

European gas market

Energy related issues have been accompanying the European integration process since the launch of the first Community in the early 50's. However, the importance of energy in the European Union's (EU) political agenda grew significantly in the first decade of the 21st century. The major factors driving this change in approach were the EU's climate policy, the desire to complete the creation of an internal energy market and the need to enhance the security of supply. Together they have contributed to the development of legislation which increasingly affects the European gas sector.

In 2006 the Green Paper "A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy" was published. On its basis the climate and energy package was developed in 2008. The EU member states, by adopting this document, committed themselves to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% by 2020 compared to 1990 levels, to increase the share of renewable energy sources in total energy consumption to 20%, as well as to set the goal to reduce primary energy consumption by 20%.

The European Energy Policy is also associated with the development of the internal energy market. In this context, the priority of the EU is to provide an efficient, safe and competitive market. Having this in mind, the so called the 3rd energy package was adopted in 2009. With reference to the natural gas sector the package consists of the following acts: [Directive 2009/73/EC](#), [Regulation 713/2009](#) and [Regulation 715/2009](#). They set forth the rules for unbundling of gas transmission and distribution systems and the establishment of an Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER). Furthermore, the new legislation envisages the harmonisation of the powers of national energy regulators, guaranteeing their independence, the introduction of common rules for the operation and development of the gas networks and extending the consumer rights.

The 3rd package also establishes [the European Network for Transmission System Operators for Gas](#) (ENTSO-G). The organisation was constituted in December 2009. One of the ENTSOG founders was GAZ-SYSTEM. The Company cooperates on its forum with other European TSOs to promote the completion of the internal gas market, to ensure the appropriate management and operation of the transmission system, including its proper technical development. ENTSOG's objectives also embrace the development of such mechanisms that will enhance the liquidity of the gas market and guarantee the free flow of gas in the EU.

The European Energy Policy will not succeed without ensuring the uninterrupted and safe supply of energy resources that are making the EU countries increasingly dependent. In 2010 the [Regulation 994/2010](#) concerning measures to safeguard the security of gas supply was adopted. It introduced measures aimed at preventing and minimising the effects of disruptions, including, inter alia, the introduction of the supply standard and the infrastructure standard, strengthening the EU-wide and regional cooperation. The regulation also defines the notion of protected consumers. It provides for the development of the Preventive Action Plans and the Emergency Plans, as well as calls for greater transparency and a higher level of information exchange.

Integration of the gas market and ensuring the security of supply also embrace the need to expand the gas network. Therefore, further development of internal systems and gas interconnections is of particular importance. Having this in mind, actions were taken with a view to preparing medium and long-term energy strategy of the European Union and drafting the Regulation on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure. This legislative proposal sets out the updated list of infrastructure priority corridors and proposes the adoption of a wide range of mechanisms to streamline the implementation of energy investments.