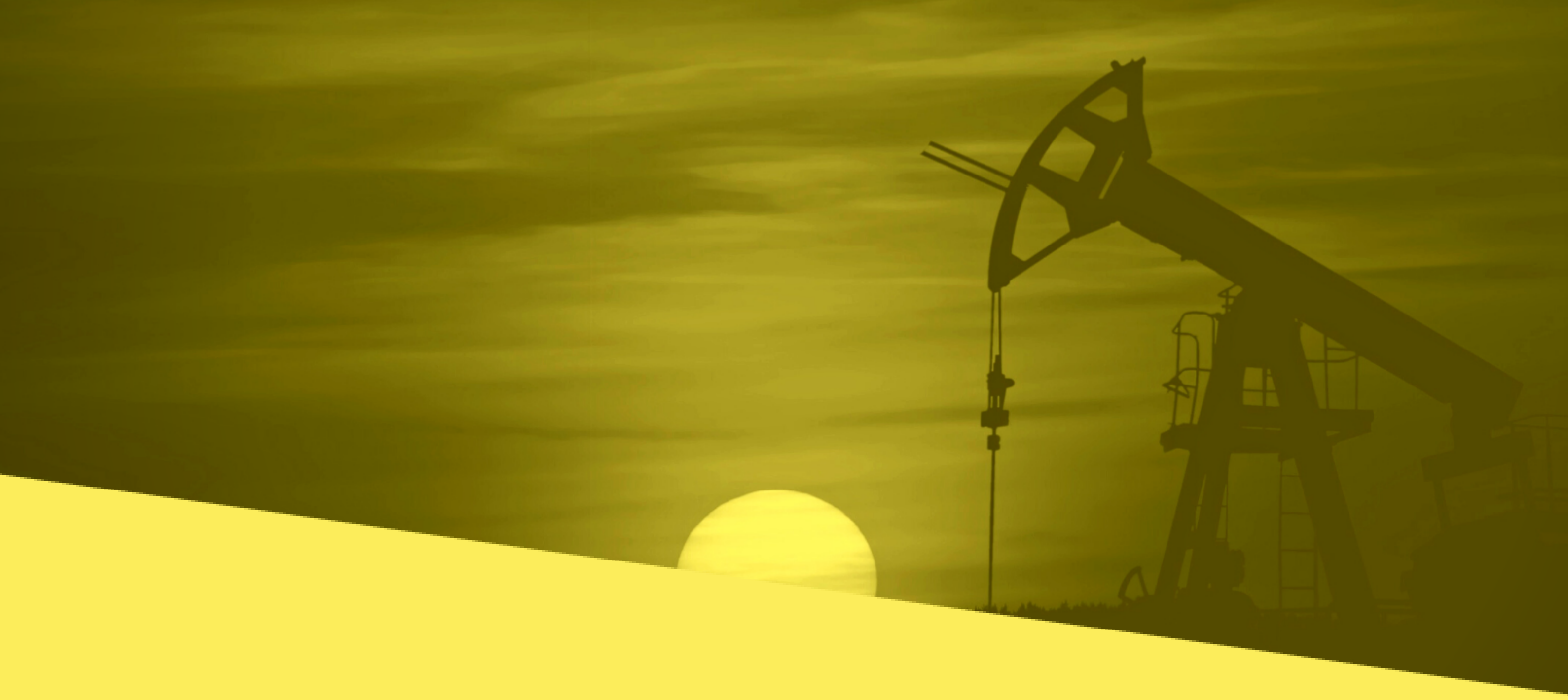

A 'GASTASTROPHIC' MISTAKE

NEW EXPERT GROUP INVITES FOSSIL FUEL GIANTS TO STEER EUROPE'S ENERGY

FOSSIL FREE POLITICS

Earlier this year, as the attack on Ukraine brought Europe’s dependency on Russian oil and gas into the limelight, Corporate Europe Observatory showed how the EU’s dependence not just on Russian supplies, but on *all* fossil gas, is a consequence of how the fossil fuel industry has successfully captured EU decision making (see Box).

