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P8\_TA(2016)0406

**EU strategy for liquefied natural gas and gas storage****European Parliament resolution of 25 October 2016 on EU strategy for liquefied natural gas and gas storage (2016/2059(INI))**

(2018/C 215/22)

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission communication of 16 February 2016 on an EU strategy for liquefied natural gas and gas storage (COM(2016)0049),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 25 February 2015 entitled ‘A Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy’ (COM(2015)0080) and the annexes thereto,
- having regard to the 2030 Energy Strategy, as outlined in the Commission communication of 22 January 2014, ‘A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 to 2030’ (COM(2014)0015),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 23 July 2014 entitled ‘Energy Efficiency and its contribution to energy security and the 2030 Framework for climate and energy policy’ (COM(2014)0520),
- having regard to the Fifth IPCC assessment report — Working Group I report, ‘Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis’,
- having regard to Directive 2014/94/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure <sup>(1)</sup>,
- having regard to the Paris Agreement reached in December 2015 at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 15 December 2011 on the Energy Roadmap 2050 (COM(2011)0885),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 8 March 2011 entitled ‘Roadmap for moving to a competitive low-carbon economy in 2050’ (COM(2011)0112),
- having regard to the Third Energy Package,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 16 February 2016 entitled ‘An EU Strategy on Heating and Cooling’ (COM(2016)0051),
- having regard to Directive 2012/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on energy efficiency, amending Directives 2009/125/EC and 2010/30/EU and repealing Directives 2004/8/EC and 2006/32/EC,
- having regard to the Special Report No 16/2015 of the European Court of Auditors, ‘Improving the security of energy supply by developing the internal energy market: more efforts needed’,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 December 2015 entitled ‘Towards a European Energy Union’ <sup>(2)</sup>,

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<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 307, 28.10.2014, p. 1.

<sup>(2)</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0444.

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- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the opinions of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on International Trade, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A8-0278/2016),
- A. whereas gas can play an important role in the EU energy system for the coming decades, in industrial production and as a source of heat in buildings and as a support to renewable energy while the EU meets its targets on greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency and renewables and makes the transition to a low-carbon economy in which the role of gas will gradually decrease in favour of clean energies;
- B. whereas natural gas is a fossil fuel that can emit significant amounts of methane along its life cycle (production, transport, consumption) if not managed properly; whereas methane has a global warming potential significantly higher than CO<sub>2</sub> on a 20-year timescale and thus has a considerable impact on climate change;
- C. whereas the European Union is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 80- 95 % below 1990 levels by 2050;
- D. whereas European gas import dependency in the upcoming years is expected to grow, and in certain Member States has already reached 100 % in cases where there are no or limited numbers of alternative suppliers or supply routes;
- E. whereas liquefied natural gas (LNG) presents an opportunity for Europe in terms of both increasing competitiveness by exerting downward pressure on natural gas prices and increasing security of supply; whereas natural gas is also a flexible backup to renewables in electricity production;
- F. whereas using natural gas in transportation (CNG and LNG), as provided for by Directive 2014/94/EU on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure, would generate great environmental benefits;
- G. whereas the EU should actively pursue the development of its domestic conventional gas resources, such as those discovered in Cyprus;
- H. whereas the EU, as the second largest LNG importer in the world, should play a more proactive role in the international energy diplomacy arena;
- I. whereas it is important to promote an integrated proposal for the use of indigenous energy sources, such as natural gas deposits in the Cyprus EEZ, and to support the creation of a LNG liquefaction terminal in Cyprus in order to exploit deposits from neighbouring areas also;
- J. whereas the EU is still not able to fully exploit the benefits of an integrated internal energy market, owing to a lack of sufficient interconnections and coherence and the incomplete implementation of the Third Energy Package;
- K. whereas the framework strategy for a resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy defines five mutually reinforcing and closely interrelated dimensions, namely: energy security; a fully integrated European energy market; energy efficiency; decarbonisation of the economy; and research, innovation and competitiveness; whereas the strategy should also promote affordable energy prices for all;

