



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
**Cabinet of Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič**  
**Deputy Head of Cabinet**

Brussels, 18 April 2018  
ARES (2018)

**Note to the attention of  
SG Unit D3**

Regarding the access to documents request "Lobby meetings between Vice-President Šefčovič and the Cabinet on the Southern Gas Corridor", please find attached the respective minutes of all meetings held on the subject with Bernd Biervert, Member in the Cabinet dealing with the SGC, from November 2014 until today.

Bernd Biervert did not correspond in writing with the lobbyist during this period.

  
Bernd Biervert

*TAP gave, one month after the Thessaloniki event, on 28 June 2016 at their own request one of their regular project updates, where I stayed, as usual, in listening mode, taking note of their interventions. No substantial progress to be mentioned, though routing issues seem to advance.*

On 21 and 22 December 2016, BP and, respectively, TAP requested a brief meeting to give an update on the situation in Italy and Greece with respect to the SGC. Being outside the tourism season, they hoped that the temporary olive removal could advance, though local opposition was mounting. I reassured in general terms of the Commission's unwaivering political support of the project.

TAP's Government relations team requested at the beginning of the year on 26 January 2017 one of its regular meetings to update on the progress of the TAP construction. Problems with the regional government continue to exist. TAP enquired if VP could contact IT Government and also reach out to Regional Governor to overcome obstacles. Remaining in a listening mood, I showed general preparedness to use contacts with Government officials but meeting with Mr [redacted] should be first assessed by Rome.

On 18 April 2017, SNAM's Government relation team paid me a short visit to prepare the meeting with the new senior management of TAP for end of April. They expressed hope that the new management team would give a new and necessary push to overcome the obstacles identified in Puglia and Greece.

On 27 April 2017, the new management team of TAP (President and Managing Director) paid a courtesy visit to present themselves. Both stressed their extensive experience at SNAM and, respectively, Fluxys, and expressed hope that progress could be recorded over the coming weeks to meet the tight timetable to ship, as contractually agreed, Caspian gas by 2020 to Europe. Issues related to the financing request of TAP (and TANAP) towards the EIB were also being raised.

On 7 June 2017, TAP provided some update on construction works in Puglia. There were some positive elements, which would allow for building the micro tunnel, but regular protests of a small group of professional activists was still being recorded, with local police being rather reticent to intervene and protect the construction sites. I remained in a listening mood.

For 6 July 2017, SNAM requested a brief meeting, confirming the progress on the Italian construction site but reconfirming also concerns vis-à-vis the protestors, which could cause considerable delays despite all relevant permits having been granted now. I expressed the hope and expectations, that contractual deadline were being abided.



On 3 September 2015, TAP asked for a meeting to report on increasing problems related to permitting procedures around the landing point in Puglia, which were rather of political domestic nature against the background of increasing tensions between the regional Governor and the federal Government in Rome. TAP asked to use available contacts with Italian authorities to ensure that agreed timeline will be met, respecting all legal requirements.

On 3 September 2015, I met with BP representatives on the SGC. BP is one of the biggest shareholders in the project and co-ordinating the implementation around Shaz Denis. They gave a positive account of the project implementation, but echoing concerns with possible delays in Italy and Greece.

SOCAR, with the representatives of TAP and TANAP, paid at their own request on 7 September 2015 a visit to me to give a state of play of the project implementation of the Southern gas corridor. Whereas the SCP and TANAP part were advancing well, problems were occurring notably in IT with the landing point (Puglia) and Greece (routing in Kavala). Financing questions were also outstanding. I took basically only note, whilst underlining the general political support of the European Commission for this project, as expressed at many occasions and also echoed by Heads of States at various occasions.

SNAM requested for 30 September 2015 a meeting to present the company's vision for Europe's gas infrastructure and how it could contribute to the Energy Union's diversification efforts to complete the internal energy market. The enquired about the Commission's estimations for future gas demands. I stayed mostly in a listening mode. On gas, I recalled the EU's commitments towards a decarbonisation path, which would also impact on the use of gas as a carbon fuel in the long-term. As for the medium-term, gas demand in our estimation would however stay stable, despite the increasing uptake of renewables, notably to compensate the inter-mittant character of RES.

TAP's Government relations team gave on 30 September 2015 a quick update on the situation in Greece and Italy with regards to permitting and routing issues. No major new developments, though. I reassured that we are in touch with colleagues of both administrations and received reassurances that agreed timelines were to be met.

TAP's Government relations team paid one of its regular visit to Brussels on 26 January 2016 to brief EU institutions and EU permanent representations about the project implementation progress of TAP. The conflict in Puglia was intensifying due to the domestic conflict between the regional Governor and the federal Government. The temporary removal of some olive trees was starting to incite local protests, with very little involvement of local enforcement bodies to protect the companies' sites. Again, I have stayed in listening mode, just emphasising our general policy line on the project.

On 22 February 2016, BP's Government relations team updated on the progress of the Shaz Deniz field, which would enable first gas transportation presumably in 2018 already to Turkey. I took note of the report and mentioned that a ministerial group was being set up to accompany at political level the project, which served as a strategic transportation route for Europe's diversification efforts.

TAP requested for 9 March 201<sup>6</sup>§ a short meeting to update on the situation in Italy, where obstacles in terms of permitting were not being removed and administrative procedures slowing down project implementation. TAP raised also the inauguration ceremony being planed for May in Thessaloniki, with the participation of Heads of States of the participating countries at the invitation of PM Tsipras.