By granting the powerful gas lobby a very strong influence over Europe’s energy policy response to the invasion, the EU is prolonging its dependency on fossil fuels. Furthermore, this choice continues to fail the millions of people facing a growing cost of living crisis.

The new EU Energy Platform Industry Advisory Group, created at the request of oil and gas majors like BP, Total and Eni (which now count among its members), represents a conflict of interest on a colossal scale. These alliances must be stopped if we are to have any chance of breaking Europe’s fossil gas habit, addressing fuel poverty, and averting climate crisis. Even the International Energy Agency recognises that no new oil or gas fields can be developed if we are to have a chance of limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5°C. Gas, like all other fossil fuels, needs to stay in the ground if we are to avoid climate catastrophe. And fossil free politics is the only way to ensure that this happens.

REPEATING THE ‘GASTASTROPHIC’ MISTAKES OF THE PAST: ENTSOG

Like a fossil-fuelled version of Groundhog Day, the EU Energy Platform Industry Advisory Group has been invited to repeat the climate-wrecking mistakes of the past. It follows in the footsteps of the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Gas (ENTSOG), a group created by EU legislation that gives the companies who build and operate gas pipelines and LNG terminals – such as Spain’s Enagás, Italy’s Snam, and France’s GRTgaz – an official role in gas policymaking. ENTSOG’s role is to predict future gas use and propose infrastructure projects – which its members then build – to meet it. A more obvious conflict of interest is hard to find. It’s no surprise, then, that the group has consistently over-estimated future gas demand; as a result, the EU spent €4.5 billion on 44 new gas infrastructure projects between 2013-2020, with 90 per cent of the money going to ENTSOG members. ENTSOG is now an observer (see box) in the new group.

The co-dependent relationship between the European Commission and the gas lobby through groups like ENTSOG has meant that instead of reducing reliance on gas imports by investing in measures that would tackle climate change, fuel poverty, and gas dependency – for example ramping up wind, wave and solar energy or energy efficiency –– the EU has increased its imports of gas from Russia and elsewhere over the past decade. Despite the EU’s intention of reducing dependence on Russia after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, by 2021 Russian imports had reached 40 per cent of the EU’s total gas consumption, an increase of almost half compared to 2013.

REPowerEU: rerun of the gas lobby setting the agenda

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the European Commission published an outline of its REPowerEU plan on 8 March 2022, followed by a REPowerEU communication on 18 May 2022. The plan aims to "make Europe independent from Russian fossil fuels well before 2030, starting with gas". However, as we explained at the time, the proposed solutions in REPowerEU have the fingerprints of the gas lobby all over them, from the plan to source oil and gas from other repressive regimes, such as Azerbaijan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, to the accompanying push for new gas infrastructure, be it new LNG terminals or the revival of old pipeline plans. REPowerEU also sets huge targets for flawed false solutions from the gas lobby like hydrogen (see Box) and biomethane, which are highly profitable for industry but also climate disasters.

'GREEN' HYDROGEN A TROJAN HORSE FOR FOSSIL-GAS BASED HYDROGEN

REPowerEU talks about an extra 15 billion tonnes of 'green' hydrogen from renewable electricity, both domestic and imported, by 2030. This more than triples the target in the EU's Fit for 55 package. But given that the EU is already missing its renewable energy targets, where will this electricity come from? Today 97 per cent of Europe's hydrogen is made from fossil gas rather than renewable electricity, and Shell, Equinor and other gas producers are confident that fossil hydrogen will remain a permanent fixture. They openly admit there will not be enough renewable electricity to produce the quantities of hydrogen being spoken about, but are using the appeal of green hydrogen (made from renewables), and the broader push for an EU-wide hydrogen market, as a Trojan horse for their own fossil hydrogen.

