Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1774 (2010)[1]
Final version

Enhancing Europe's energy security through greater use of liquefied natural gas

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Energy security is a crucial condition for the smooth functioning of statesand an essential factorin the competitiveness of European economies in the context of globalisation. It is an ongoing concern across all Europe as a series of recent gas crises and other incidents have demonstrated. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that achieving optimal levels of energy security in the Council of Europe member states is an ambitious economic task and a compelling reason for closer political co-operation.

2. Seeking to develop a common understanding of energy security risks and possible policy responses in greater Europe, the Assembly has repeatedly insisted on the importance of the diversification of energy sources, technologies and supply routes, in addition to the need for energy savings, sound investment choices and better co-ordinated energy policies across Europe. The Assembly is convinced that, despite current economic hardships, policy makers must remain focused on the strategic aim of sustainable long-term development underpinned by sufficient, affordable, accessible and clean energy, as well as a certain degree of cross-border solidarity and co-operation in the energy sector.

3. Although European countries employ a wide range of energy resources for serving their economies and households, most of them rely overwhelmingly on imported oil and gas. Moreover, many countries of central and eastern Europe depend on oil and gas imports from a single supplier and limited transport routes, which renders them particularly vulnerable to supply shocks, with direct economic, political and social consequences.

4. The security of future supplies of natural gas as one of the most important energy sources can be better secured by expanding the use of underexploited options such as liquefied natural gas (LNG). The Assembly notes that efforts aimed at developing LNG in Europe can make a significant contribution to enhanced national energy security, especially in central and eastern Europe. LNG systems could not only serve as a complementary element in case of unexpected failures of conventional energy supply structures, but also as a strategic part of the European energy system.

5. Making more extensive use of LNG systems would enable European countries to take full advantage of the rapidly growing global natural gas market, to make substantial long-term savings on their energy bill and to optimise storage and back-up capacities to compensate for shortages at peak times or in order to minimise disruptions in energy supplies in general. Moreover, countries with well-developed river and canal networks could envisage the development of LNG transportation to end users via inland waterways, thus creating a virtual pipeline network that avoids traffic congestion and permits LNG shipments to locations where geographic, demographic or environmental specificities do not justify laying down traditional pipelines.

6. In this context, the Assembly recalls that Europe has an extensive network of inland waterways that offer a comparatively cheap, efficient, clean and reliable mode of transport. As it stressed in its Resolution 1473 (2005) on European waterways: focus on the Danube-Oder-Elbe Canal project, this network offers a

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee,* acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 12 November 2010 (see Doc. 12424, report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, rapporteur: Mr Melčák; and Doc. 12425, opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Ünal).

strong, but largely untapped, potential for development, such as through the Danube-Oder-Elbe Canal project. With a view to fostering regional economic co-operation, multimodal transport links and LNG use, European countries should pay greater attention to the integrated management of their waterways and energy systems.

7. The Assembly welcomes the €4 billion energy infrastructure investment plan adopted by the European Union in 2009, the European Union's Energy Security and Solidarity Action Plan, and the Strategic Energy Technology Plan together with the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development for the 2007-2013 period, which could serve, among other things, to support the development of LNG facilities in the new European Union member states and candidate countries.

8. The Assembly therefore asks the Council of Europe member states to:

8.1. study current and future vulnerabilities in their energy use at national level with a view to putting in place adequate safety measures for coping with emergencies and making structural improvements towards further diversification and more effective use of their energy supplies;

8.2. initiate regional co-operation schemes for co-ordinated development of their LNG infrastructure and cross-border transport networks;

8.3. accelerate the preparatory works aiming at implementation of the Danube-Oder-Elbe waterway connection;

8.4. launch an international feasibility study on the development of an LNG transport network using the Danube River Basin;

8.5. work on the integrated management of their waterways and energy systems;

8.6. ensure that the additional burden placed on European transport routes (waterways, etc.) by the increase in traffic generated by transporting LNG does not have adverse effects on the environment that would ultimately be liable to counter the strategic advantages that were initially sought;

8.7. ensure that increased use of liquid natural gas would not result in an overall increase in the use of fossil fuels;

8.8. seize existing investment opportunities in the field of LNG infrastructure and technologies presented by the European Union's 2009 energy infrastructure investment plan, Energy Security and Solidarity Action Plan, and Strategic Energy Technology Plan;

8.9. review the feasibility of creating an independent operator of a European transmission system in the framework of the European Union's third liberalisation package for gas and electricity markets.

9. The Assembly decides to consider the issue of energy security in Europe in the light of environmental protection.