

PRESS RELEASE

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Natural Gas and Low-Carbon Gases are Crucial for an Orderly Mediterranean Energy Transition, Say Regional Leaders at a Conference Organised by OMEC on Navigating the Energy Transition – The Future of Gas in the Mediterranean.

On 16 June 2025, the Organisation Méditerranéenne de l'Énergie et du Climat (OMEC), with the support of the European Commission, held the conference of the UfM Working Group on Gas, Emissions Abatement and Hydrogen (formerly UfM Gas Platform) in Cairo. The event, hosted by OMEC member EGAS under the patronage of the Egyptian Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, brought together over 60 high-level participants from across the Euro-Mediterranean region, both in person and online.

In his opening remarks, Eng. Yassin Mohamed, CEO of EGAS, emphasized that natural gas is the “greenest fossil fuel” and can bridge the gap between traditional fossil energy and renewables in the years to come. Matteo Fumerio of DG Energy of the European Commission noted that the EU sees the Mediterranean as a key partner region and a bridge between the Gulf and Europe, particularly in the development of renewable energy, decarbonised gases and hydrogen trade. Finally, OMEC Chairman Lapo Pistelli highlighted that the Mediterranean is a “basket of two energies”: fossil fuels and renewables—both abundant in the region. They underlined the importance of pursuing decarbonization while ensuring regional energy security and resilience, and that the establishment of a dedicated Directorate-General for the MENA region within the European Commission will strengthen Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, also via a Trans-Mediterranean Energy and Clean Tech Initiative (T-Med) under the New Pact for the Mediterranean. The development of T-Med should also build on the work carried out by the main regional stakeholders advancing renewable energy deployment and energy market integration in the Euro-Mediterranean region through efforts and initiatives centred on facilitating and supporting private investments, regulatory reforms, development of energy infrastructure, and industrial cooperation along the renewable energy value chains.

The conference focused on the evolving roles of natural gas, low-carbon gases, and hydrogen in the region's energy future. Experts discussed how natural gas—despite its declining role—remains important for balancing renewable energy, maintaining industrial production, and ensuring energy system reliability. It was highlighted that methane emissions must be reduced and that certification tools like guarantees of origin are needed to improve transparency and sustainability in gas markets.

Panelists also discussed hydrogen, noting the need to manage expectations and to focus on lessons learned rather than high expectations about short-term goals. Speakers pointed to the emerging potential of renewable hydrogen in the longer term, especially in the South Mediterranean countries. However, they also highlighted persistent infrastructure, regulatory, and financing challenges. Panelists called for a

coordinated regulatory framework to support both international and bilateral cooperation in the hydrogen sector. Achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 will require not only reducing reliance on fossil fuels—but also major investments in infrastructure, technological innovation, and cross-border cooperation.

The conference concluded with remarks from Eng. Yassin Mohamed, Matteo Fumerio, and OMEC Director-General Houda Ben Jannet, all of whom stressed the importance of pragmatic, inclusive, and forward-looking collaboration across the region to ensure a just and sustainable energy future. OMEC Director-General closed the event by thanking all participants and guests for their active participation and the lively debate as well as EGAS for hosting the meeting.



Initiated in Malta in July 2014, confirmed in Rome in November 2014 and launched in June 2015, in Brussels, the objective of the UfM Working Group on Gas, Emission Abatement and Hydrogen (formerly 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 "Organisation Méditerranéenne de l'Énergie et du Climat" (OMEC) 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 Working Group on Gas, Emission Abatement and Hydrogen available at <https://www.ufmgasplatform.org/>