

GIE Annual Conference

New dynamics in EU politics: what impact on the Energy transition?

Brussels, 14 April 2022

Last week, we were in Budapest. EU Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson, MEP Cristian Buşoi, Chair of ITRE Committee Chair in the European Parliament, 4 States Secretaries, Ministerial Commissioner Dóra Zombori, Ambassador-at-Large for Energy & Climate: the 19th edition of GIE Annual Conference started strong. In total, over 50 game-changers from the energy landscape came to discuss the security of supply and decarbonisation.



From left to right: Ministerial Commissioner Dóra Zombori, Ambassador-at-Large for Energy & Climate, Boyana Achovski, GIE Secretary-General, MEP Cristian-Silviu BUŞOI, Chair of ITRE share the views of the European Parliament, Torben Brabo, GIE President and Senior Vice President, Energinet Group Cristian Buşoi, Chair of ITRE Committee Chair in the European Parliament.

Each year, the annual conference of [Gas Infrastructure Europe \(GIE\)](#) welcomes high-level decision-makers for two days of holistic discussions. Providing the audience with a 360° perspective and exclusive insights, it involves representatives from gas, electricity, wind, energy-intensive industries, regulators, European Commission, European Parliament, academia, NGOs, media... and more. Such variety in terms of speakers and participants reflects the gas infrastructure's awareness: collaboration will be key to making this transition successful.

Kadri Simson, EU Commissioner for Energy, European Commission set the scene of the current situation in Europe while stressing that we were *“too reliant on Russian fossil fuels. We are not in full control of our energy future. This has to change. It is not a new priority it is a sense of urgency. We have to diversify gas supplies, invest in LNG, increasing renewables and energy efficiency. In May we will propose a more concrete REPowerEU plan to make sure to optimize the use of the current gas*

infrastructure, including LNG. We are also launching a platform to coordinate the gas purchases at the EU level but also international trade of LNG. We want Europe to have a competitive hydrogen market by 2030.”

Torben Brabo, GIE President and Senior Vice President, Energinet Group reminded us that the key priority now was to prepare for next winter. *“That is essential to protecting EU citizens as well as the economy. After COVID-19 and high energy prices, comes today's new challenge: security of supply. So far, we took it for granted because gas was there. Now, it is our duty to support the European Union with solutions for overcoming this new. “Mr Brabo underlined that providing up-to-date data on the reality on the ground was crucial to enable EU makers to develop coherent initiatives. “This is what GIE is doing with its [transparency platforms](#). Created on a voluntary basis, they provide a clear overview.*

MEP Cristian-Silviu BUȘOI, Chair of ITRE share the views of the European Parliament: *“This is a race against time. The Parliament showed is ready to react. We need to deal with the matter urgently so the framework is in place in time for the filling of gas storage capacities in the Member States ahead of the winter. But while the Parliament is ready to step up its game to allow for extraordinary measures, we want to guarantee that the long-term measures are properly reflected upon and built from the experience of the past ten years but also from the experience of the coming months. Consequently, we do believe that triple diversification remains the ultimate solution to energy security and independence in the EU.”*

He added: *“Why I am saying triple diversification? because I am referring to one: Of the sources of energy (mainly low carbon and renewable), suppliers and supply routes. Diversification is also key to energy security, in terms of suppliers and energy sources. We agree that the indigenous generation of low-carbon sources should be increased further, as well as boosting efforts in energy efficiency in all areas of our economy. Parliament is ready to proceed also with proposals allowing for joint procurements of gas on top of boosting strategic stocks. But we need the Commission to use the appropriate instrument to help us do so.”*

2021’s edition was about getting back together after months of being locked inside. For 2022, it was a complete other story. Following the recently released REPowerEU, the conference was the occasion to address the security of supply and decarbonisation. Light was shed on the key role that LNG terminals and storage can play in that matter.

