

17th Energy Community Gas Forum

4-5 October 2022, Ljubljana and on-line

Conclusions

1. The Forum discussed security of gas supply and winter preparedness in the Energy Community Contracting Parties. The Forum praised the Contracting Parties' resilience in coping with the crisis and reminded them to transpose the Gas Security of Supply Regulation urgently. Updating the risk assessments, Preventive and Emergency Plans is of utmost importance. The impact assessment on the prolonged halt of the Russian supplies for the Energy Community and the individual Contracting Parties and possible mitigation measures were debated.
2. The Forum invited the Contracting Parties to take necessary measures to diversify supplies and requested that the fundamentals of market functioning be preserved while highlighting the need for solidarity.
3. The Forum stressed the need for the swift establishment of the EU initiative for joint gas purchase and called for the participation of the Contracting Parties in it.
4. The Forum acknowledges Moldova's success in reforming its gas market and removing barriers to regional interconnectivity. As one of the most exposed Contracting Party to the gas supplies interruption by Russia, Moldova was praised for improving its security of supply framework, but the need for enhanced cooperation with neighboring countries, Ukraine and Romania, was reiterated as crucial for this country's winter preparedness.
5. Ukraine's supply situation is stable at the moment thanks to the availability of domestic production and reduced demand. The storages are relatively well filled and provide sufficient security for the forthcoming winter. At the same time the situation is unpredictable and Ukraine may need additional imports from the European market.
6. The Transmission System Operator of Ukraine continues to comply with its contractual obligations. The GTSOUA remains physically and contractually ready to supply the quantities of gas requested by Moldova and comply with its contractual obligations in transiting gas to its European partners.
7. The Forum supported North Macedonia in its efforts to conclude the interconnection agreement with Bulgaria, a crucial step to unlocking the capacity for new gas suppliers. The cooperation and coordination with the Member States along the joint interconnectors with the Contracting Parties is essential to deliver increased security of supply. All other Contracting Parties are invited to make additional efforts to align their markets with the gas acquis.
8. The Forum welcomed the SEEGAS Study which takes into account the urgency of ensuring the energy security of consumers in preparation for winter. The Forum supported the Study's conclusions for swift application of the EU's Network Codes at border points between Contracting Parties and EU Member States, prompt signing of interconnection agreements between Contracting Parties and EU Member States. The Forum invites the transmission system operators in the region to offer firm capacity in

addition to interruptible capacity, wherever possible, and align on key issues such as gas quality and the calculation of commodity charges.

9. The Forum welcomed the adoption of the Storage Regulation in the Energy Community as a matter of urgency and called upon Contracting Parties for its implementation without delay. The related progress shall be reported at the next Forum.
10. The Forum invited the Energy Community Secretariat to continue its coordination role for developing infrastructure in the region for the South-East European markets to enable alternative supply sources to reach respective customers.
11. The Forum welcomed the establishment of the Energy Community Center for Alleviating Energy Poverty as a contribution to designing the most effective policy measures for protection of vulnerable and poor citizens and invited Contracting Parties to cooperate with the Center. The Forum also acknowledged the recommendations of the recently published Policy Guidelines on Identifying and Addressing Energy Poverty in the Contracting Parties, setting out short- and long-term measures on how to address energy poverty effectively in line with the energy transition goals.
12. The Forum stressed the need to address the current price surge without unduly distorting the market.
13. The Forum recognized the role of low-carbon gas production and usage as an instrument to replace missing natural gas imports and combat climate change at the same time. The timely preparation, already demonstrated by a vast number of the Energy Community DSOs and TSOs is of vital importance. In this context, the Forum welcomed the timely engagement of ECRB in recognizing the methane emissions activities undertaken by the system operators.
14. The Forum welcomed on-going pilot projects and recognised the vast potential of Ukraine to produce and export hydrogen as well as biomethane and invited Ukraine to continue progress on the relevant legislative framework.