### **Introduction**

1. Welcomes the Commission communication entitled 'An EU strategy for liquefied natural gas and gas storage'; believes that an internal energy market which fully integrates LNG and gas storage will play a significant role in achieving the ultimate objective of a resilient Energy Union;

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2. Recalls that the EU strategy for LNG and gas storage is one element of the Energy Union, which aims to give concrete expression to the EU's ambition to bring about a quick transition to a sustainable, secure and competitive energy system, and also aims to end dependence on external gas suppliers; stresses that one of the goals of the Energy Union is to make the EU the world leader in renewable energies;
3. whereas, in line with the COP 21 Paris Agreement, the EU gas policy needs to be adapted to comply with the concluded goal of limiting the global temperature rise to 1,5 °C above pre-industrial levels; whereas gas is expected to continue to play a role in the EU energy system until 2050 when, in accordance with the Paris Agreement and the EU Energy Roadmap, greenhouse gas emissions will have to be reduced to 80-95 % below 1990 levels, especially in industrial production and as a source of heat in buildings; whereas the role of gas will diminish and needs to be phased out in the long term as the EU meets its ambitious targets on greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency and renewables and makes the transition to a sustainable economy;
4. Is of the opinion that energy security can be achieved in the most efficient way through better coordination of national energy policies, the establishment of a real Energy Union with a single energy market, and a common energy policy, as well as through cooperation among the Member States on the matter in accordance with the principles of solidarity and trust; believes, in this context, that further integration of energy policy should be for the benefit of the Member States, in line with EU targets and international obligations as well as with the stated objectives, and should not conflict with the interests of the Member States or their citizens; supports the efforts to forge a common EU position in multilateral energy institutions and frameworks;
5. Considers that all EU citizens must have access to a secure and affordable energy supply; highlights, in this context, current developments in global LNG markets, where oversupply has led to lower prices, presenting an opportunity to deliver lower energy costs to EU consumers through relatively cheaper gas supplies; stresses that safe, affordable, sustainable energy is a key driving force in the European economy and is essential for industrial competitiveness; calls for the EU and its Member States, as part of the EU energy strategy, to give priority to eliminating energy poverty, and to enhance energy supply through the sharing of best practices at EU level;
6. Stresses that an EU strategy for LNG must be consistent with the framework strategy for a resilient Energy Union, so as to contribute to increased security of energy supply, decarbonisation, the long-term sustainability of the economy and the delivery of affordable and competitive energy prices;
7. Agrees with the assessment of the Commission that Member States in the Baltic Sea region and in central and south-eastern Europe, and Ireland — despite the huge infrastructure development efforts realised by certain Member States — are still heavily reliant on a single supplier and are exposed to supply shocks and disruptions;
8. Acknowledges that the availability of LNG, including supporting pipeline infrastructure, in these Member States could significantly improve the current supply security situation not only in physical but also in economic terms, contributing to more competitive energy prices;
9. Urges the Commission and the Member States to promote and incentivise a more efficient and better use of existing infrastructure, including gas storage;
10. Draws attention to the potential of power-to-gas technology to store renewable energies and to make them usable as carbon-neutral gas for transport, heating and power generation;
11. Stresses the need to make the EU gas system more diverse and flexible, thus contributing to the key Energy Union objective of a secure, resilient and competitive gas supply; calls on the Commission to develop a strategy that aims at lessening EU gas dependency in the long term, reflecting its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emission to 80-95 %

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below 1990 levels by 2050, and stresses in this regard that treating energy efficiency as a 'first principle' and gradually phasing out fossil subsidies would significantly reduce the EU's dependency on imported fossil fuels;

12. Recalls that the Parliament has repeatedly called for binding climate and energy targets for 2030 of at least a 40 % domestic reduction in GHG emissions, at least 30 % for renewables and 40 % for energy efficiency, to be implemented by means of individual national targets;