Along with the woefully insufficient priority given to energy efficiency and insulating homes, and the limited scope of a proposed windfall tax on Big Energy due to fears it could 'de-incentivise' investment in renewable energy, the REPowerEU communication is itself evidence of the corporate capture of EU policymaking by the gas industry. And as of October 2022, this corporate capture has been given an official new outfit, with the first meeting of an advisory group that was requested and populated by fossil fuel companies. Its role? To assist the Commission in delivering "on the objectives identified in the REPowerEU Communication and subsequent Plan".

EU Energy Platform Industry Advisory Group: rotten at the core

There are only so many ways of saying "don't let the fox guard the henhouse", but that warning seems to have passed European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen by. On 23 March 2022, von der Leyen tweeted that she had "discussed with energy CEOs" and the European Roundtable of Industrialists (ERT) "how to diversify supply and reduce demand for gas. We will set a group of industry experts to help reduce our dependency [on Russian gas].

The ERT consists of the chief executives of dozens of multinational corporations, including oil and gas giants TotalEnergies, Shell, BP and Eni. With unparalleled access to governments and the Commission, the ERT has been a major agenda-setter, accelerating market-driven integration in the 1980s and 90s including the single market and the single currency.

Documents obtained by Corporate Europe Observatory show the full extent to which the fossil fuel industry – facilitated by the ERT – was the architect of this newly-created EU Energy Platform Industry Advisory Group. Minutes of the meeting that von der Leyen had on 21 March 2022 with "Shell, BP, Total, Eni, E.ON, Vattenfall and the chairman of ERT" recount how the "CEOs offered assistance through a Task Force with company experts". During the meeting, the fossil fuel giants also argued that the EU should "avoid heavy-handed interventions in the market" such as "capping prices". This can be translated as: don't let energy poverty and the climate emergency mess with our profits. Seven months later, numerous governments are insisting on the need to cap prices, but the Commission has been very slow to act on this demand.

The dirty energy CEOs also told von der Leyen in their March meeting that "more can be done to speed up procedures (permitting, approval and interconnection of floating LNG terminals...)". In other words, be sure to give us the green light for more gas infrastructure *asap.*

While the fossil fuel industry enjoyed frequent opportunities to convene and exchange with President von der Leyen, she refused to meet with representatives of the Green 10, a coalition of ten of the largest environmental organisations and networks active on the European level. In fact, von der Leyen did not grant environmental groups one single meeting, despite two requests in the first half of 2022 and despite references to the numerous meetings with industry representatives.

FOSSIL FUEL BOSSES PILE ON THE PRESSURE

The March 2022 ERT meetings with von der Leyen were by no means the only opportunities given to fossil fuel bosses to voice their wishlists in light of the Ukraine crisis. At a meeting with "ERT CEOs" on 28 February 2022 in Paris – one of the ERT's annual meetings with the European Commission and Council presidents, together with the French President and German Chancellor – von der Leyen was told that "Now is the moment" to go for "a true European hydrogen market and cross-border interconnectors". BusinessEurope – whose corporate members include Shell, TotalEnergies, Repsol, ExxonMobil, BP etc – also took the opportunity on 9 March 2022 to pile on the pressure by urging European leaders to "simplify and speed up permitting procedures for… energy production and infrastructure projects". On 22 March, BusinessEurope went a step further, using the Ukraine invasion to delay climate action such as renewable energy development by arguing that ensuring an efficient economy "requires a reconsideration of timelines for realistic energy and climate policies".

