

European Union

Fracking: Coming to your doorstep



One eighth of total EU gas consumption in 2022 is estimated to be fracked US gas.

Imports of US gas into the EU represent 23% of the fossil gas consumption in the 11 EU LNG importer countries, which adds up to 14% of total EU gas consumption - and almost all of it is fracked. Fracking is a disaster for our climate and for communities affected by the brutal drilling method. Europe must swiftly move off all fossil gas for a safe liveable future.

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Fossil gas, no matter its origin, is no solution for Europe. Russian gas has proven to be synonymous for supply insecurity and weaponization of the EU's dirty energy dependency. The EU's aim to get off Russian gas could be a big chance to accelerate a just transition. So far, EU-leaders and European governments have chosen to go into the wrong direction embracing LNG as a dirty fix, while largely ignoring real solutions.

US LNG imports more than doubled between 2021 and 2022 alone, with 55 billion cubic metres (bcm) of the dirty fuel arriving in the EU last year. This is close to the total amount imported between 2021 and 2016, when the US started exporting to Europe. Simply moving Europe's gas addiction from Russia to LNG imports is a big problem. This briefing takes a closer look at fossil gas imports from the US, which are almost entirely fracked.

SPOTLIGHT FRACKED GAS

U.S. LNG terminals are primarily supplied by a pipeline network that links them directly to shale basins around the country where fracking is the dominant mode of production. While the Gulf Coast terminals are close to the offshore production in the Gulf of Mexico, which is produced conventionally (i.e. not fracked), the LNG terminals procure most of their gas from the fracking-dominated onshore sources.

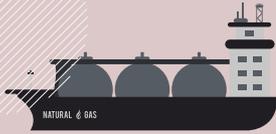
US Energy Information Administration data states that **87% of gas produced in the U.S.** is shale and tight gas, which needs to be **extracted via hydraulic**

fracturing, or fracking.

If we assume that U.S. gas exports to the EU in 2022 follow this same proportion, it means that **fracked US gas represents 20% of all gas consumed in the LNG importing countries** (Belgium, Croatia, France, Greece, The Netherlands, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and Spain) in 2022. Compared to the fossil gas consumption of all EU countries during that same time, fracked gas makes up a share of 12%. That means **over one eighth of the gas we cook and heat with and which is used in industry processes in the EU is fracked** and harming communities in the U.S. as well as our climate.

” I live in New Mexico in the Permian Basin region. In my little area of the state alone there are **over 18,006 oil and gas production sites. In rural neighborhoods like mine, there are **frac sites next to homes**. My home has **four natural gas pipelines running through the property**. Many of these production sites have a terrible smell and the people who live near them get used to it as **there is no other choice**. Areas like mine send oil and gas to refinery plants that ship product out of the country. **Maybe gas and petroleum from my neighborhood has made it all the way to your neighborhood.** ”**

Jozee, New Mexico resident impacted by fracking



621 vessels with US LNG reached the EU in 2022. The **biggest importers** of US gas in Europe in terms of volumes are **France, followed by Spain and The Netherlands.** These three countries alone received 39 bcm of US LNG, that's 70% of the imported volumes from the US.

On the other hand, smaller EU countries are leading the pack when it comes to comparing import volumes with the gas consumption of the import country: **Lithuania's US LNG imports are higher than its consumption** (135%), followed by **Croatia, whose US gas imports represent over 75% of the volumes it consumed** in January-September.

That means that these countries likely re-export a large share of the US gas received via ship or via pipeline to neighbouring EU countries. The by far biggest US export terminal supplying dirty US gas to the EU in 2022 was **Sabine Pass terminal in Louisiana, followed by Corpus Christi terminal in Texas.** Both pollution-spewing terminals are **owned by Cheniere, America's largest fracked LNG company.** Cheniere cashes in big on the polluting business: in 2022 it reported more than double its revenues compared to last year. At the same time the company grossly underestimates the climate impact of its product, providing misleading

What is Fracking?

Fracking is the process of drilling down into the earth before a large quantity of water, sand and chemicals are injected into the rock at high pressure, allowing oil and gas to flow to the surface. Fracking is linked to a global spike of methane in the atmosphere, and methane is over 86 times more climate damaging than CO2. Fracking pollutes drinking water and produces large amounts of toxic, even radioactive wastewater. It is causing indescribable harm to impacted communities, poses a threat to indigenous rights and land and leads to several public health problems.

Fracking can trigger earthquakes and drives the petrochemicals and plastics boom as well as destructive infrastructure buildout.