13. Stresses the need, before supporting new regasification terminals, to promote the most efficient use of existing LNG terminals from a cross-border perspective, so to avoid technology lock-in or stranded assets in fossil fuel infrastructure and ensure that consumers do not have to bear the costs of any new projects; believes that the Commission needs to carefully revise its analysis for gas demand and risks and needs assessments;

### **Completing missing infrastructure**

#### *LNG infrastructure*

14. Recalls that the EU as a whole is sufficiently supplied with LNG regasification terminals, and acknowledges that, owing to weak internal gas demand in past years and a relatively high global LNG price, several of the EU's LNG regasification terminals are experiencing low utilisation rates; underlines that all Member States, especially those depending on a single supplier, should have access to LNG, either directly or indirectly through other Member States;

15. Underlines that, in most cases, priority should be given to market-based solutions and to the utilisation of existing LNG infrastructure on a regional level; notes, however, that solutions can be different depending on national and market specificities, such as level of interconnectivity, availability of storage solutions and market structure;

16. Stresses that in order to avoid stranded assets, it is necessary to carry out a careful analysis of LNG supply alternatives and options from a regional as well as an environmentally sustainable perspective, taking account of the Union's climate and energy targets and the principle of geographical balance, before deciding on new infrastructure, in order to improve energy security and guarantee the most efficient use of existing infrastructure;

17. Stresses the importance of regional cooperation when building new LNG terminals and interconnections, and underlines that Member States with access to the sea should cooperate closely with landlocked countries in order to avoid over-investment in unnecessary and uneconomic projects; stresses that, in this regard, a more optimal use of west-east and north-south corridors, with improved reverse flow capacity, would increase the LNG supply options; believes that knowledge and information could be developed jointly on issues such as energy storage facilities and tendering processes for LNG and interconnectors; strongly believes that the EU strategy has to ensure that LNG is accessible at regional level all over Europe;

18. Urges the Commission and the Member States to put in place strategies to support facilities that can be used in the future to manage the transfer and storage of renewable natural gas;

19. Stresses that the strategy should also include the use of LNG as an alternative to the development of gas distribution and transmission infrastructure in areas where it is not currently cost-effective; notes that small LNG installations can provide the optimal infrastructure for increasing the use of natural gas in areas where investments in gas infrastructure are unprofitable, including for increasing the use of gas to generate heat and thus curb so-called low-stack emissions;

20. Urges the Commission and the Member States to fully implement key projects of common interest (PCIs), and to assign high priority primarily to the most economically and environmentally efficient projects identified by the three regional high-level groups; stresses that building LNG terminals which are necessary for and compatible with gas demand is not sufficient, and that supporting pipeline infrastructure with appropriate tariffs is indispensable for the benefits to be realised outside the receiving countries;

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21. Welcomes the fact that important LNG projects (e.g. the North-South corridor) are being defined as projects of common interest; calls on the Commission to fully include Balkan countries when planning the further reconstruction of the gas pipeline and TEN-E network to ensure a key role of the EU energy sector in the region;

22. Supports the Commission proposal in the ongoing revision of the Security of Supply Regulation to review the existing reverse flow exemptions on interconnectors, and endorses the increased role of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) in the process; notes the understaffing and lack of resources of ACER; underlines the need to provide ACER with the necessary resources, in particular sufficient own staff, to allow the agency to fulfil the tasks assigned to it by the legislation;

#### *Storage infrastructure*

23. Recalls that geology is a major determining factor when developing new gas storages, and notes the current excess capacities in European gas storages; stresses that regional cooperation and an adequate level of gas interconnections, as well as the removal of internal bottlenecks, could significantly improve the utilisation rate of existing gas storages; highlights the need to ensure the application of the highest environmental standards in the planning, construction and use of LNG storage infrastructure;

24. Recalls that the cross-border accessibility of gas storages is one of the key tools to implement the principle of energy solidarity during gas shortages and emergency crisis;

