**A European Sustainability Model Fostering the Energy Union Despite of our Differences? An Overview of the Energy Transition in Spain and Italy**

María Dolores Sánchez Galera

Conex-Mari curie Fellow Carlos III University (Madrid)

The EU has been on an accelerated transition towards a more climate-friendly energy sector since 2009.  There is no doubt that the interface between energy, environment and the EU integration project are now shaped by the demand to embrace a long-term vision incorporating the need to respect the limits of our planet (that is the basis of our last EU Environmental Action Program). Sustainability has become a proactive approach at the basis of the EU integration project representing new regulatory tendencies and intergovernmental mechanisms. This contribution reviews two major topics behind this project: the EU sustainability model and the Energy Union focusing on the idea that energy has clearly become an area of divergences among member state interests that disenchants the ambitious picture of the Energy Union perceived as a potential platform for integrating sustainability measures into energy policy and assuring that decarbonisation of European economies is conducted in a coherent, efficient and timely manner.

The energy union under these lines is depicted as the most significant policy idea that seeks to reform European Energy governance and regional cooperation, streamlining these with long-term climate protection goals. It gives hope for solving the major paradox of EU energy policy-the tension between national sovereignty over the energy sector and a community perspective based on solidarity, cooperation and scale that should be at the basis of every social policy today for a real transition towards a low-carbon and sustainable economy.

The main argument will be followed by a comparative analyses of two country cases representing different energy transition models, mixes and energy policy directions whilst belonging to the same geographical region.