Fracking is a technology widely banned across the EU over environmental concerns.

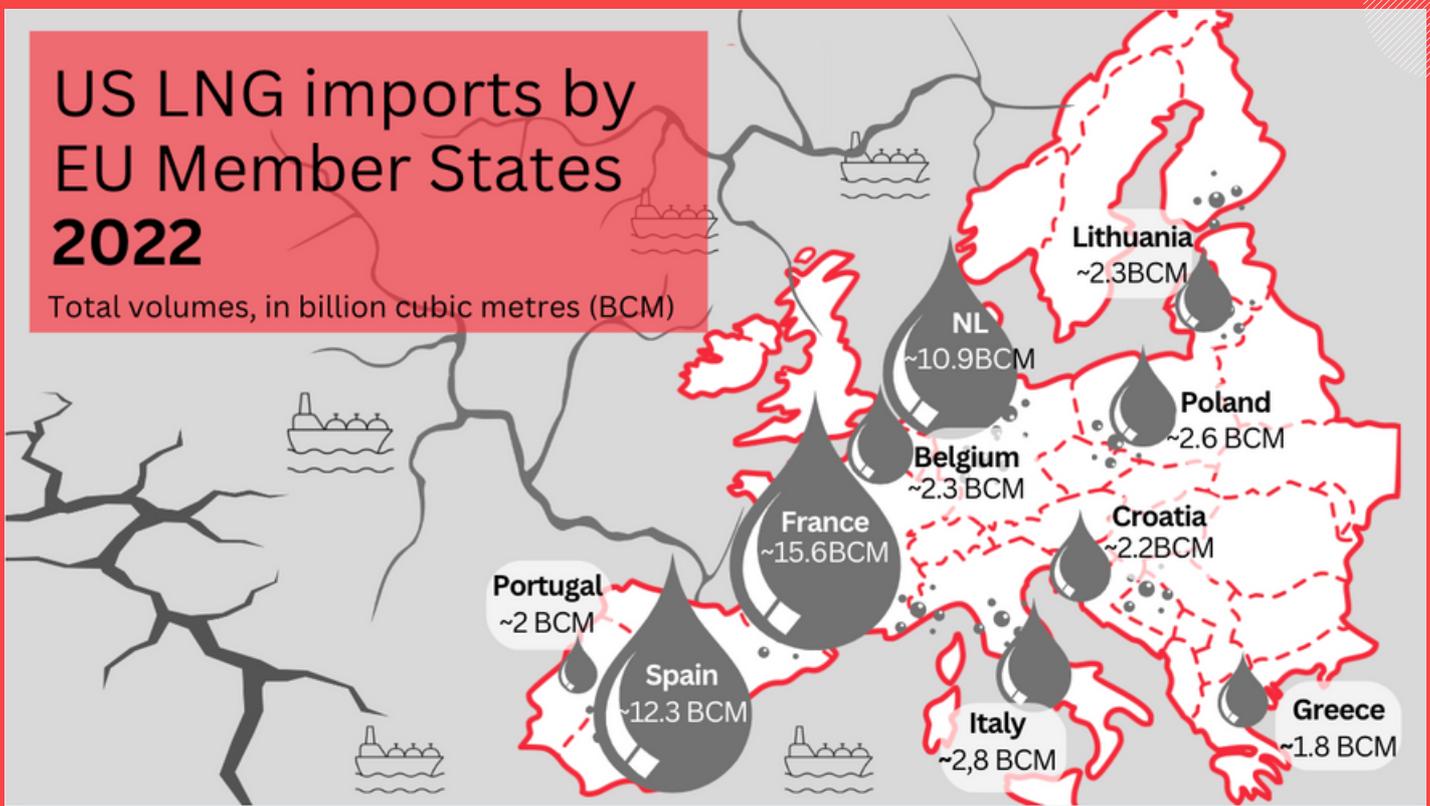
information, and lobbying to weaken measures that protect communities impacted by its dirty business.