25. Emphasises that a more extensive use of Ukraine's storage capacity will only be possible if an appropriate and stable commercial and legal framework and the integrity of supply infrastructure is guaranteed in Ukraine and provided the right level of gas interconnections is in place so that energy can flow freely across the borders without physical barriers; furthermore emphasises that as Ukraine's gas-dependent industrial sector rebounds in the short term, additional gas supplies will have to be imported; considers that the EU should support Ukraine in transitioning from dependency on Russian natural gas to LNG;

#### *Connecting LNG and storage to markets*

26. Emphasises the importance of the work of regional high-level groups, such as the Central East South Europe Gas Connectivity High Level Group (CESEC), the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) and the South-West Europe group; believes that this type of voluntary-based regional coordination is highly effective, and welcomes the facilitating role of the Commission in these arrangements; stresses the need for pragmatic and timely execution of the approved action plans, and urges close follow-up of implementation;

27. Stresses the importance of finding cost-efficient and environmentally sustainable energy supply options to increase long-term security of supply for the Iberian peninsula, Central and South-East Europe, the Baltic states and Ireland, all of which are insufficiently connected to and/or integrated with the internal energy market and deserve the full support of the EU in the name of the principle of solidarity; also highlights the need to support the most vulnerable countries that continue to remain energy islands, such as Cyprus and Malta, in order to diversify their sources and routes of supply; stresses, in this context, that LNG and gas storage must contribute towards ending energy isolation of whatever kind that affects Member States and regions in the EU;

28. Calls for gas production in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Caspian regions, as well as for interconnecting landlocked countries in Central and South-East Europe to these new capacities in order to diversify supply sources in those regions; notes that this will allow for competition between gas from multiple sources and will replace imports of natural gas volumes under oil-indexed contracts, thus increasing Member States' bargaining power; stresses that no single energy source will ever fulfil the EU's energy needs and that diversity in the case of both domestic and foreign markets is essential; considers, therefore, that the development of the domestic conventional gas resources discovered in Cyprus should be actively pursued;

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29. Supports the Commission's ambition to provide more information and assistance to project promoters on various project financing options, such as the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), and on various technical solutions;

30. Notes that finding cost-efficient and environmentally sustainable solutions should be a key principle in reaching the EU and regional optimum, and calls on the Commission, the Member States and the national regulatory authorities to allocate the limited resources available to the development of critical infrastructure so as to attract private investment for LNG infrastructure and interconnectors;

31. Expresses concern at the fact that gas imports from Russia were 7 % higher in 2015 than in 2014, and at the fact that 41 % of gas imports from outside the EU in 2015 came from Russia; highlights the vital role of LNG and gas storage, in addition to increased efficiencies and renewable energy deployment, in reducing dependence on Russian gas;

32. Expresses concern at the proposed doubling of capacity of the Nord Stream pipeline, and the counterproductive effects this would have on energy security and diversification of supply sources and the principle of solidarity among Member States; highlights the geopolitical implications of the project and the underlying principles of a fully integrated, secure, competitive and sustainable Energy Union, stressing that as such it should not benefit from EU financial support or from derogations from EU law; underlines that a doubling of the capacity of the Nord Stream pipeline would give one company a dominant position on the European gas market, which should be avoided;

33. Considers that if, contrary to European interests, Nord Stream 2 were to be built it would necessarily require a sound assessment of LNG terminals' accessibility and a detailed state of play on the North-South Gas Corridor;

### ***Completing the internal gas market: commercial, legal and regulatory aspects***

#### *Making the EU an attractive market for LNG*

34. Urges the Member States to fully implement the Third Energy Package and gas network codes;

35. Highlights the important role that well-interconnected liquid gas hubs play on the gas markets, that would ensure a single integrated market where gas can freely flow across borders in line with market price signals;

36. Stresses that significant gas reserves in the North African countries and recent discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean provide the region with an opportunity to emerge as a vibrant centre for transporting gas into Europe; believes that new LNG capacity being developed in the Mediterranean could form the basis of an infrastructure hub;

