

INTERVIEW WITH ANASTASIA B. BONDARENKO, STATE SECRETARY, DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENERGY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION



— Dear Anastasia Borisovna, in 2018 you became the State Secretary, Deputy Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation. We would like to take this opportunity and congratulate you with this appointment and wish you successful and fruitful work. What are the main lines of your activity in this new role? What is the scope of your work now? And what state authorities and organizations you have to interact with?

— Thank you, Viktoriya Valeryevna. The lines of activity under my supervision include, first of all, the legislative drafting activities of the Ministry of Energy. Apart from that, the Minister has entrusted me with such tasks as interaction with public organizations, labor issues, including labor market monitoring, liaising with universities, social partnerships in the FEC branches, and corruption combating. My main counterparties

are the deputies and senators, the members of our parliament. All platforms of the State Duma and the Federation Council hosting the discussions of the issues relevant for the FEC branches, both related to passing the bills and theme-specific ones: parliament hearings, parliamentary hours of the Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation, committees' sessions, work of various expert groups and sections, and so on. Of course, my responsibilities include working with the Government of the Russian Federation, departments of the Government Office, the Presidential Administration, and with all federal authorities of the executive power.

— Dear Anastasia Borisovna, you are supervising the department for the administrative and legislative drafting work. What are the core lines of activity in these fields? What changes in them would you name as the key ones? What strategic tasks have been set to this department?

— Regarding the legislative drafting activities, the Department is responsible for the coordinated work within the Ministry to form a consolidated position regarding the bills, both prepared by the Ministry of Energy itself and submitted for its approval. The Department is also charged with the function to monitor the compliance with the regulatory requirements in the bills' preparation. A large range of tasks has been also set regarding the issues of the FEC labor market. Undoubtedly, the industry's companies are free to make any decisions in this field, however, the Ministry has been assigned an essential role in monitoring the situation across all industry branches in general, as well as in supporting our companies in any way possible for the purposes of entering into the branch tariff agreements, consideration of the issues of employee social support, introduction of a new system of independent performance

assessment, forming the reference figures for universities (“the branch order”), and in many more other cases. The prevention of corruption offences is the line we are tracking on a daily basis, with checks taking place not only across the Ministry’s state service function, but, within the established limits, across the branch companies as well. Among the key changes, I would name the change of the approach to the legislative drafting activities. While there are such evident factors as sound analysis of a problem (“Is changing of the law necessary?”), sound preparation of the bills by our branch subdivisions (“Does the solution suggested address the issue?”), refinement of the bills’ wording (obtaining of “clean” reports) according to the results of the legal and anticorruption examinations by the legal service of our Ministry, and non-delaying of the deadlines, I want to change the very approach to the process. Particularly, as I see it, the task is to analyze any bill at its “pre-zero” stage to validate the correctness of its goal and turn the opposing stakeholders into neutral parties or supporters. I’ll explain that. It’s not a secret that various authorities have different views of a certain problem. My goal is building such a system of the bill concept refinement that will minimize the controversies between the stakeholder authorities at the stage of the interdepartmental approval of the text.

— Dear Anastasia Borisovna, you have been managing the Legal Department of the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation for a long time. What were your goals and tasks when you had started working at the Legal Department? Which of them had been achieved? And what are the goals and tasks of the Legal Department now?

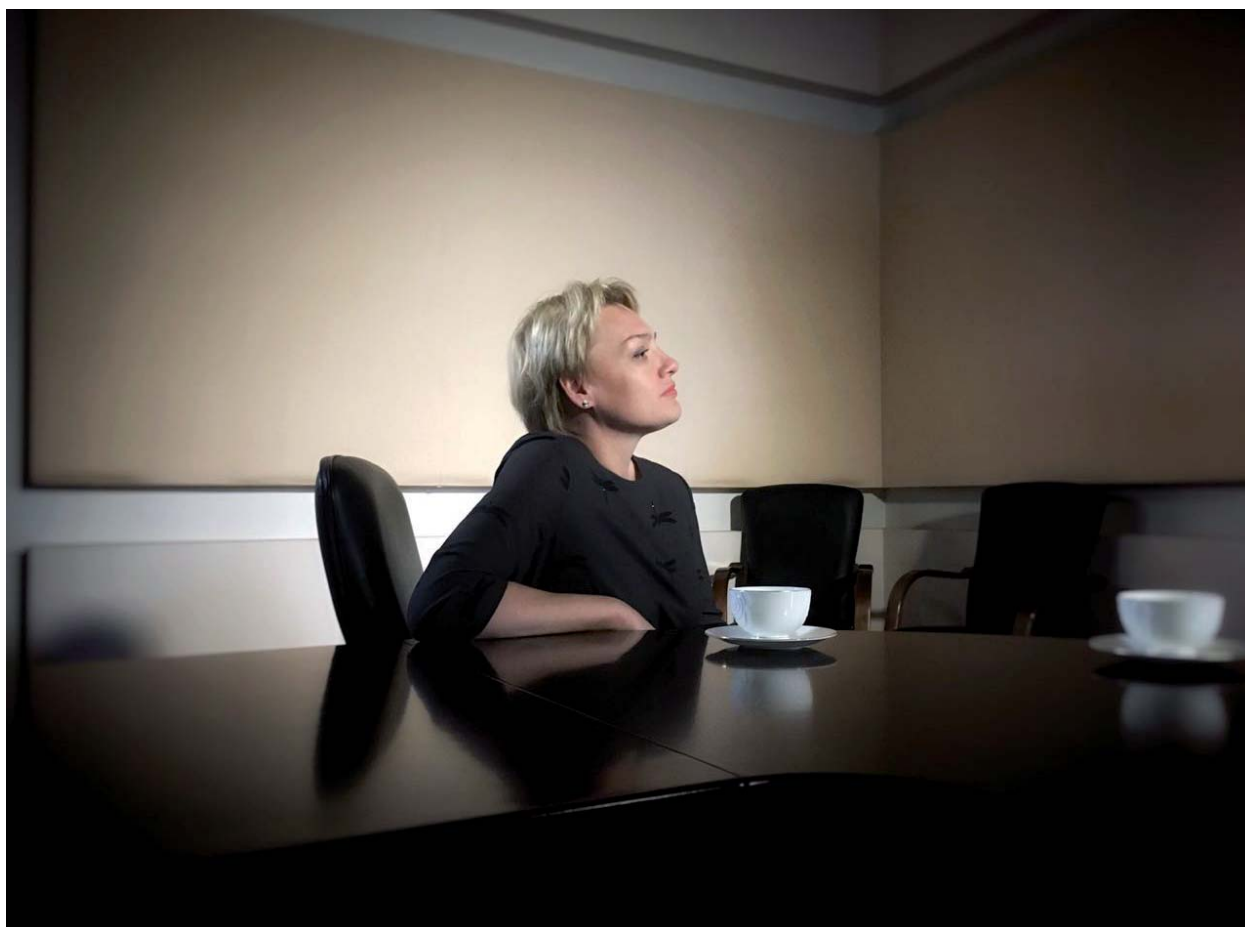
— Yes, I have been managing the Legal Department for almost 10 years. My team and I had had one goal: building the system of the legal service operation as an integral mechanism of the Ministry of Energy of Russia for exercising its powers (from rule-making to enforcement and remedy). Over those years, I think, I have fully achieved the goal. The lawyers of the Ministry of Energy of Russia are respected both by their peers in the Ministry and other authorities and organizations. I managed to gather, train, and encourage to work for the civil service a remarkable