Despite the fact that **seven out of the eleven LNG importing EU countries have either bans or moratoria on fracking, or even all hydrocarbon extraction** (France, Croatia, Germany, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain) or don't extract fossil fuels on their territory (Belgium), there is **no ban on importing fracked gas in any of these countries.**

On the contrary, the **EU LNG importing countries imported 55 billion cubic metres of US gas in 2022.**

US LNG imports by EU Member States 2022

Total volumes, in billion cubic metres (BCM)



US LNG - A COSTLY DIRTY BET

LNG imports have been portrayed as a flexible energy supply saving Europe. A solution for immediate gas needs as a result of embargoes and cuts of gas flows from Russia is indeed necessary, but **LNG can only be a short term emergency solution**. The veritable LNG import and LNG infrastructure expansion frenzy Europe witnesses today is a dangerous and disproportionate reaction to the energy crisis. **Europe must not create a risky, dirty LNG dependence which comes at a high price and is no solution for energy poverty.**

The EU-US LNG import deal of 50 bcm annually, which was actually even topped by last years' **LNG shipments to the EU, is estimated to cost Europe €64bn through 2025**. It also comes with high climate costs - the **US import deal with Europe will lead to emissions equalling those of 100 coal plants each year**. While Russian gas is clearly no solution for Europe, it is clear that LNG is a dangerous climate bomb: Rystad analysis finds that **emissions from LNG are up to 10 times higher** than piped gas from Norway.

GAS BULLY EUROPE

The import infrastructure build-out plans in EU countries are nothing short of delusional, with over **195 billion cubic meters of new LNG import capacity planned or under construction**, that's more than the amount of Russian gas

the EU imported before the invasion of Ukraine. Such **massive LNG expansion plans** can be seen across the globe and risk making it **impossible to keep the world at 1.5 degrees of global warming**.

At the same time, **global additional LNG supply capacity is expected to only grow by 20 bcm** in 2023. A decades-long lock-in to the dirty fuel, or the creation of huge stranded assets will be the consequence. Further, several long-term contracts for 10-15 or more years have been or are expected to be made. This **LNG frenzy already has devastating impacts across the globe**. Egypt is now burning dirtier fuels to be able to sell more gas to Europe. Pakistan suffers significant blackouts after the country can't buy LNG, as it is outbid by wealthy EU countries. Gas-hungry Germany is estimated to be able to bid high enough to trigger the breaking of long term contracts with poorer countries that

can't afford paying that much for the LNG they are painfully dependent on.

Wasting money on the dirty LNG bet also **blocks funds we desperately need to get off gas and to ensure *real* European energy security**, failing also to stop Europe from being at the mercy of importers like Azerbaijan, Russia (which increased LNG exports to Europe by 40% between Jan-Oct 2022 compared to the same period in 2021), Qatar, or the dirty fracking world champion USA.

Stopping the rush for LNG is needed to avoid turning Europe, the biggest LNG importer on the planet, into a gas-bully.

WE CAN STOP FRACKING IMPORTS!

We ask for:

- Permanent and **ambitious fossil gas consumption reduction** in Europe, managed in a just and fair way to prioritize the energy poor and ensure no one is left behind in the switch to clean energy.
- An immediate **stop to all public funding for new fossil gas infrastructure**
- **Money to be directed at solutions** and adapting legal requirements to facilitate the **upscaling of renewables and energy efficiency**. This means further investments in geothermal, wind, solar, and solar electrification, demand side response, and smart energy storage solutions etc. which will fight climate change more efficiently, cheaply and with less public health risks while creating thousands of new clean energy and climate jobs.
- The **blocking of the undue influence the fossil fuel industry has on climate and energy policy**. Just like the tobacco lobby isn't invited to draft health legislation, big oil and gas must not have a say in developing legislation to protect our climate.

Methodology

- Analysed time period: 1. January - 31 December 2022
- Malta, despite importing US gas, is not considered in the country ranking, given with 0,13 bcm its imports are very small. Also Finland and Germany, countries that received first shipments of US LNG in December 2022, are not included in the country rankings.
- U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) figures show that in 2021, 87% of the gas extracted in the United States was shale/tight gas. This gas is extracted by fracking.
- <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/natural-gas/where-our-natural-gas-comes-from.php>. U.S. East Coast LNG terminals exporting to Europe contain different shares, but often close to 100% fracked gas.
- Data on LNG vessel origin, destination & volumes from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) [<https://www.energy.gov/fecm/articles/lng-monthly-2022>] was compared with Eurostat monthly data on gas consumption [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nrg_cb_gasm/default/table?lang=en]
- Note: Gas imports into an EU member state are often higher than the total consumption of that country as imported LNG is often transported further into Europe, eg. from Greece to Bulgaria, from The Netherlands to Germany, from Italy to Austria etc. or injected into storage facilities.
- Underlying calculations and data can be found here: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NxVyECIvqy23uc9AeLPxiFZxgtrzzP0Y4uF1pUlfNU8/edit#gid=0>

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