

Press Release

UfM Gas Platform dual event on Mediterranean energy perspectives and the role and importance of South Mediterranean gas in European supply security

Paris, 14 December 2022 – As part of the UfM Gas Platform 2022 activities, the Observatoire Méditerranéen de l’Energie (OME) organized with the support of the European Commission, a dual event at the Hilton Paris Opéra Hotel in Paris on 13 December 2022.

The first part was structured as a capacity building session and provided an overview of the most important factors and uncertainties likely to affect the Mediterranean energy trends over the next 30 years under two different scenarios. The session followed the launch, during the COP27 in Egypt, of OME’s flagship publication, Mediterranean Energy Perspectives 2022.

The Mediterranean region, a home to 7% of the world population, is one of the most severely affected by climate change. A drastic move towards sustainable production and consumption patterns is urgently needed as the energy sector plays a relevant role in the transition towards sustainable development.

OME experts presented the two scenarios of MEP 2022 which explore different pathways for the Mediterranean energy system to 2050, taking into account the impact of the recent pandemic and energy crisis in its prognoses. For this outlook, OME has updated its Reference Scenario as a base scenario and an alternative scenario co-funded by the European Commission, the ProMED “Net Zero Carbon” Scenario where all Mediterranean countries reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

The EU has clearly embarked in a trajectory towards carbon neutrality by 2050. But the EU strategy can become fully effective only if its closest neighbours follow a similar path, as recalled by the 2021 EC Communication “A new Agenda for the Mediterranean”. This requires strengthened cooperation at regional level. Regardless of the scenario, the South Mediterranean countries will account for all increase in energy demand through 2050 and will overtake the North Mediterranean demand by the end of this decade. Decarbonization would lead to a significant shift away from traditional hydrocarbons (oil, natural gas and coal) towards non-fossil fuels, led by renewable energy. In the ProMED Scenario, both oil and coal would be nearly totally displaced by 2050. Achieving carbon neutrality for the Mediterranean region would not only involve a significant further acceleration in the deployment of clean energy technologies over the next 30 years but would also require the implementation of stringent energy efficiency policies & measures, including major behavioural changes.

The second part of the event was structured as workshop where participants debated the role and importance of South Mediterranean gas in European supply security.

At a more global level, it was underlined that Europe turned into a premium market for LNG as Russian flows plummeted; pipeline flows to the European Union (EU) halved in the first ten months of 2022 according to IEA data. Europe’s incremental supply needs drive LNG growth and tightness, and entails a wholesale realignment of LNG trade flows around the world. Some gas importing countries could not import LNG because of the high spot prices.

In the short term, experts agreed that 2023 might be a very difficult year for the LNG market, not only for Europe but also for the rest of the World, especially if Russian pipeline gas to the EU stops fully and China’s LNG imports increase stronger than planned today, as almost no additional LNG is available globally.

In the longer run, EU's LNG imports will remain high even if gas demand declines significantly by 2030 because a high probability exists of Russian gas to never come back to Europe.

Therefore, Europe needs to drastically accelerate its clean energy transition, decrease its import dependence, and further diversify its supply sources and routes. In response to the huge challenge, the EC representative presented the REPowerEU Plan which aims at saving energy, producing clean energy and diversifying its energy supplies to make Europe independent from Russian fossil fuels well before 2030. It is backed by financial and legal measures to build the new energy infrastructure and system that Europe needs to ensure its security of (gas) supply.

When focusing on the role South Mediterranean gas could play in Europe's search for additional gas supplies, it was recalled that countries like Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Israel and Mauritania as well as the Mediterranean neighbour Azerbaijan can help replacing a significant part of EU's Russian gas imports in the short, mid and longer term. They have the potential for higher production capacities thanks to significant untapped gas resources, both conventional and unconventional, and they stand to offer a portfolio of diverse sources and routes of supply in the future.

Several promising gas supply initiatives are taking place in the Mediterranean area such as new contracts with Algeria, investments in reducing flaring and methane leakage, new wave of investments expected in Libya, 4th offshore bidding round in Israel in 2023. A wide variety of export and infrastructure options to accommodate the supply potential are also assessed.

However, increasing domestic gas demand, building new interconnections across the Mediterranean and the important investments required to fully exploit the resources are important challenges the South Mediterranean countries will face to free up more gas for export. Therefore, all experts pointed out that more regional cooperation between public and private sectors as well as more integrated Mediterranean energy market are necessary in order to encourage and facilitate investments and increase the flow of gas from the South Mediterranean region into the EU.

Organised by



Co-funded by



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 Platforms (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/>