The Commission also took other opportunities to assure fossil fuel companies that they'd be setting the energy agenda: Executive Vice-President Timmermans' cabinet promised the chief executive of Enagás, for example, that "Transmission system operators, including Enagás will have an invaluable role in addressing the emergency and ensuring energy security of the European Union". This followed the Enagás boss telling Timmermans on 7 March 2022 that the company is available "for whatever the European Commission may require". He emphasised that his company had built most of Spain's gas infrastructure, is a shareholder in the controversial gas pipeline TAP, and is "promoting new sources of energy such as hydrogen". New research shows that Enagás is proposing to build many more gas infrastructure projects – using EU money – in response to the energy crisis brought about by the Ukraine crisis. What's more, Enagás, as a member of ENTSOG (see Box), has used hydrogen (see Box) to successfully push for more fossil infrastructure, under the guise of being "hydrogen-ready". The rapidly growing plans for the European Hydrogen Backbone proposed in 2020 show the danger of this scheme: a great deal of new fossil gas infrastructure is in the pipeline. ENTSOG quickly cashed in on REPowerEU, and has updated its biannual list of proposed infrastructure investments to 321 new projects, a large number on LNG and hydrogen. This surge in fossil gas infrastructure is completely at odds with the need to rapidly phase out fossil fuels.

In another document (released under freedom of information rules), the conclusion of von der Leyen's March 2022 meeting with fossil fuel CEOs was described in more detail as an "agreement to establish a working group with industry experts to:

- Provide detailed information on markets and on what is feasible in terms of envisaged measures
- Discuss supply side solutions (where can additional supplies come from, what are possible bottlenecks, how to optimise the gas storage policy)
- Demand management (which will in any case require a coordinated EU approach in case of supply disruptions)."

The origin story of this new fossil fuel industry expert group could not, therefore, be clearer. And on 6 September 2022, the EU Energy Platform Industry Advisory Group appeared in the Commission's register of expert groups with a call for applications for members *that was open only to companies*. The set-up of the group is inherently problematic: essentially, it is an officially endorsed body for lobbying-come-co-writing of gas policy that solely welcomes companies.[1] Like the Commission's earlier creation of ENTSOG (see Box), this gives gas companies the opportunity and means to sit down and work out how they themselves can profit, and how this can be enabled by the EU through its policy, regulatory and financial decisions. Yet rather than seeing the conflict of interest inherent in such a project, the Commission describes the group's purpose as to "address current energy challenges" and to "provide the Commission with the necessary industrial perspective to meet the objectives of the EU Energy Platform". The EU Energy Platform was established by REPowerEU to coordinate the "voluntary common purchases of natural gas, LNG and hydrogen" and infrastructure use; it has been given high political importance, as shown by the October 2022 Council conclusions, which urge the Commission "to make full use of the EU Energy Platform".

The EU Energy Platform Industry Advisory Group, therefore, shall "provide feedback and comments on options issued by the Commission for natural gas and LNG (and, in the future, hydrogen) demand aggregation and joint purchasing", and give "insights and advice" on how to ensure that the EU's goal of "reduction of dependency on gas supplies from Russia can be achieved... with a particular focus on the diversification of gas supply". Meeting four times a year, both Executive Vice President Timmermans and Energy Commissioner Simson are expected to participate to "exchange with the group's participants or seek the group's advice on specific issues related to the REPowerEU objectives" – offering a staggering degree of regular top-level political access, alongside being a huge conflict of interest.

[1] The Call for Applications says: "Members shall be companies operating in the energy markets in the European Union and the European Economic Area, Western Balkan countries and the three associated eastern partners (Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia) willing to participate in and/or enable natural gas, LNG and/or, in the future, hydrogen demand aggregation and joint purchasing set up under the EU Energy Platform."

COMPETITION RULES WILL BE FOLLOWED - TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT!

One of the EU Energy Platform Industry Advisory Group's tasks is to "exchange market data and information to support outreach activities" – with the caveat that the group will comply with "EU competition rules". Whilst the Commission is seemingly blind to the conflict of interest implicit in letting fossil fuel companies help shape EU gas policy, it offers assurances that competition will be "safeguarded by reporting on meetings, discussions, information exchange and agreements reached and making these available to the Commission on request". Furthermore, all members and observers are to sign a "competition compliance programme", promising for example that no sensitive pricing information will be shared.

