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EBA's response to the article on EurActiv (23 September): *EU risks wasting billions on gas infrastructure 'white elephants'*

Dear Mr Gaventa, dear EurActiv,

Reading this morning's EurActiv news, European Biogas Association (EBA) was baffled and concerned about the ignorance and one-sidedness of the article on the need of a gas infrastructure. We would like to underline that gas networks, similarly to electricity, indeed do transmit energy from a variety of sources: gas in not "just gas"! Biomethane that is a 100% renewable energy source, profit from the natural gas' infrastructure due to its similar chemical composition and energy content. There is an increasing amount of biomethane plants in Europe (232 in 2012, 259 in 2013) and most of the produced biomethane (77% of the 166 000 m³/h capacity in 2012) is injected into the gas grid. In 2030, the overall potential for biogas is at least 50 billion m³. Thus, by 2030 and with right policies in place, the industry could in the best case scenario deliver 2-4% of the EU's electricity needs and reach a 15-30% share of the overall gas market. It should also be noted that with power-to gas technologies, which convert surplus green electricity into biomethane, green electricity can be reasonably balanced. However, to realise the full potential of these innovative technologies and green gas deliveries to all over Europe, there is a clear need for a strong European gas network.

Increased production and use of biomethane has several benefits for Europe's economy and environments. Biomethane is a domestically produced energy source that revitalises European rural areas with green jobs; in 2013, the biogas sector alone employed almost 70 000 Europeans (source: Euroobserver (2013)). Biomethane can be produced from any organic material contributing to the European climate targets by reduced GHG emissions and improved air quality (while fossil fuels are replaced, particulate (< PM10) and NOx emissions are massively reduced).

Therefore, investments in gas infrastructure are certainly not any "waste of public money". Similarly to "green electricity", there is also "green gas" with a huge potential to decarbonise the European energy sector.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Jan Stambasky
President

European Biogas Association