

Netherlands Fracking: Coming to your doorstep

Imports of U.S. liquid gas into the Netherlands soared in 2022, representing 59% of total LNG imports and 34% of total gas consumption in the country – and almost all of it comes from fracking. In order to avoid climate catastrophe, Europe and the Netherlands should decrease their dependence on U.S. fracked gas as fast as possible.

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, however, EU-leaders and European governments have chosen to go into the wrong direction embracing LNG as a dirty fix, while largely ignoring real solutions. 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 U.S., which are almost entirely fracked.

SPOTLIGHT FRACKED GAS

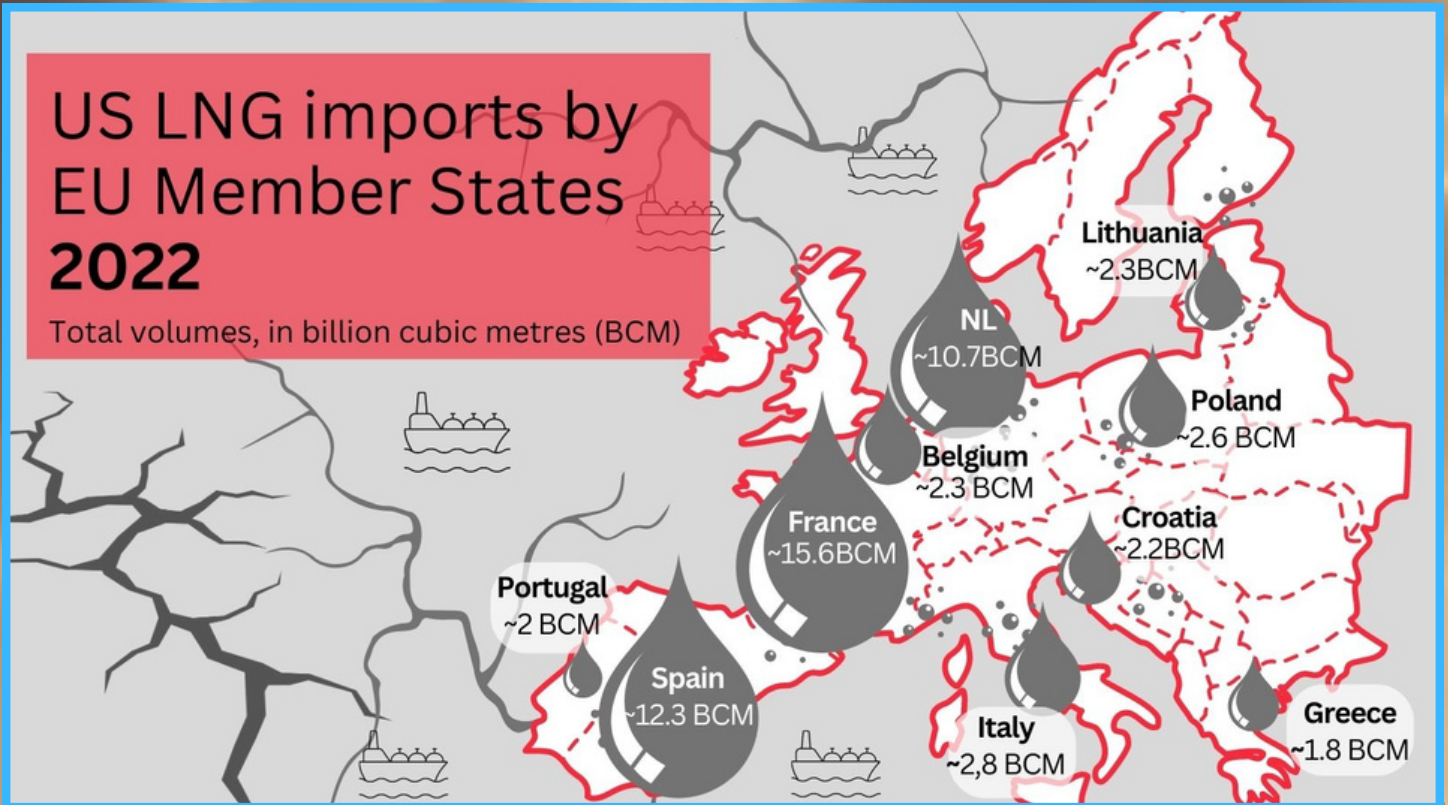
U.S. governmental data states that 87% of their gas production is from shale and tight gas, which needs to be extracted via hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. If we assume that U.S. gas exports to the Netherlands follow this same proportion, it means that fracked gas represents 30% of all gas consumed in the country (25% when including storage). The Netherlands has received 111 vessels with U.S. gas between January and December 2022, making it the third biggest importer of U.S. fracked gas, after France and Spain.

The majority of these vessels were filled at the Sabine Pass export terminal in Louisiana. Residents in the nearby city of Port Arthur are exposed to a range of polluting chemicals, lack clean air, and suffer from diverse health impacts as a consequence. People of color in Port Arthur are 40% more likely to contract cancer than anywhere else in the country. The Sabine Pass terminal and its owner Cheniere are heavily financed by the Dutch ING bank.

So despite the fact that the Dutch government has passed a fracking moratorium in 2015, there is no ban on importing the climate-wrecking fuel. The Netherlands imported 10.7 billion cubic metres (bcm) of almost entirely fracked U.S. gas between January and December 2022.

US LNG imports by EU Member States 2022

Total volumes, in billion cubic metres (BCM)



U.S. 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 is estimated to cost Europe €64bn through 2025. It also comes with high climate costs - the U.S. import deal with Europe will lead to emissions equalling those of 100 coal plants each year.



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 and leads to several public health problems. Fracking can trigger earthquakes and drives the petrochemicals and plastics boom as well as destructive infrastructure build-out. Fracking is a technology widely banned across the EU over environmental concerns.

"I live in New Mexico in the Permian Basin region. In my little area of the state alone there are over 18,000 oil and gas production sites. In rural neighborhoods like mine, there are fracking 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, U.S. resident impacted by fracking

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. 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 the Netherlands, 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, insulation, smart energy storage solutions etc. These 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
- 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) LNG Monthly 2022, <https://www.energy.gov/fecm/articles/lng-monthly-2022>
- Domestic gas consumption data for 2022 from Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, <https://opendata.cbs.nl/#/CBS/nl/dataset/00372/table?dl=76F4B>
- Our calculations can be found here:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15Y9yoN3HRcu4BcTSq73LB0KAftjgBN9mZJNYEcAuiq0/edit?usp=sharing>

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