37. Insists that the completion of the internal gas market and the elimination of regulatory obstacles would greatly improve the liquidity of gas markets; urges stakeholders to finalise the network code on rules regarding harmonised transmission tariff structures for gas as soon as possible;

38. Recalls the continuous need for active cooperation between governments, national regulatory authorities and main stakeholders on cross-border investments, keeping always in mind a European perspective besides the national interests;

#### *Gas storage in the internal market*

39. Highlights the need to develop harmonised tariff structures across the EU and to increase transparency in tariff definition in order to achieve a higher utilisation rate of existing gas storages; takes the view that the network code on rules regarding harmonised transmission tariff structures for gas should take into consideration the need for harmonisation;

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40. Supports the Commission's proposal to enable the deployment of bio-methane and other renewable gases which comply with relevant EU quality standards in gas transmission, distribution and storage; recommends, in this respect, the consideration of technical parameters, gas quality, cost efficiency, economies of scale and possible local or regional grid solutions;

41. Urges the Member States to fully implement the third energy package, particularly in relation to the provisions on granting access to bio-methane to the grid and to storage facilities; highlights in this regard Directive 2009/73/EC, according to which Member States should ensure that, taking into account the necessary quality requirements, biogas and gas from biomass or other types of gas are granted non-discriminatory access to the gas system, provided such access is permanently compatible with the relevant technical rules and safety standards;

42. Encourages LNG and storage operators, in cooperation with national regulatory authorities, to develop new flexible products and services, compliant with the EU current legislation, in order to make LNG regasification and storing more attractive and maximise the utilisation of existing LNG and storage facilities;

#### *Optimising the role of storage for security of gas supply*

43. Highlights the role of the immediate, high-flexibility services that gas storage offers in certain Member States, and points out the different role that storage can play during a supply disruption compared to LNG where logistics in the supply chain might not grant the same responsiveness;

44. Underlines the importance of eliminating regulatory barriers to developing regional storage concepts; believes that certain storages could offer tailor-made international services, i.e. storage services tied with cross-border transportation; proposes that the regional high-level groups cooperate more extensively to find innovative solutions on how to use strategically valuable assets effectively at regional and European level;

#### ***The EU as a player on international LNG markets***

45. Notes the emerging global trend of increasing liquefaction capacity and its potential impact on the European gas markets;

46. Considers that, through its emergence as an important market, the EU can contribute to the evolution of gas trading rules with a view to improved flexibility and the convergence of global gas markets;

47. Supports the Commission, the European External Action Service and the Member States in their active engagement in energy diplomacy in order to promote a rule-based, transparent and well-functioning global gas market;

48. Stresses the importance of reducing or removing the EU's gas and oil dependence on imports from authoritarian regimes that violate human rights, in keeping with the EU's founding values and the effectiveness of EU external action;

49. Calls for greater institutional convergence and synergy, and, in particular, for the better integration of external energy security priorities in policies pursued by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), and for better coordination between the VP/HR and the responsible Commissioners; calls on the VP/HR, along with the Member States, to enhance existing means and establish new means of energy cooperation with current and potential suppliers, as well as with transit states and other key players; calls, in this context, on the VP/HR to inform Parliament regularly on the implementation of the EU Energy Diplomacy Action Plan;

50. Stresses the necessity of eliminating all barriers to global free trade in LNG, the production of which must be sustainable; in this context, urges US policymakers to increase investment certainty by introducing clear criteria and deadlines in the authorisation process for gas exports to non-FTA countries;

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51. Underlines the need to raise awareness of the environmental, climate and social impacts of imported LNG in global free trade fora; underlines, in particular, the need to ensure that fugitive methane emissions are minimised;

52. Stresses that the use of LNG may also lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from maritime and road transport, provided that all effective measures are taken to minimise methane slip throughout the lifecycle of the fuel, including the production, distribution, and combustion phases; calls, therefore, for adequate measures to minimise methane slip in the overall LNG chain through the use of the best available technologies, and to ensure adequate R&D financing for that purpose;

