EU-U.S. LNG TRADE

U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) has the potential to help match EU gas needs

In their Joint Statement of 25 July 2018, President Juncker and President Trump agreed to strengthen EU-U.S. strategic cooperation with respect to energy. The European Union would import more liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the United States to diversify and render its energy supply more secure. LNG imports from the U.S. have increased substantially ever since. March 2019 recorded the highest volume ever of EU-U.S. trade in LNG (more than 1.4 billion cubic meters). The High-level Business to Business Energy Forum on 2 May 2019 is a clear signal of the strengthened cooperation between the U.S. and the EU in this field.

U.S. LNG exports to the EU are on the rise (in billion cubic meters)

* Data until 24 April 2019
Source: European Commission.
**EU and U.S. in the global liquefied natural gas market**

The global liquefied natural gas market is becoming increasingly fluid and competitive. Between 2017 and 2023, global liquefied natural gas trade is expected to grow by more than 100 billion cubic meters, from 391 to 505. The International Energy Agency expects liquefied natural gas imports to Europe to increase by almost 20% by 2040 compared to 2016 levels.

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<th><strong>U.S.</strong></th>
<th><strong>EU</strong></th>
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<td>• Biggest gas producer in the world</td>
<td>• 2nd biggest gas consumer after the U.S.</td>
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<td>• Growing gas production</td>
<td>• Rapidly declining domestic gas production</td>
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<td>• Increasing gas exports</td>
<td>• Increasing gas imports (today 70% of demand); need to diversify imports to improve security of supply</td>
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<td>• U.S. is significantly increasing its LNG export infrastructure</td>
<td>• EU has strongly developed LNG import infrastructure with massively available capacity (utilisation rate 26%)</td>
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<td>• Additional LNG terminals in development, some with EU support</td>
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The increasing gas production in the U.S. and the start of U.S. LNG exports to the EU in 2016 have improved the security of gas supply in Europe and globally. Europe is currently importing around 70% of the gas it needs, and this share is expected to increase in the coming years. LNG is also an important part of the EU’s diversification strategy, and as the second biggest single gas market in the world after the U.S., the EU is therefore an attractive option for the U.S.

Natural gas plays a central role in the EU energy system - including in the context of the clean energy transition - accounting for 23% of energy demand.
The European LNG infrastructure

Further opportunities

In addition to being an insurance policy against threats to the security of gas supply, LNG can contribute to the fight against climate change. LNG is a good solution for air pollution in the maritime sector, as it allows meeting the standards of the International Maritime Organisation on maritime emissions, especially for sulfur (SOx) and nitrogen (NOx) oxides and the global sulphur cap (0.50% in 2020).

LNG-powered ships could be part of the answer as LNG produces up to 80% less emissions than fuel oil. In the EU €135 million have been already invested in Motorways of the Sea (MoS) on LNG maritime projects.

1. Liquefied natural gas tanker
2. Offshore liquid natural gas terminal, Świnoujście, Poland
3. Liquefied natural gas transport, Spain

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Next Steps

The EU and the U.S. have much to gain from the LNG trade as there is real potential for further increase LNG trade in the coming years. Since the July 2018 meeting of President Trump with President Juncker, U.S. LNG exports into Europe have increased by 272%, up to a total of 10.4 billion cubic meters. We will work to double the transatlantic trade of LNG to at least 8 billion cubic meters per year over the next four years. In addition, by strengthening their cooperation on energy matters, the E.U. and the U.S. will send a signal for all Europe, as well as to the rest of the world, of the advantages of U.S. LNG. The fact is that U.S. LNG, if priced competitively, can play an increasing role in EU gas supply, enhancing diversification and EU energy security.

Further transatlantic cooperation will include actions aimed at:

- Removing unnecessary U.S. LNG licencing barriers to accelerate U.S. exports
- Working on reciprocal solutions to provide equivalence for the purposes of access to markets
- Developing joint efforts to complete key missing infrastructures and investments in Europe to improve access to LNG
- Establish regular consultations and promotion activities with market operators to make U.S. the major gas supplier to Europe

Steep increase of U.S. LNG by EU Member States since the Trump-Juncker agreement in July 2018. Namely France, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, UK, Greece and Belgium purchased increasingly U.S. LNG.

* Data until 24 April 2019
Source: European Commission.