

PRESS RELEASE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF EUROGAS REELECTS WILLY BOSMANS PRESIDENT, WELCOMES WINGAS AND SOTEG AND IS ADDRESSED BY FABRIZIO BARBASO, DEPUTY GENERAL DIRECTOR DG TREN.

The General Assembly of Eurogas took place in Bratislava today on the invitation of SPP, its Slovak company member who organized and hosted the event. The General Assembly re-elected Willy Bosmans, Distrigas Belgium, President of Eurogas for a two years term. This event was also the occasion for the President to welcome officially two new company members, which joined the organization, namely *Wingas* from Germany and *SOTEG* from Luxembourg.

In his speech, Willy Bosmans referred to the globalisation of the natural gas business, to the increase of gas consumption and to the declining European production. These lead to an important supply gap that Europe will need to fill. Europe will therefore compete with other world regions and gas companies will have to invest in upstream activities but also in transmission, LNG and storage to be able to meet European gas demand.

Against this background, Mr. Bosmans underlined that Eurogas fully supports the objectives of the Green Paper of a secure, sustainable and competitive energy for Europe. He presented to this General Assembly Eurogas results of a strategic reflection on how natural gas can contribute to realise these objectives.

For Eurogas the first priority is and remains to implement fully the existing European legislation and to fulfil the voluntary commitments which are the prerequisite for a well-functioning market.

The second priority is to focus on achieving further European market integration. Eurogas is supportive of a closer level of cooperation between the regulators and more harmonization. Market integration implies that the rules are in place to ensure non-discriminatory access to grids as well as capacity allocation and congestion management rules that optimise the use of existing capacity. Eurogas welcomes EREGEG's initiative to create regional gas markets as a first pragmatic step.

The important new investments needed to secure future supplies to Europe have to be supported by a policy conducive to these.

He concluded by underlining that to deliver security of supply, **negotiations between buyers and sellers at industry level** must remain the basis for organizing European gas supplies. This should be supported by **sound political bi-lateral and multi-lateral relations** with producing and transit countries, facilitated by European level dialogues.

In its policy session, the General Assembly welcomed two special guests; **Mr. Fabrizio Barbaso, Deputy Director General of DG Transport and Energy** in charge of the coordination of the energy policy and **Mr. Michel Catinat, Head of Unit DG Enterprise**. They presented the Commission's views on competitiveness and key challenges facing the natural gas industry.

In his speech, Mr. Barbaso mentioned the key goals and instruments of the announced Strategic EU Energy Review which include a clear policy on securing and diversifying energy supplies; the partnership with producers, transit countries and other international actors; a new initiative for cooperation with Russia; developing a Pan-European Energy Community by building on the Energy Community Treaty with partners in South-East Europe; reacting effectively to external crisis and finally integrating energy into other policies with an external dimension.

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