53. Stresses that trade plays a key role in energy security, and that strong energy partnerships, reinforced by the inclusion of energy chapters in the EU's trade agreements, are essential tools; considers it of key importance that the EU's trade policy should enhance the Union's and Member States' energy diversification and reduce their dependency on imported energy from too few suppliers; stresses that the EU should explore new partnerships, review its existing ones and hold specific energy talks with other partners in areas such as — but not limited to — Central Asia, North Africa and the Americas; notes that the EU should play a more proactive role in the international energy diplomacy arena; calls for greater coherence between the EU's trade and energy policies; underlines the need to increase transparency in international negotiations on LNG; believes that current and future negotiations with partners such as the US and Australia should include a strong energy component; underlines that the EU should collaborate closely with international partners towards a competitive and transparent global LNG market;

54. Recalls that in order to meet the current challenges and implement its energy and climate change objectives in the context of global constraints in those policy fields, the EU and its Member States must, on the basis of existing legal frameworks and multilateral conventions, also take common action on the international stage by raising energy security and sustainability issues in international trade forums, including with partner countries dependent on gas imports; stresses that, at the same time, the EU should support and promote energy efficiency;

55. Considers that trade policy generating significant opportunities for EU Member States' private and public companies in clean, secure and energy-efficient technologies is particularly important, especially in light of the growing global energy demand; calls for tariffs on clean technologies to be reduced significantly within the Green Goods initiative and also within EU free trade agreements, which must tackle non-tariff barriers to trade in energy sources;

56. Highlights the importance for EU energy security of the 'Energy and Raw Materials' chapter of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement; welcomes the Commission's work towards removing export restrictions on US gas to the EU;

57. Considers that the 12,2 billion cubic metres per year being added to the market in 2016 through Sabine Pass LNG on the US East Coast, along with potentially a further 74 billion cubic metre capacity being added through various US projects before 2020, represents a significant opportunity for Europe to increase energy trade links with the US; believes that the conclusion of the work on the 'Energy and Raw Materials' chapter of TTIP will significantly boost EU gas supply options;

58. Considers that European companies should not be restricted from operating on third countries' energy markets under the same conditions as domestic companies; stresses that third-country companies operating on European energy markets must comply with European law; stresses that such entities must have a transparent structure making it possible to track their shareholders;

59. Stresses the need to ensure the highest environmental protection in the planning, construction and use of LNG as well as in the exploitation of indigenous reserves and sources, and to respect the international labour standards on occupational health and safety; underlines the need to raise awareness of the environmental, climate and social impacts of imported LNG; reiterates the need to involve local communities and to rely on realistic assessments regarding consumption

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and — in the event of construction — the planning of new infrastructures; emphasises the potential offered by the transition to LNG for ending the dependency of maritime transport on coal; calls for the EU to provide financial support for European projects for this purpose;

60. Points out that, given the prospects for growth in the supply of LNG in coming years, this strategy may be complemented by an assessment of needs, in terms of LNG-carrying vessels and measures to enable the EU shipbuilding industry to seize this opportunity, thereby contributing to the target of increasing the industry's share of GDP to 20 % in 2020; calls for safety standards so that the transport of LNG can be monitored and, if necessary, subjected to more stringent conditions in the context of measures to prevent terrorism;

### ***Sustainability and the use of LNG as an alternative fuel in transport, heat and power***

61. Acknowledges the potential of LNG as an alternative fuel, both in road and maritime transport; underlines that wider use of LNG in freight transport could contribute to the decrease of global CO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub>, and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions, especially through using more LNG engines in maritime transport;

62. Underlines the fact that the network of fuelling infrastructure is a prerequisite for substantive deployment of LNG as an alternative fuel in the transport sector; calls, in this regard, on the Commission and the Member States to ensure full implementation of Directive 2014/94/EU on alternative fuels, including the establishment of LNG refuelling points across the TEN-T corridors and at maritime and inland ports, replacing more polluting conventional fuels; underlines, however, in this regard that LNG should not take the place of renewable energy sources, so as to ensure consistency with sustainability goals;