Boyana Achovski, GIE Secretary-General: *“Considering the ongoing conflict, we thought about postponing our conference. But while carefully monitoring the evolution of the geopolitical context, one thing became clear: maintaining this event was essential. Today and more than ever, the energy sector needed to meet, connect, and share information. The focus is now on strengthening the security of supply. And gas infrastructure can help with that. LNG and storage facilities have a crucial role to play in enhancing the security of supply in Europe. LNG terminals can do that through the diversification of the sources and routes of supply. They can provide secure access to the global market and could become without almost no additional investments the entry door to competitive low-carbon and renewable molecules.”*

The Hydrogen and Decarbonised Gas Market Package was of course tackled, together with the challenges and opportunities related to the ongoing process of the decarbonisation of the European economy. It was time to ask the right questions:

- how to invest for a secure and decarbonised energy future?
- How to decarbonise the transport sector?
- And what role for renewables and low-carbon molecules such as hydrogen or biomethane in all of that?

Ákos Kriston, President & CEO of HGS reminded *“Besides providing technically secure gas infrastructure, the role of infrastructure operators also comprises a robust advisory and knowledge sharing function to the decision-makers, which is a great responsibility alongside with providing constant security of the energy supplies for the society, which we are honoured to fulfil every day.”*

Ferencz I. Szabolcs, CEO of FGSZ Hungarian Gas Transmission Ltd. said *“To make solid business cases for an unprecedented level of investments in the energy sector, a rock-solid regulatory framework must be put in place in order to minimize the social cost of a new and vital infrastructure for a new and important market.”*

György Berze, CEO of HEXUM Földgáz Zrt explained *“The security of supply of Europe, the ransoming of Russian gas, the situation of our infrastructures, the fill-up levels of the natural gas storage facilities, the preparation for next winter in the upcoming weeks and months are questions of vital importance. Providing a reassuring resolution to these issues requires extraordinary efforts, high-level preparedness, consideration, sober judgement, mutual support and cooperation.”*

A warm thank you goes to Hungarian Gas Storage, FGSZ Hungarian Gas Transmission Ltd., HEXUM Földgáz Zrt. who hosted the event and made this memorable experience possible.

What did we talk about and with whom? Security of Supply, Decarbonisation and Integration

State secretarial panel on Gas infrastructure & new supply routes

Opening remarks: Ákos Kriston, President & CEO, HGS

- Attila Steiner | State Secretary for the Development of Circular Economy, Energy & Climate Policy, Ministry for Innovation and Technology, Hungary
- René Neděla | Deputy Minister for Energy, Czech Republic
- Karol Galek | Secretary of State, Ministry of Economy, Slovak Republic
- Adam Guibourgé-Czetwertyński | Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Climate & Environment, Poland

And more:

- Global Outlook: Unleashing the power of renewable & low-carbon molecules for the security of supply
- Reality check: Hydrogen & Decarbonised Gas Market Package

- Waking up in 2030: For a safer and cleaner world to live in
- Cleaning up transport: opportunities & challenges ahead
- Investing in a secure future: renewable & low-carbon gases infrastructure
- Talking about Energy and politics: in discussion with Frederic Simon & Paolo Nicoletti
- Renewable & low-carbon: A safe mix of molecules & electrons
- The future of storage in practice
- [Meet the speakers](#)

Boyana Achovski, GIE Secretary-General: *“The policy landscape is changing at an incredible speed those days. That is why we had to rescope the agenda. Over the years, GIE Annual Conference become famous for its prestigious programming and destinations. Some of you recall inspiring discussions with Ministers. This year, we could have been working on shedding light on our members’ innovations for decarbonisation. We could have been celebrating the resilience of our association that is turning 20 years old. But the world’s balance shift in an unpredictable way. And we adapted.”* She added *“That is now essential to keep working on the establishment of an integrated, innovative and secure energy system. That’s the only way to deliver climate and social objectives. We need to understand the insights of the different EU Members States, their citizens, their industries: collecting regional insights is crucial.”*

Note to editors

We are the European association of gas infrastructure operators (TSOs, SSOs, LSOs). We work and innovate renewable and low-carbon molecules infrastructures. We provide technical and policy information to enable European institutions, regulatory bodies and industry stakeholders to understand what is happening on the ground across the EU regions. In fact, we have around 70 members from 26 countries which enables us to have a panoramic view of diverse opportunities and challenges to make the energy transition happen while ensuring the security of supply.

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