experiences of providing regulatory training in Tanzania and Macedonia, and in cooperating with international regulators at the World Forum on Energy Regulation and the ERRA Energy Investment and Regulation conference. In just one year as a NARUC committee chair, I grew into a much more informed international citizen and, in the process, became a stronger leader.

I was thrilled last month to join the NARUC International Relations Committee again, this time as a guest presenter. I spoke about the lessons the U.S. can learn from Australia and Germany in making rooftop solar less costly and more accessible: reducing permitting and interconnection barriers, and ensuring fair compensation for the electricity provided by solar customers to their neighbors. True to my experience as a commissioner, I value in my current

role understanding energy policy and regulation from around the world, particularly as we work to overcome global challenges, such as climate change and energy security.

At Sunrun, one of our values is to “be the change you wish to see in the world.” Back in March 2016, I had no idea what would come next in my career – or that I would be living and working in California today. But change was inevitable, as my term of service came to a close. I'm happy to report that I have embraced another transition and am working every day to change our world for the better, too.

*Initially written 3/2016 and updated 2/2018.*

---

### **Anne Hoskins**

Anne Hoskins serves as Chief Policy Officer of Sunrun, the largest dedicated residential solar and storage company in the United States. She leads Sunrun's policy efforts to expand consumer access to solar energy and deploy local solar energy that modernizes the grid and benefits all grid users. Anne previously served on the Maryland Public Service Commission where she was a member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Board of Directors, Chair of the NARUC International Relations Committee and a board member of the Organization of PJM States (OPSI). Anne also led federal and state advocacy for an electric and gas utility, and served as a Visiting Research Scholar and Instructor at Princeton University, a telecommunications attorney and as a Governor's policy advisor. She is a graduate of Harvard Law School, the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton, and Cornell University.