The sheer quantity of disclaimers and warnings the Commission included in the Annex of the terms of reference of the platform shows how blurred the line is between "exchang(ing) market data and information" or "provid(ing) feedback" and the risk of collusion in the form of a Commission facilitated cartel. Moreover, despite the Commission stating the very serious consequences of any violation of competition law, we are supposed to rely on and trust the members to enforce the rules and denounce any infringement. Yet again, we're asked to trust the fox to guard the henhouse.

On transparency, the situation is equally bleak. The Platform operates with an "obligation of professional secrecy" as a curtain to hide behind – so we won't know what comes out of its meetings. That is, however, unless a "simple majority of its members" decides that the deliberations of the group shall be made public… Yes, you read that right; it's not a joke. Transparency about the group has been made conditional on the whims of the same fossil fuel firms that requested its creation. In short, the gas companies advising the EU on its gas policy response to the Ukraine crisis get to decide if the public has a right to know about their advice. Civil society organisations are not even allowed 'observer' status in the group – instead, platform observers include major fossil fuel lobby groups (see Box).

FOSSIL FUEL LOBBY GROUPS ENJOY 'OBSERVER' STATUS, CIVIL SOCIETY EXCLUDED

Not only is membership of the EU Energy Platform Industry Advisory Group open solely to companies, but 'observer' status excludes civil society groups, academic institutions and the like from taking part.[2] Instead, the eleven observers invited by the Commission include lobby associations with fossil fuel members such as Eurogas, Hydrogen Europe, Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE), ENTSOG and the International Association of Oil & Gas Producers Europe (IOGP Europe). These groups have well-documented histories of lobbying to weaken and delay EU climate laws, or of promoting the fossil fuel industry's favourite false solutions, like hydrogen and carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS). IOGP, for example, which represents the world's biggest oil and gas majors, has lobbied hard for 'blue hydrogen' made from fossil gas with CCUS (see Box), while the EU's Hydrogen Strategy strongly echoes the wishlist of Hydrogen Europe, whose members include BP, Enagás, E.ON, Shell and Total.

Some of the observers' ties with the fossil fuel industry go beyond their membership lists: IOGP's representative, for example, Axel Scheuer, worked for over two decades at ExxonMobil – a firm that made a whopping $23 billion in the first half of 2022.[3] Exxon is planning to invest a staggering $21 million *per day* (at least) through to 2030 in the exploitation of new oil and gas fields that cannot be burned if we are to stay well below a 2ºC temperature increase.[4] GIE's representative, Francisco de la Flor, is Director at Enagás (see Box) and a board member of ENTSOG (see Box), both key in the push for more gas and hydrogen infrastructure.

Another of the expert group's observers is Shell, one of the companies that pushed von der Leyen to create the group in March 2022. Shell spent between €4 and €4.5 million lobbying the EU in 2021, and has had 33 top-level meetings with the von der Leyen Commission: that's nearly one per month. In the first half of 2022, as a growing cost of living crisis hit Europe, Shell made record profits of over $20 billion, thanks to invasion-inflated oil and gas prices, while its shareholders were promised payouts of around $15 billion. Shell is planning to invest $8 million *per day* (at least) until 2030 exploiting new oil and gas that must stay in the ground if we are to limit global heating well below 2ºC. What's more, the company admits that it has no concrete plans to meet emissions reduction targets, and its 'net zero' pledge has been shown to be grossly insufficient. Meanwhile, internal documents urge employees not to "give the impression that Shell is willing to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to levels that do not make business sense". Shell is also accused of not complying with a 2021 ruling of a Dutch court that orders the company to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent.

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[2] The terms of reference state that "Public entities other than Member States' authorities, such as international organisations and third country authorities, including from candidate countries, as well as industry associations may be granted an observer status, in compliance with the horizontal rules, by direct invitation." Observers "may be invited by the Chair to take part in the discussions...and provide expertise. However, they shall not have voting rights and shall not participate in the formulation of recommendations or advice."

