



FRIENDS OF THE EARTH EUROPE

Media briefing

Embargoed until: 00.01 CET Tuesday November 7, 2017

Media Briefing: Can the climate afford Europe's gas addiction?

New research from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research shows the incompatibility of EU climate action in line with its commitments under the Paris Agreement, and continued gas use.

Friends of the Earth Europe commissioned a team of climate change scientists to determine how much gas Europe can afford to use in its future energy mix. The findings reveal the urgency with which Europe needs to phase-out all fossil fuels.

Continued support for gas risks exceeding the EU's carbon budget in the short term and locking-in Europe to a fossil fuel future incompatible with its commitments under the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 'well below 2°C' and to 'pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°'.

But, urged on by the fossil fuel companies at the heart of the climate crisis, Europe is still planning for decades of fossil fuel use including support and subsidies for new gas infrastructure.

Key findings of 'Natural gas and climate change' by Professor Kevin Anderson and Doctor John Broderick:

- **At current levels of emissions the EU will use up its 2°C carbon budget in just nine years**
- **Fossil fuels – including natural gas – can have no substantial role beyond 2035 in an EU energy system compatible with staying below 2°C**
- **Methane emissions are at dangerously high levels, as high as the “top end of IPCC scenarios”**
- **Recent empirical studies of fossil fuel producing areas have found official methane emissions levels reported by governments to be large underestimates**
- **Methane emissions from man-made sources, including gas leaks, are likely to add 0.6°C to global warming**
- **The transportation of Liquefied Natural Gas increases its climate change impact by an average of 20%, and by up to 134%.**

Anderson and Broderick conclude, “*considering both carbon dioxide and methane emissions, an urgent programme to phase out existing natural gas and other fossil fuel use across the EU is an imperative of any scientifically informed and equity-based policies designed to deliver on the Paris Agreement*”.

Despite the climate change impacts of gas, the oil and gas industry is now heavily investing in gas and aggressively promoting it as a 'clean' fuel which has an 'indefinite' future.

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Today, the EU and its member states spend €112 billion per year on fossil fuels subsidies, much of it to support gas. The European Commission has, for instance, invested over a billion Euro in gas infrastructure since 2014 while the EU has also backed multiple gas projects with loans and research funds. This infrastructure is set to last for decades to come with European climate commissioner Arias Cañete saying that gas will “still be there” in 2050.¹

Friends of the Earth Europe recommends:

- **The EU’s energy system needs to be transformed rapidly to be fossil fuel free by 2030².**
- **The EU should immediately end all fossil fuel subsidies, including grants or loans to gas infrastructure projects, and ensure that the next EU budget is a fossil free budget.**
- **The EU and its member states should halt support for all fossil fuel projects, including LNG terminals and gas pipelines such as the Southern Gas Corridor, and stop any new exploration for oil, gas and coal and ban unconventional fossil fuels such as tar sands and shale gas.**

ENDS

Visit www.foeeurope.org/NoRoomForGas for:

- the full report, ‘Can the climate afford Europe’s gas addiction?’ by Friends of the Earth Europe
- the research report, ‘Natural gas and climate change’, by Anderson and Broderick

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With its Fossil Free Europe vision, Friends of the Earth Europe is working to create the much-needed, fair and urgent transition to a fossil fuel free Europe by 2030. This means dismantling the fossil fuel system and creating the just, clean energy future that people want and need.

www.foeeurope.org/fossilfreeeurope

Friends of the Earth Europe is the largest grassroots environmental network in Europe, uniting more than 30 national organisations with thousands of local groups. We are the European arm of Friends of the Earth International which unites 74 national member organisations, 5,000 local activist groups, and over two million supporters around the world. www.foeeurope.org

¹ <https://www.politico.eu/sponsored-content/canete-gas-is-a-bridge-between-coal-and-renewables-but-in-2050-itll-still-be-there/>

² To pursue efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C, gas and other fossil fuels would need to be phased-out even faster than 2035.