

Press Release

The UfM Gas Platform conference in Paris reaffirms the key role of natural gas in the future of energy in the Mediterranean



Paris, December 12, 2022 – When the Mediterranean considers the future of energy in the region, natural gas appears not as a relic of the past but as the right tool to boost the ongoing transition.

On December 12, the UfM (Union for the Mediterranean) Gas Platform Conference took place at the Hotel Hilton Opéra in Paris. Organized by the Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Énergie (OME), with the support of the European Commission, the event was devoted to **"The Future of Energy in the Mediterranean Region"**.

Recent geopolitical events, including the Ukrainian conflict, have put the entire energy sector into a once-in-a-generation crisis situation. As new vulnerabilities have been highlighted, the security of energy supply and affordabilities emerge as the priorities of the moment. Against this backdrop, the need to secure energy is one more major argument to accelerate the energy transition, regardless of its costs and its challenges, by tapping the huge energy efficiency potential, diversifying sources and moving gradually to clean energy also in the Mediterranean region. As OME chairman Lapo Pistelli pointed out, "Russia was actually betting on our energy transition going wrong" when it invaded Ukraine.

2022 has indeed put the entire energy sector into "rough waters", but, as several participants to the OME conference pointed out, these are also promising times for increasing cooperation in the Mediterranean region. Decisions have to be taken, neither too hastily nor too late, creating lasting partnerships and bonds, as dialogue, collaboration and trust are a necessity.

For the Mediterranean, it is an opportunity to build a better future for the entire region. The development of renewable energies is indeed regarded as essential. But every form of energy can contribute. Natural gas, in particular, the less polluting among hydrocarbons, also thanks to the recent regional discoveries, has already been fundamental to smooth longstanding geopolitical conflicts and needs to be produced with the lowest levels of emissions while it will progressively take over the other forms of fossil energy in the near

future. Production is expected to increase significantly, particularly in the coming decade. Natural gas will help Europe to diversify its sources and reduce pollution, allow developing countries to achieve a just transition, while hydrogen, biofuels and low-carbon gases, in compliance with the EU “Green Deal”, will ultimately take over.

The 2010s were considered as a “Golden Age” for natural gas. So can be the 2020s, especially if LNG and major infrastructure projects will allow Mediterranean natural gas to contribute to the security of supplies, to decarbonization and transform interdependencies into mutual cooperation. Even beyond this decade, gas will still be vital to achieving energy security and to making energy transition more sustainable and affordable.

For more information, please visit us at www.ufmgasplatform.org

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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 www.ufmgasplatform.org