[3] $5.48 billion in the first quarter, $17.9 billion in the second quarter.

[4] ExxonMobil spent €3.5 to €4 million lobbying the EU in 2021, and has had 14 top-level Commission meetings since the von der Leyen Commission took office in December 2019.

A who's who of the world's biggest polluters

The call for members of the EU Energy Platform Industry Advisory Group closed on 5 October 2022, and the members selected for participation were announced on 19 October 2022. The group's first meeting is scheduled for 26 October. The 27 members of the group announced so far[5] include four of the companies that urged von der Leyen to set it up: BP, Total, Eni and E.ON (Shell is an observer – see Box). Fossil fuel firms whose profits have reached record highs as a result of energy prices hiked up by the Ukraine invasion, and whose woefully inadequate 'net zero' pledges rely on false solutions such as damaging carbon offsetting and failed technologies like CCUS (and the pie-in-the-sky 'carbon removal' technologies that rely on it) to justify continuing their oil and gas profiteering.

Below, we take a close look at five of the group's members to show exactly why they shouldn't be advising the Commission on its gas policy:

BP

BP spent between €2.25 and €2.5 million lobbying the EU in 2021, and has had 11 top-level Commission meetings – with Commissioners, their cabinets or Director-Generals – since the von der Leyen Commission took office in December 2019. BP recorded huge profits of $14.7 billion in the first half of 2022, thanks to soaring energy prices prompted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

BP has lobbied the EU to include fossil gas as a 'sustainable investment'. This strategy pushes the dirty and dangerous line that natural gas is needed to enable the transition from coal and helps to weaken the EU's new green taxonomy. The company also argued for "both green and blue hydrogen" to be counted as a green investments, despite the fact that blue hydrogen is made from fossil gas and relies on virtually non-existent CCUS (see Box). Yet a US Congress investigation into climate disinformation has revealed that BP believes it can enjoy "full use of fossil fuels across the energy transition and beyond" thanks to CCUS. This technology, the get-out-of-jail free card promoted by oil and gas companies for decades, has repeatedly failed to materialise at scale, while draining public coffers, delaying the energy transition and enabling even more oil to be extracted by using the carbon captured to pump it out.

BP is planning to invest around $5 million *per day* (at least) through to 2030 in the exploitation of new oil and gas fields that are incompatible with halting global heating well below 2°C. In other words, as The Guardian explains, fossil fuel giants like BP are "placing multibillion-dollar bets against humanity halting global heating", bets that can only pay off if countries fail to rapidly slash emissions. Hence, BP has a vested interest in lobbying to ensure the company can keep pumping gas – which is precisely why it should not be advising the Commission on how to reduce Europe's dependence on gas.

BP spends tens of millions each year on misleading advertising that portrays the company as a pioneering green, renewable energy company when in reality, it pours 97 per cent of its capital expenditure into digging up fossil fuels. This year, BP has spent over £800,000 in the UK alone on social media ads to greenwash the oil giant's reputation.

TotalEnergies Electricité et Gaz France

TotalEnergies Electricité et Gaz France only spent between €10,000 and €25,000 lobbying the EU in 2021, but its parent company, TotalEnergies SA, spent between €2 and €2.5 million,[6] and has had 12 top-level Commission meetings since the von der Leyen Commission took office in December 2019. TotalEnergies raked in $10.6 billion in profits in the first half of 2022, on the back of rocketing energy prices

[5] Only two days before the first meeting of the group, the Commission added new members and observers, including ENTSOG and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

[6] There is a third entry for Total in the EU lobby register, TotalEnergies Corbion (bioplastics); its lobby spend is not included here.

due to the situation in the Ukraine.[7] TotalEnergies' has lobbied to weaken the European Green Deal and to ensure that EU decisions lock in a future for fossil gas. Despite strong public pressure, Total initially refused to pull out of Russia, and has continued to drag its heels on completely severing its presence in the country. This makes it even more absurd that the Commission is now rewarding the company with a seat on the new advisory group.

