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

Committee Opinion¹

Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs

Rapporteur: Mr Mustafa ÜNAL, Turkey, Group of the European People's Party

A. Conclusions of the committee

The Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs congratulates the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, especially its rapporteur, Mr Melčák, on having examined the issue of using liquefied natural gas (LNG) in the context of energy security in Europe.

It does, however, regret that greater consideration was not given to environmental aspects. The committee considers it necessary and important to analyse and take account of the environmental impact of measures to reinforce energy security.

B. Proposed amendments to the draft resolution

Amendment A (to the draft resolution)

In the draft resolution, after paragraph 8.5, insert the following sub-paragraph:

“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, which are ultimately liable to counter the strategic advantages which were initially sought;”

Amendment B (to the draft resolution)

In the draft resolution, after paragraph 8.5, insert the following sub-paragraph:

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

Amendment C (to the draft resolution)

In the draft resolution, after paragraph 8, insert the following paragraph:

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

1. Reference to committee: [Doc. 11827](#), Reference 3537 of 29 May 2009. Reporting committee: Committee on Economic Affairs and Development. See [Doc. 12424](#). Opinion approved by the committee on 7 October 2010.



C. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Ünal, rapporteur for opinion

1. As already mentioned in the report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, it is important to diversify energy technologies and supplies and to secure better co-ordinated energy policies across Europe in order to improve energy security throughout the continent.
2. In this context, special importance is attached to developing LNG systems, in view of the energy crisis arising from the instability of pipeline supplies from gas sources in Russia. The report by the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development rightly points out that LNG systems could serve not only as a complementary element in the event of unexpected failures of conventional energy supplies but also as a strategic part of the European energy system, in addition to introducing new supply sources and routes for pipeline gas.
3. The fact that LNG is a non-toxic, non-corrosive, non-flammable and non-explosive gas, which evaporates quickly in the event of accidental spillage, is a considerable argument in favour of intensifying its use. In fact, since state-of-the-art technologies are used for liquefaction, storage for transport and re-gasification, there are no major risks in these areas.
4. Nevertheless, it is vital to take account of the side effects of such a development on the environment. Using rail, road and especially waterways to transport LNG entails certain environmental hazards, including increased traffic, which leads to increased air pollution.
5. Of course, the choice to intensify the transport of gas in liquefied form corresponds to strategic needs and would greatly boost energy security in many countries. Nevertheless, in the current context of combating climate change, the advantages of such a choice should be weighed against the drawbacks which it would cause at other levels, namely greenhouse gas emissions.
6. In the light of the above comments, the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs considers that urgent discussions are needed on the issue of energy security in Europe and its impact on the environment.