UfM Gas Platform Newsletter

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UfM Gas Platform website online at
https://www.ufmgasplatform.org/

Message from the UfM Gas Platform Secretariat

The OME, as Secretariat of the UfM Gas Platform, organized several events in cooperation with the European Commission in December to end 2021. The meetings, which all took place "physically" in Paris, gave an opportunity to all actors of the gas chain to hear from policy makers and industry on the key challenges, benefits and opportunities for strengthening and deepening cooperation and collaboration on energy and natural gas issues. During the two days of gathering, experts agreed that gas is expected to play a leading role in the Mediterranean energy transition.

During this quarter, the Secretariat of the Platform circulated the final version of several reports incorporating all the comments received by the Gas Platform members; "Power to Gas, a sector coupling perspective towards a more sustainable energy transition in the Euro-Med area", "the role of renewable gases as an energy carrier towards a low carbon Mediterranean energy future" both in November, and "management and reduction of methane emissions in the Mediterranean region: status and actions" in December. Another report on "natural gas trade among the South Mediterranean countries: Perspectives for the future" was sent as a first draft to WG members for their comments in October 2021.

In addition, following the adoption of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Energy in June 2021, the OME, as Secretariat of the UfM Gas Platform, participated in several (virtual) Energy Platforms meetings, brainstorming sessions organised by the UfM Secretariat for the preparation and drafting of a Roadmap for Action mandated by the Declaration. A draft version of the document will be presented at the next UfM Energy Platforms Annual Meeting in early 2022.

The UfM Gas Platform is a concrete outcome of the will of the UfM members and major stakeholders to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between the EU and South and East Mediterranean countries.

More information available at: **ufmgasplatform.org**

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About 40 delegates registered to the dual event on 9 December

Mediterranean Energy Perspectives to 2050

On 9 December 2021, in Paris, at the Millennium Hotel Paris Opéra, the OME as Secretariat of the UfM Gas Platform, in cooperation with the European Commission, organized 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 three different scenarios. It also dealt with the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on energy transition in the region. The session followed the launch, earlier this year, of OME's flagship publication, Mediterranean Energy Perspectives to 2050.

During the meeting, OME experts presented the three scenarios of MEP to 2050 which explore different pathways for the Mediterranean energy system to 2050, taking into account the impact of the COVID19 health crisis in its prognoses. For this outlook, OME has updated its Reference Scenario as a base scenario and developed two alternative scenarios: an in-house OME Proactive Scenario where the Paris Agreement is realized in full, and, for the first time, a joint scenario, developed with the UfM Energy Platforms for the European Commission, the ProMED "Near Zero Carbon" Scenario which provides detailed insights on what carbon neutrality could be like by 2050 under the current impetus.

Workshop on Changing Dynamics in Global Gas Markets and the Mediterranean region

Still on 9 December 2021 and in cooperation with the European Commission, the Secretariat of the Platform, organized a workshop, within the framework of the 2020-22 Program of Work of the UfM Gas Platform, where participants debated changing dynamics in global and Mediterranean gas markets.

At the global level, after a strong recovery in 2021, gas demand growth is expected to cool down in 2022. At the Mediterranean level, natural gas is still essential to the improvement of life conditions in several South Mediterranean countries. But, in parallel, the region is at the forefront of the battle against climate change.

Therefore, participants debated on the situation of methane emissions and the numerous challenges, barriers and opportunities for reducing, and monitoring them, as well as the possible strategies and way forward in the Mediterranean region. They also discussed the switch from coal to gas in the power sector in the region as well as the natural gas trade among the South Mediterranean countries.

Experts pointed out the role of natural gas infrastructure to achieve a cost-efficient energy transition. They supported the speed up of the deployment of the hydrogen economy, promoting hydrogen blending, and using the existing natural gas networks as an effective and cost-efficient way, rather than building dedicated hydrogen infrastructure.

Conference on the Role of Gas in the Mediterranean Energy Transition

The OME, as Secretariat of the UfM Gas Platform, in cooperation with the European Commission, organized on 10 December 2021 in Paris, at the Hotel Lutetia, a conference on the Role of Gas in the Mediterranean Energy Transition.

According to the various institutions, organizations, associations and industry representatives who took part in the conference, gas is not just the most commonly used source of energy in the Mediterranean region (excluding for transport), it is key to the whole energy transition. Lapo Pistelli, President to the OME, even stated that "if we neglect the role of gas, we're getting into a big trouble."



As experts pointed out, there is indeed no "silver bullet" for the energy transition, especially in the Mediterranean region. Renewable energies such as photovoltaic or wind do not grant continuous supply, and the cost of massive deployment remains prohibitive, especially in some countries where access to and affordability of energy are still a challenge. For such reasons, gas will remain a vital part of the energy mix in any solution designed to work for everybody in the next decades.

Natural gas is still essential to the trade balance of several countries (in the region). Transition needs to combine prosperity and cleanliness to succeed. It will be a long and complex process, but on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of OME, stakeholders mapped out more than thirty years of sustainable use for gas in the Mediterranean, that take into consideration the particular situation of each country but also the need for some insightful legislation that would boost the transition and create the conditions for an integrated Mediterranean energy market.

Upcoming event

On 2 February 2022, the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean will organise, through Zoom, its Annual Meeting of the three UfM Energy Platforms. This annual meeting will be of high importance to discuss and adopt the UfM Roadmap for Action on Energy. This document will steer the work of all three UfM Energy Platforms (UfM REM, UfM REEE and UfM Gas) for the upcoming period.

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