TotalEnergies is planning to invest around $5 million *per day* (at least) through to 2030 exploiting new oil and gas fields that cannot be burned if we are to stay well below 2°C heating. Environmental groups have sued TotalEnergies over its misleading 'reinvention' ad campaign, which falsely portrays the company as on track to address the climate crisis. TotalEnergies' greenwashing centres around its 'net zero' plans, which actually include a massive fossil fuel expansion in opposition to climate science, while avoiding any action to meaningfully reduce its emissions by 2030 in line with the IPCC's strongest warnings. Yet the company's social media ads promote gas as the least carbon-intensive fossil fuel and a complement to renewable energy – omitting that life cycle emissions for gas, including leaks during extraction and transportation, mean that fossil gas' carbon footprint can be as bad as coal's.

Eni

Eni spent between €1 and €1.25 million lobbying the EU in 2021, and has had 12 top-level Commission meetings since the von der Leyen Commission took office in December 2019. Fuelled by soaring energy prices following the Ukraine invasion, Eni's profits reached €7 billion in the first half of 2022.

Eni has lobbied the Commission to provide more public money for fossil fuel companies as "incentive mechanisms" for them to develop the repeatedly failed CCUS technology. Meanwhile, the company's close relationship with the Italian government has seen its profits remain untouchable, as a new tax on the extra profits earned by companies that import gas into Italy at a much lower price than the selling price was deleted at the last minute from measures to contain energy prices.

Eni is planning to invest around $2.5 million *per day* (at least) through to 2030 in the exploitation of new oil and gas fields that are incompatible with keeping global heating well below 2°C. In fact, Eni is planning to increase its oil and gas production until 2025, before gradually decreasing oil in favour of gas, for which it has concessions in some of the most important fields in Africa and the Middle East.

As part of its so-called 'net zero' plans, Eni says it will 'offset' its continuing emissions. In order to do so, however, it would need nearly 8 million hectares of land every year until 2030. This is a vast and unsustainable amount of land, and Eni has neither addressed where it would be located nor the potential implications for local communities. This is a dangerous intention, given that carbon offset projects often go hand-in-hand with human rights and environmental abuses.

E.ON

E.ON spent between €1.25 and 1.5 million lobbying the EU in 2021, and has had eight top-level Commission meetings since the von der Leyen Commission took office in December 2019. E.ON made €4.1 billion in profits in the first half of 2022. The German energy utility boasts that it operates "100,000 km of gas grid, around 2.5 times the circumference of the earth", with electricity and gas grids in nine European countries.

E.ON has lobbied the Commission to create "a market for valuable carbon removals", which would provide polluters with yet another excuse for business-as-usual, under the false premise that future carbon removals can undo the damage of continued carbon emissions now. Such a market could be a lucrative opportunity for companies like E.ON, while leading to land grabs and other threats to farmers and food sovereignty and promoting dangerous and speculative technologies that rely on failed CCUS technology.[8]

[7] $4.9 billion in first quarter, plus $5.7 billion in second quarter (see here and here)

[8] for more about carbon removal markets, and the difference between nature-based and technology-based

Repsol

Spanish energy giant Repsol spent between €600,000 and €700,000 lobbying the EU in 2021, and has had three top-level Commission meetings since the von der Leyen Commission took office in December 2019. Repsol's profits reached over €2.5 billion in the first half of 2022 thanks to invasion-inflated oil and gas prices.

Repsol's lobbying at EU level has sought to ensure that EU decisions lock in a future for fossil gas. The Chairman of Repsol, Antonio Brufau, recently emphasised "the role that natural gas and oil have to play for many years to come" whilst downplaying the role of electrification with renewable energies. Repsol is projected to increase its oil production by 22 per cent by 2030 and is postponing its efforts to reduce 50 per cent of its emissions by two decades until after 2040 – far too late to stop catastrophic climate change.

