

Press Release

An ambitious EU gas policy could better support efficient climate action

Mixed messages on the role of gas in EU energy and climate policy are leaving investors confused. A coherent future approach would be a driver for gas projects in Europe and could better support efficient climate action.

This was the call made by the European gas industry in Nice today at the Eurogas General Assembly, which brings together the association's members in addition to high-level experts on energy and climate policy.

Should a greater use be made of gas in the current transition to a low-carbon energy mix, the EU could reach its climate goals quicker and more efficiently. Gas is the ideal fuel to bring about immediate reductions in CO₂ emissions, to accompany the development renewable energy sources and to contribute to a low-carbon economy.

However, the current energy and climate policy has led to a paradoxical situation in which whilst the desired growth of renewable energy in electricity has been achieved, there has been a simultaneous increase in the use of higher carbon fuels. In 2011, gas demand dropped by 11%, whereas coal consumption, which has a higher carbon footprint, picked up. While coal-fired power stations are being switched back on, gas-fired power stations are closing.

"It is in the EU's interest to draw up an integrated policy that clearly favours the use of gas over higher carbon fuels, not just in electricity generation but also in heating and transport," said Eurogas President, Jean-François Cirelli, (Vice-Chairman and President of GDF SUEZ), in his address to the association's General Assembly. Mr Cirelli, who was along with the association's Vice Presidents and Board, re-elected as President for another two-year term, also stated that *"although the Energy Roadmap 2050 represents progress in the right direction, there still remains scope for a more ambitious approach to gas."*

The message that clearer signals are needed in order to attract investment in low-carbon generation and transmission as well as in energy efficiency was addressed to Philip Lowe, Director General of Energy at the European Commission, who attended the General Assembly. As the [Eurogas Roadmap 2050](#) has shown, these elements are integral to a low-carbon energy mix.

Concerns over perpetuating the use of gas (gas lock-in) can be addressed and attention should be shifted to carbon lock-in. A clear post-2020 target for greenhouse gas reductions and a revamped Emissions Trading Scheme, uncompromised by other targets, would form a strong incentive for investment in the most cost-efficient low-carbon technologies.

Eurogas panel discussions examined internal market rules, financial market regulations and external energy policy, and concluded that they all need to be further geared to promote the role of gas in the future energy mix.

On the occasion of the General Assembly, Eurogas also presented its activity report 2011/2012, highlighting the focus of the association on informing its stakeholders of how gas can, and does, complement other low-carbon technologies.

Note to Editors: Eurogas is the association representing about 50 companies and associations engaged in the wholesale, retail and distribution of gas in Europe. The association's aim is to provide data and information relevant to EU decision makers and opinion formers in making the right policy choices. The Eurogas General Assembly takes place in a different country every year. This year's General Assembly was held in Nice on 29 June and hosted by GDF SUEZ.

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