

18th Energy Community Gas Forum

28 September 2023, Vienna

Conclusions

1. The Forum praised the efforts made by the Contracting Parties related to enhancing the security of gas supply situation and winter preparedness for 2023/24, resulting inter alia from transposing the Gas Storage Regulation. However, transposition of the Security of gas Supply Regulation must be accelerated to have the risk assessments adopted and shared by the Secretariat by the end of the year. The pending certification of storage system operators must be finalized by 31 March 2024.
2. The Forum acknowledges the availability and robustness of the Ukrainian storage and transmission systems and invites Ukraine to engage in reducing of regulatory risks for storage business further.
3. The Forum welcomed the participation of the Contracting Parties in the EU initiative for joint gas purchase and invited their companies to make the best use of this additional opportunity to diversify supplies. The Forum invites the Contracting Parties to continue with efficiency measures to reduce excessive gas consumption.
4. The Forum praised progress related to infrastructure in the region for the South-East European markets. Further efforts should investigate options to increase capacities at the Trans Balkan Pipeline in physical reverse flow and finalise and put into operation the Serbia-Bulgaria Interconnector at fast pace.
5. The Forum welcomes the work carried out by the European Commission and the Energy Community Secretariat about the adaptation and soon adoption of the EU Regulation 2022/869 (the TEN-E Regulation). The Forum welcomes a new Projects of Energy Community Selection Process, after the having adopted the TEN-E Regulation. The Forum encourages the stakeholders to engage in the PECl selection process.
6. The Forum noted the limited progress in gas network codes implementation in the Contracting Parties and invited institutions and other gas market stakeholders to accelerate market reforms. The Contracting Parties are encouraged to consider designing flexible regulatory frameworks for gas and hydrogen infrastructure, considering the need to decarbonize the economies.
7. The Forum welcomed the pilot projects on biomethane production in Ukraine, recognised the vast potential of Ukraine to produce and export biomethane and as well hydrogen and invited Ukraine to continue progress on the relevant legislative framework and removing regulatory obstacles.
8. The Forum recognized the role which gas industry can play in decreasing the greenhouse gasses emissions only by removing venting and flaring practices, aiming to net zero emissions.

9. The Forum praises the success of Moldova in unbundling of its transmission system operators and work on regional interconnectivity and invites it to follow up and speed up the remaining market reforms.
10. Interest in trading in the Contracting Parties grows, as more countries transform their gas systems and establish virtual trading points. The Forum welcome the inclusion of Moldova and Serbia in the annual hub study by EFET for the first time to support the development of these markets.
11. The Forum invites the Secretariat to organise a separate workshop to bring together new LNG service providers and market participants in the Southeast and Central Europe region and discuss practical conditions of access to and new products offered by LNG infrastructure.