



EUROCHAMBRES statement on the Commission's proposal to amend the Gas Directive

Ensuring a competitive, sustainable and secure energy supply is one of the most important challenges of the years and decades to come. Particularly in the context of the transition towards a low-carbon and more renewable-based economy, businesses need guaranteed access to affordable and reliable sources of energy at all times. The dependency on gas imports from third countries is forecasted to increase in the EU in the upcoming years. The Union therefore has to strengthen its efforts on deepening the integration of the internal gas market, provide an adequate gas infrastructure and potentially adapt regulatory provisions as part of a major overhaul of the European gas legislation.

Against this background, EUROCHAMBRES supports the goal of fostering competition between gas suppliers, as an increased number of origins, sources and market participants should translate into lower energy costs and improved competitiveness of EU businesses on the global market. However, the recently proposed amendment to the Gas Directive¹, might result in a number of consequences which require additional attention. Consequently, before adopting rules with far-reaching implications, EUROCHAMBRES calls for an adequate in-depth analysis of the impact the proposal would cause, particularly in relation to the following aspects:

➤ **Effects on gas prices**

It should be clarified how to apply new rules (tariff structure, third party access and unbundling rules) to the existing pipelines from third countries. In case of comprehensive adaptation requirement, costs could be passed on to consumers. These price effects must be weighed against the expected effects arising from increased supply competition and reduced import dependency.

➤ **Effects on planning certainty**

It is of utmost importance to guarantee a stable and sound regulatory framework for investors. Any regulatory uncertainty arising from the amendment might not only affect already existing pipelines but could also threaten investment security with regard to future pipeline projects. In this context, it must be assessed whether the planned derogation would lead to a discrimination against existing and/or future pipeline projects.

➤ **Effects on subsidiarity**

It should be further assessed if the proposed amendment undermines the principle of subsidiarity or unduly restricts the sovereignty of Member States to negotiate bilateral agreements with third countries and to determine national energy mixes, as set out in Art. 192(2) TFEU.

Without prejudice to the outcome of such an assessment, Chambers want to make it unequivocally clear that they continue to support strongly the European Commission in building a resilient Energy Union to the benefit of all Europeans. However, in this context, we also stress the need for avoiding not sufficiently analysed decisions and for consulting all relevant stakeholders on the basis of a comprehensive impact assessment before changing any important market rules with significant implications.

EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 20 million enterprises in Europe – 93% of which are SMEs – through members in 44 countries and a European network of 1700 regional and local Chambers.

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¹ i.e. Directive 2009/73/EC concerning common rules for the internal market in natural gas