

5th October 2022

European Parliament
1047 Brussels
Belgium

OBJECT: TIME HAS COME FOR MUCH TOUGHER METHANE EMISSIONS RULES

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

Methane is the main component of fossil gas. It is a potent greenhouse gas responsible for about 30% of global warming since pre-industrial times. Nearly 60% of global methane emissions are a result of human activity¹, and the energy sector, including oil, fossil gas, coal and bioenergy, accounts for around 40% of human-made methane emissions². Decisive measures to rapidly address methane emissions from the energy and petrochemical sectors **need to be coupled with long-term plans to phase-out fossil fuels.**

As negotiations progress on the European Commission's proposal for a Regulation on methane emissions reduction in the energy sector and amending Regulation (EU) 2019/942, **we write you to express our deep concern about the serious lack of ambition** shown in the ENVI (Environment, Public Health and Food Safety) and ITRE (Industry, Research and Energy) draft joint report. **We urge MEPs to amend this draft in line with the 1.5°C climate objective.**

The signatories of this letter urge MEPs to **support a binding methane emissions reduction target.** A minimum reduction of 80% of methane emissions in the energy sector by 2030, alongside a decline in the use of fossil fuels, would capture the social benefits of methane mitigation at less than their cost and could help us reach a fossil free economy by 2035. This will contribute positively to limiting global warming to 1.5°C³ and would allow the EU to effectively take the lead in fighting methane emissions.

Moreover, we ask you to **strengthen methane reduction measures on energy imports.** The EU imports 90% of its gas consumption, 97% of its oil and 70% of its coal needs. Most of the EU's emissions happen outside European borders, and we cannot outsource our methane emissions. This is why domestic provisions not only on Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV), but primarily on Leak Detection and Repair (LDAR) and Limits on Venting and Flaring (LVF) should cover the entire life-cycle emissions of oil, fossil gas and coal consumed in the EU. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has resulted in a race to secure Liquefied 'Natural' Gas (LNG) supplies, bringing with it a high risk of increasing fugitive methane emissions during production, processing and transportation of fossil gas to Europe. **North America's LNG is largely sourced from hydraulic fracturing (fracking) wells,**

¹ Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2021, *Global Methane Assessment*,
<https://www.unep.org/resources/report/global-methane-assessment-benefits-and-costs-mitigating-methane-emissions>

² International Energy Agency (IEA), *Global Methane Tracker 2022*,
<https://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2022>

³ International Energy Agency (IEA), *Curtailing Methane Emissions from Fossil Fuel Operations: Pathways to a 75% Cut by 2030 and Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector*,
<https://www.iea.org/reports/curtailing-methane-emissions-from-fossil-fuel-operations>

which has devastating climate, environmental and health impacts. **We are calling again on the EU to refrain from importing fracked gases.**

The draft report also fails to **ensure leaks of any size are repaired as soon as detected.** This is key, as methane is an extremely fast-acting greenhouse gas; there is no time to lose.

The European Parliament should also stress that fulfilling the requirements of the regulation **cannot provide a justification for oil and gas companies to keep investing in fossil fuels.** A strict verification system needs to guarantee that the fossil fuel industry does not mislead consumers by promoting fossil gas as 'clean' even if methane emissions are reduced, as is already happening in the USA.⁴ As pointed out by the European Parliament in its INI report⁵ on an EU Strategy to reduce methane emissions, '*fossil fuels have no long-term role in the Union's energy mix*'. The Methane Regulation should include a **clear reference to urge Member States to implement comprehensive fossil fuel phase-out strategies**, in tandem with investments towards an energy efficient and 100% sustainable renewables-based economy.

Ultimately, **fossil fuel companies need to be held financially responsible for the cost of reducing methane emissions.** It is key to enforce the *polluter pays principle*, avoiding the burden of methane emission reduction costs falling on consumers, as is currently possible under the proposal. Millions of people across Europe cannot pay their energy bills and soaring energy prices are further worsening the situation. We therefore urge MEPs to stress the need for the energy industry to bear the full cost of these measures.

It is time for bold measures to cut methane emissions that are independent of the fossil fuel industry's interests. The rules must be integrated in comprehensive plans to phase-out fossil fuels and invest in 100% sustainable renewable energy; this is the only way to secure a liveable future for our planet!

We remain at your disposal if you wish to discuss this further or require any additional information.

Yours sincerely,

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⁴ Global Witness, 2022, *US gas can't certify away its climate and environmental justice problems*, <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/fossil-gas/us-gas-cant-certify-away-its-climate-and-environmental-justice-problems/>

⁵ European Parliament, INI report on the EU Methane Strategy, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0436_EN.pdf

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