63. Calls for the development of maritime routes, notably in the archipelago of the Azores which, given its geographical situation, could serve as a key fuel station for the transatlantic routes of LNG; urges the Commission to make funds available to support European projects to this end;

64. Asks the Commission to create, jointly with the Member States and their regions, a common project of 'LNG Blue Corridors for Islands' for the maritime sector, including ports of the TEN-T Comprehensive Network, in order to establish the necessary LNG infrastructures and link this network to the TEN-T Core Network;

65. Calls on the Member States, in addition, to ensure the implementation of Directive 2014/94/EU as regards the establishment of CNG refuelling points, so as to ensure that motor vehicles running on that fuel can circulate in urban/suburban agglomerations and other densely populated areas, and at least along the existing TEN-T Core Network, thus ensuring that those vehicles can circulate throughout the Union;

66. Stresses the need to establish common technical specifications for LNG refuelling points for seagoing ships, inland waterway vessels and motor vehicles, as provided for in Directive 2014/94/EU; calls for rigorous harmonised safety rules and training for LNG storage, bunkering and on-board use throughout the Union, allowing also the possibility of simultaneous bunkering and cargo operations; notes that this work should be carried out in close cooperation with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and EMSA;

67. Stresses the need to ensure adequate R&D financing for the development of improved technologies for inland waterway vessels, seagoing ships and motor vehicles with the aim of swiftly shifting to a lower-carbon fleet, as well as for the development of unmanned systems for the installation of LNG refuelling points; also calls on the Commission and the Member States to create incentives for the development of vessels and motor vehicles running on LNG, or retrofitting those running on conventional fuels to enable them to use LNG;

68. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to create incentives for the transport of LNG by rail, as this will on the one hand reduce road transport and on the other hand contribute to the environmentally sound and safe transport of a fuel which is low in pollutants;

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69. Calls on the Commission, after consulting the stakeholders, to consider whether, alongside Regulation (EC) No 443/2009 setting CO<sub>2</sub> emission performance standards for new passenger cars, it might establish a CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent for hydrocarbon emissions, not least with a view to informing consumers;

70. Notes that the use of small-scale LNG technology in certain areas, such as long-range transportation or industrial high-performance applications, could not only contribute to climate policy objectives but also result in significant business advantage;

71. Notes that LNG, and in particular CNG, is also a viable solution for public transport, which is already available and can help reduce air and noise pollution, thus improving living conditions, especially in urban agglomerations;

72. Notes that although LNG and CNG can present viable transitional solutions to reduce the environmental impacts of transport, their long-term benefits will be only realised if a smooth transition towards the use of liquefied biogas (LBG) and other forms of renewable energy is simultaneously promoted by also ensuring the interoperability of LNG and LBG systems; emphasises that the EU strategy for LNG needs to fit into the wider European climate and energy targets and priorities, and correspond to the COP21 agreement, with a focus on reducing demand, improving energy efficiency and phasing out fossil fuels;

73. Emphasises that an efficient network of refuelling infrastructure is a prerequisite for the substantive deployment of LNG as an alternative fuel in the transport sector; calls on the Commission and the Member States to create incentives for the development of such infrastructure in order to close the existing gaps in provision and create a complete supply network;

74. Stresses the importance of LNG infrastructure at maritime and inland ports in terms of promoting multimodality, as such infrastructure can be used by seagoing ships, inland waterway vessels and trucks for the further overland transport of the fuel; urges national and regional operators to cooperate closely with the aim of enhancing the multi-functionality and exploitability of this infrastructure;

75. Considers that fostering the use of natural gas as an alternative fuel in transport is an important global challenge, and calls for a commitment to achieving emissions reductions to be obtained through the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO);

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76. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Member States, the Energy Community Secretariat and the Contracting Parties of the Energy Community.

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