

Lucerne, 12th October 2021

The debate continues at GIE's Annual Conference. We are at the end of the first day and the debate has heated up on decarbonising Europe's regions by **switching from coal to gas and methane emissions**.

The switch from coal to gas – a central step for quick decarbonisation of the society

Here are the main messages we heard on the power of switching from coal to gas in some of EU's countries and regions:

- There is no one-size-fits-all solution across the EU to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. One thing is clear: for a just transition, national and regional specificities must be considered.
- Current high energy prices show the risk and vulnerability of energy poverty. The heating sector is at stake in here. The gas infrastructure is committed to not leave anyone behind by delivering affordable natural, renewable and low-carbon gases;
- Replacing coal combustion by using natural gas enables quick and affordable decarbonization wins;
- Reducing reliance on coal reduces air pollution and hence, improves air quality and health for citizens.
- As a next step, the uptake and full switch to new gases would be the solution as well, with a role not only for hydrogen, but as well for biogas, biomethane, synthetic gas, ammonia, etc.

Bulgarian MEP Tsvetelina Penkova mentioned *"Taking into account the specifics of each region would be the key for a successful energy transition. Climate neutrality by 2050 can only be achieved if we all work together in decarbonising our economy. The ecological, economic and social transition must go hand in hand – with no single European citizen, region or member state left behind."*

Piotr Kuś, GIE's sponsor of CH4 Area stressed that *"the flexibility of the gas infrastructure is an essential element to achieve the climate targets of the EU. The switch from coal to natural gas in the short-to-mid term and to renewable and low-carbon gases in the mid-to-long term will guarantee an efficient, stable and affordable transition of our energy system for all end-users. Gas infrastructure operators can deliver all these developments."*

Greg Molnár, Gas Analyst at the International Energy Agency explained that *"the existing gas infrastructure can fast-track the deployment of low-carbon gases, by providing network access, reducing transport costs and ultimately facilitating their integration into the broader energy system."*

Collaboration for the methane emissions abatement

To deliver the goals of EC Green Deal and accelerate the energy transition, the European Commission has under preparation a legislative proposal on Methane Emissions for the energy support as it was announced in the *EU Strategy to reduce methane emissions* published in October 2020.

On the 18th of September of 2021, The European Union and the United States announced the Global Methane Pledge, an initiative to reduce global methane emissions to be launched at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in November in Glasgow. Gas operators continue taking action to support the European Commission and to effectively and responsibly further address methane emissions.

Methane emissions are accountable for a quarter of today's global warming. In fact, their environmental impact comes right after carbon dioxide's one. This gives a good idea of how crucial methane emissions are to enable climate-neutrality.

Reducing methane emissions will benefit to the whole society, the environment, and the economy by reducing the costs of the energy transition and the European gas industry as a whole has a crucial role to play in all that process, joining forces and collaborating towards a decarbonised future.

Francisco de La Flor – GIE Board Member explains:

Joining voluntary and mandatory programmes, gas industry players have been working for many years to minimise methane emissions of their facilities. Emission reductions are being achieved thanks to the implementation of ambitious leak detection and repair programmes as well as the progressive reduction of venting and flaring. It's in an ongoing process. We are implementing the best available techniques to mitigate emissions and we keep looking to improve those technologies. Each time, we take into consideration the safety of our workers as well as the citizens. Technical and environmental aspects are also part of the equation

Numerous joint initiatives are already in place or under development, as detailed in the [Action Plan on Methane Emissions](#) that was developed after the report [Potential ways the gas industry can contribute to the reduction of methane emissions](#):

- [The OGMP 2.0](#) - the new gold standard reporting framework that will improve the reporting accuracy and transparency of anthropogenic methane emissions in the oil and gas sector.
- [Methane Emissions Glossary](#) – a tool meant to help need to adopt a common terminology understandable by each actor of the EU ecosystem
- [Guidelines for Methane Emissions target setting](#)
- Energy Community Methane Emissions Mondays meetings, with the support of GIE and MARCOGAZ

- GERG “Technology Benchmark for site level methane emissions quantification”, which is divided in different phases. Phase I, study of the state of the art of these technologies. Phase II.A is being developed with excellent results, it consist in a series of tests with blind controlled releases to analyse the ability of 12 technologies.
- [MARCOGAZ Technical recommendation on LDAR campaigns](#)
- [MARCOGAZ technical recommendations on venting & flaring](#)
- Cooperation with new technology providers like satellite imagery geolocation data interpretation
- Project on measurement and modelling of environmental impact of LNG carriers.
- [Methane Guiding principles](#): A Toolkit (a set of recommended Guides, Synopses and Tools, which support the uptake and implementation of the Reducing Methane Emissions: Best Practices)
- CEN standard (under development) to quantify methane emissions in gas Mid/downstream assets

Who is GIE

Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE) is the association representing the interests of European gas infrastructure operators. GIE members are active in transmission, storage and regasification via LNG terminals of renewable and low-carbon gases, including natural gas and hydrogen. Gathering around 70 industry entities from 27 European countries, GIE perfectly embodies the multiple transitional decarbonisation pathways of the EU regions. The association's vision is that by 2050, the gas infrastructure will be the backbone of the new innovative energy system, allowing European citizens and industries to benefit from a secure, efficient and sustainable energy supply.

Press contact:

GIE Secretariat
+32 209 05 00
gie@gie.eu
www.gie.eu