

Press Release

Gas will play a leading role in the Mediterranean energy transition, the UfM Gas Platform Conference points out in Paris



Paris, December 10, 2021 – Net zero emissions may be the clear goal, but it’s only feasible if the transition also ensures socio-economic development and energy security in the region, and gas is key to achieving all of this.

On December 10, the UfM (Union for the Mediterranean) Gas Platform Conference took place at the Hotel Lutetia in Paris. Organized by the Observatoire Méditerranéen de l’Énergie (OME), with the support of the European Commission, the event was devoted to **The Role of Gas in the Mediterranean Energy Transition**.

Excluding for transport, gas is not just the most commonly used source of energy in the Mediterranean region, it is key to the whole energy transition, according to the various institutions, organizations, associations and industry representatives who took part in the conference. Lapo Pistelli, President to the OME, even stated that “if we neglect the role of gas, we’re getting into a big trouble.”

As experts pointed out, there is indeed no “silver bullet solution” for the energy transition, especially in the Mediterranean region. Renewable energies such as photovoltaic or wind don’t grant continuous supply, and the cost of massive deployment remains prohibitive, especially in some countries where access to and affordability of energy are still a challenge. For such reasons, gas will remain a vital part of the energy mix in any solution designed to work for everybody in the next decades.

The goals stated in the Paris Agreement, the recent Glasgow Climate Pact or the European “Green Deal” are a necessity, acknowledged by all stakeholders at the COP26 conference, and the journey to implement them will involve decarbonized and low carbon gases, such as biomethane and

hydrogen, which provide cleaner energy while using existing gas infrastructures. Natural gas already provides the best solution for countries that need first to move away from coal. Rather than betting it all on the “silver bullet”, experts considered a whole toolbox for the Mediterranean region, to which carbon capture and storage (CCS) needs to be a part.

Natural gas is still essential to the trade balance of several countries. Transition won't oppose prosperity and cleanliness. It needs to combine both to succeed, as the pooling of resources among countries, including the power grid, has shown that strategic partnerships do contribute to sustainable development, and pave the way for smart grids that also incorporate renewable energies into the equation.

The transition will be a long and complex process, but on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of OME, stakeholders map out more than thirty years of sustainable use for gas in the Mediterranean, that take into consideration the particular situation of each country but also the need for some insightful legislation that would boost the transition and create the conditions for an integrated Mediterranean energy market.

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Initiated in Malta in July 2014, confirmed in Rome in November 2014 and launched in June 2015, in Brussels, the objective of the UfM Gas Platform is to enhance the cooperation in the Euro-Med. region between all stakeholders of the gas chain, in a bottom-up approach to improve gas security by identifying barriers and opportunities. The "Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Énergie" (OME) runs the Platform's secretariat in close coordination with the UfM co-presidency.

The UfM Gas Platform is one of the three UfM Energy Platform (The two others are on regional electricity market and on renewable energy and energy efficiency) established by EU Energy Ministers, Ministers of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, and the European Commission to further strengthen regional cooperation in the Mediterranean for ensuring secure, affordable and sustainable energy for the region and beyond.

More information about the UfM Gas Platform available at <https://www.ufmgasplatform.org/>