young team of people sharing the same ideas, with each of them ready to help other team members and tackle the most challenging issues. Lawyers are the “lifesaver” in any team, which, in our case, is our Ministry. The goals for the future include the preservation and development of the achievements, which is even more important in the digital transformation era. You have to anticipate any trend, be curious and engaged, and have your heart set on what you are doing.

— Dear Anastasia Borisovna, you have successfully completed a management talent pool program this year. Could you please tell us what was the most interesting in the program? What methods, in your opinion, would be expedient for training of specialized lawyer personnel for the energy industry?

— Yes, this was an unforgettable year: with rich information, new skills acquired, and daring objectives set for the future. The most interesting aspect I noted was the change in the policy, its moving closer to a particular person, a citizen. Our country’s well-being depends of the well-being of each person. It is the most important thing, it is what one should work for. And for me personally, this is what motivates me the most. Apart from that, or, more correctly, for that, there are new practices, working with big data and new approaches to work, working with big data (the project method, agile), new technology, new world trends and challenges, and ways to manage changes under the corresponding conditions. From the point of view of lawyer personnel training, irrespective of a particular industry, I believe that all of the above is important and should be studied by a person to get a wider understanding of things; however, training in basic (fundamental) disciplines is mandatory; lawyers should have up-to-date knowledge, especially in Industry 4.0, true, but lacking the fundamental knowledge they are weak specialists, since it is deep understanding of the fundamental principles of law, which is the art of good and justice, that allows a person to see the main goal, the protection of interests of a particular person.

— Dear Anastasia Borisovna, what line of legal regulation in the sphere of energy do you believe



to be the most successful? And what line or branch requires, in your opinion, considerable changes in its legal regulation?

— Having worked within the Ministry of Energy system since 2003, I sincerely believe that the civil service employs a huge number of highly professional experts in various fields, and they do their best, including in the sphere of rule-making, to develop our and associated industries. That is why I cannot distinguish particularly successful ones. But I would note that the 2008 reforms of RAO UES, OJSC, and demopolization of such huge and technologically sophisticated sector as energy industry has resulted in revising of the regulatory framework in this sphere. The volume of changes was significant, and the system is still being refined. In addition to that, a range of new federal laws and subordinate acts have been adopted since 2008, particularly, regarding heat supply, FEC facilities security, energy efficiency, and FEC state information system, as well as many amendments

have been made to the branch acts. Changes in the oil and gas complex were rather local, while major work has been performed recently on the preparation of another strategic law for this sphere, “on the main pipeline transportation”. We are looking forward to its adoption in the nearest future.

— Dear Anastasia Borisovna, what draft regulatory legal acts governing social relations in the sphere of energy are being considered now?

— The main tasks of the Ministry of Energy for the near-term outlook have been formulated in Decree of the President No. 204 issued in May and include the guaranteed affordable electric power supply, sustainable energy supply to consumers, development of the infrastructure, support of RES and the distributed generation, and the introduction of intellectual systems. These are the fundamental tasks. However, the scope of work of the Ministry of Energy is much wider; and we will keep working along all lines of our activity: gasification development, introduction

of gas motor fuel, support of LNG, tax system monitoring, social welfare benefits for mineworkers, talent pool development, and many more. The initiatives are rather numerous. Apart from the said draft law, “on the main pipeline transportation”, which is being considered by the Government of the Russian Federation, we are also discussing microgeneration, cross-subsidizing measures, transfer of the responsibility for the metering devices installation from citizens to the resource supplying organizations, land relations, and so on.

— **Thank you very much, Anastasia Borisovna, for the interview, for your support, help, and cooperation!**

— Thank you, Viktoriya Valeryevna, for developing the science of energy law, your active expert activities, and training of specialized lawyer personnel for the energy industry. ■

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