

[REDACTED] (ECHO)

From: [REDACTED]
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To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Debrief - Meeting NP with Eurogas representatives on European Green Deal

Today I met with three representatives of Eurogas: [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

They came to explain their position on the European Green Deal and the role of natural gas in the transition towards climate neutrality.

Eurogas regret that investment in gas is excluded from funding in the Commission's proposal for the Just Transition Fund, not so much because of the lost opportunity from the financing perspective, but because of the signal it sends about the role of gas in the transition towards climate neutrality. They assert that the modelling shows that in many parts of Europe the shift from coal to gas will be a necessary step to get there. Whereas this had been largely integrated and accepted as part of the climate narrative until recently, they say that the Green Deal has launched a new discussion on the role of gas and it is now being called into question: on the one hand, by certain EU Member States as a justification for sticking with coal until they can leap-frog towards alternative energy sources; on the other, by other non-EU big CO2 emitters [and, presumably, to gas exporting countries].

As regards energy in the geopolitical Commission, they pointed out that today, Europe has much more choice in terms of where it gets its gas. For a long time we were dependent on USSR/Russia, but this is no longer the case thanks to LNG. In this sense, it is important also from the security of (energy) supply perspective.

They also used the occasion to mention the work they are doing to make gas greener, including on biogas, clean hydrogen and carbon capture and storage. I asked a bit more about hydrogen. The problem is apparently that to make truly green hydrogen you also need truly green electricity, and the two combined make it far too expensive to be competitive. Producing hydrogen with methane, on the other hand, is less expensive but emits CO2. The solution here is carbon capture and storage. The industry is now re-investing in CCS technology. Total has a project in Norway which should demonstrate results, but publicly funded pilot projects are needed to test other options for combining different technologies.

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