

New Eurogas President: Gas remains a sustainable fuel

Brussels, 20 June 2014: *“In this turbulent period it is time to focus on the positives of gas,”* said Gertjan Lankhorst, the newly elected President of Eurogas and CEO of the Dutch gas company GasTerra. *“Current concerns about gas should not detract from the fact that gas remains a secure, competitive and clean fuel.”*

Gertjan Lankhorst was speaking today at the Eurogas General Assembly in Venice where he was elected to take over from Jean-François Cirelli as President of Eurogas. “The gas sector has more to offer than just a product,” said the Dutch CEO, born and bred in a country where huge gains in energy efficiency and large emissions reductions have already been achieved using modern gas technology in, for example, home heating.

“Gas can provide solutions for partnering with renewables, innovative technologies as well as expert knowledge and skills.”

Lankhorst agreed with Commissioner Günther Oettinger, who addressed a keynote speech to the General Assembly, that energy security is inseparable from the 2030 framework for climate and energy. *“But I can only caution against proposals such as replacing gas prematurely with renewables, while coal use continues to be on the rise,”* Lankhorst said, referring to the Commission’s recent “European Energy Security Strategy”.

On energy security, the Commissioner stressed the need for Eastern European countries in particular to diversify their sources of energy supply. He confirmed the EU’s commitment to a fully functioning internal energy market as the backbone of Europe’s energy policy and energy security strategy. It was crucial to accelerate priority infrastructure projects to join up energy islands and to diversify energy sources, both supplier countries and routes.

Outgoing Eurogas President Jean-François Cirelli urged utmost care with any intervention that could suppress market-based business. *“More market means more security. But more progress needs to be done to reach this objective,”* he said. Marco Alverà, Eni Chief Midstream Officer and Vice-President of Eurogas, who hosted the meeting on behalf of his company, urged EU decision makers to accelerate the integration of the gas market. *“We need a single integrated European market for gas, not twenty-eight. To do this we need to press on with the priority interconnections and ensure that market based rules for storage are applied across all Member States,”* he said.

Representatives from the gas industry, the International Energy Agency, the academic world, and renewable energy sector gathered in Venice to discuss energy security and the 2030 framework for climate and energy. Opinions on targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, renewables and energy efficiency differed but Eurogas stands firm that one target of at least 40% GHG emissions reductions, compared with 1990, adopted by the Council this October, together with early and effective measures reforming the ETS in 2015 would be the most cost-efficient way of moving to a secure low-carbon energy system.

Note to Editors: Eurogas is an association representing 45 companies and associations engaged in the wholesale, retail and distribution of gas in Europe.

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