Repsol's Chief Executive Josu Jon Imaz formerly held "notable" roles within the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism of the Basque Government in 1999. His political connections are suspected to have impacted Spain's climate law, such as the last minute inclusion of the promotion of hydrogen (see Box) and biogas.

Along with a significant proportion of greenwashing adverts, analysis has shown that out of six European fossil fuel companies – including Shell, TotalEnergies and Eni – Repsol has the highest proportion (36 per cent) of social media adverts that promote fossil fuels.

Conclusion

Thanks to corporate capture, EU energy policy is being made with and for the gas industry. The current Commission has spent the first half of its mandate talking to fossil fuel companies, and even though the number of meetings adds up to the equivalent of one per day, it still seeks additional advice above and beyond these get-togethers. This is clearly illustrated by the new EU Energy Platform Industry Advisory Group, which was set up at the request of dirty energy companies. But putting fossil fuel giants at the wheel to steer Europe's energy response to the Ukraine invasion will end in disaster, as it will pave the way for decades of continued fossil fuel lock-in and thus ensure climate catastrophe.

The climate science is clear: we need to end our reliance on fossil fuels, Russian or otherwise. To do so, we need to terminate the relationship between the fossil fuel industry and decision makers, thereby cutting fossil fuel interests out of our political system. Faced with a growing cost of living crisis, we need long-lasting and transformational energy and social policies that protect the energy poor and help cut the dependency on fossil fuels. Analysis has shown that the simplest way to phase-out Russian gas is to boost clean energy investments beyond what the Commission has proposed so far – *not* by spending more on new gas infrastructure. Yet giving gas companies a seat at the table, and asking them for solutions to a crisis they helped cause, practically begs them to use this position to secure long-term market access for the product that is bringing them record-breaking profits.

As long as the fossil fuel lobby remains involved in policymaking, the growing pressure for transformation of our energy system will have less of a chance to bring about real change. This is why we need fossil free politics (see Box), starting with an immediate dissolution of the EU Energy Platform Industry Advisory Group. As well as the abolition of this group (and other similar entities), the creation of formal or informal groups like this must be stopped in the future. And when consultation with fossil fuel companies is justified – for specific, technical points, and only when absolutely necessary – consultation should be through public hearings, conducted in a fully transparent manner.

carbon removals (and their respective dangers), see Corporate Europe Observatory's recent report The Deadly Climate Gamble.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN FOR FOSSIL FREE POLITICS

Fossil free politics is vital to getting Europe off fossil fuels – rather than just replacing one dubious source of gas with others, and locking-in yet more fossil gas infrastructure – as the colossal conflict of interest embodied by the EU Energy Platform Industry Advisory Group demonstrates. Fossil free politics requires more than just the end of groups like this; it also needs decision makers to:

1) Institute a firewall to end fossil fuel industry access to decision-making;

2) Address vested interests;

3) End preferential treatment of the fossil fuel industry; and

4) Reject partnerships with the fossil fuel industry.

See **fossilfreepolitics.org** for our demands in full and to find out how you can get involved

Acknowledgements

Published by: Corporate Europe Observatory and Friends of the Earth Europe

Written by Rachel Tansey, with contributions from Belén Balanyá, Myriam Douo and Pascoe Sabido

Thanks to: Paul de Clerck, Olivier Hoedeman and Chloé Mikolajczak

Edited by Ann Doherty

Designed by Gemma Bowcock

Publication October 2022

Image credits: Zbynek Burival (pixabay.com)

Disclaimer: Corporate Europe Observatory and Friends of the Earth Europe are founders of the informal Fossil-Free Politics coalition. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of CEO and FoEE and should not be regarded as reflecting the position of any of the over 200 organisations supporting the call for fossil-free politics, including the rest of the founders.

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