

# A dangerous distraction: 'renewable' gas keeps us on the fossil fuel path



## PART 2 The industry lobby behind so-called renewable gas

November 2018, Brussels

**PART 1** dissects some of the key myths about renewable gas being promoted by industry and shows why they shouldn't be believed.

**PART 2** gives a first glimpse into the tactics and strategies used by the renewable gas lobby to influence Brussels decision makers.

### INTRODUCTION

The recent report by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) underlines the urgency with which we need to drastically move away from fossil fuels.' Couple this with the European Union's wish to re-establish itself as a global climate leader, and it spells bad news for the gas industry, whose primary product is a fossil fuel. In response, the last 18 months the sector has increased its lobbying efforts to convince policy-makers that gas is in fact compatible with the Paris Agreement climate targets agreed in 2015.

Their strategy is to claim that so-called 'renewable gas' is the way forward – massively overstating its climate credentials and how much we can produce by 2050 – and if renewable gas can't meet all future gas demand, then non-renewable gas (ie fossil gas) can be 'decarbonised' – despite a lack of proof that this is realistic or achievable.

**A closer look reveals industry is more concerned with greenwashing its image and staying in business than tackling climate change.** Attacking renewable electricity deployment in favour of gas infrastructure shows what lengths they will go to in order to keep fossil gas flowing well into the future.

Corporate Europe Observatory takes a first glimpse at the lobbying behind this push. Our research reveals a host of different tactics employed, from buying the Brussels media to co-opting the NGO community. The first section of Part 2 looks at the lobby efforts around renewable gas directed at the European Commission's Department for Energy (DG Energy), as well as how the Commission has reciprocated. The report also focuses on the role of the European Council, and has a special profile of the biggest renewable gas

lobbyist, the Gas for Climate Coalition. Other sections look at the important role of trade associations, cross-sectoral coordination, collaboration with NGOs and using the Brussels media.

As the European Commission draws up plans to make our gas system 'Paris compliant' by 2050, it's make or break time for industry and its argument that it is part of a low-carbon future. However, don't expect them to admit that the potential for renewable gas by 2050 has been massively over-hyped, while 'decarbonised' gas remains hypothetical (**see Part 1, our myth buster**). Both remain a dangerous distraction, keeping the door firmly open to continued use of fossil fuels. This entails disaster not just for the climate, but also the communities and their environments along the supply chain. This report is just a snapshot of some of what's going on, but lobbying will undoubtedly intensify in the coming years as the Commission finalises its plans for gas market reform in 2020 and passes them to the European Parliament and the Council.

Rather than betting on a dangerous distraction that will lock us into decades of fossil fuel use, the Commission should be drawing up policies that chart a rapid phase out of gas. But the gas industry is not going to plan for its own demise, and instead will continue to use its grip over energy policy-making and its lobbying arsenal to ensure the Commission won't either.<sup>ii</sup>

**Is it time to remove the gas industry from policy-making if we are serious about tackling climate change?**

### BOX 1: The truth about so-called 'renewable' gas

- 1 It's convenient for industry to talk about renewable gas alongside green, clean, decarbonised, low-carbon, or just plain 'natural' gas, mixing definitions. This hides the true impact and also sneaks fossil gas under the 'renewable' label. Truly renewable gas is hydrogen from excess renewable electricity or locally produced and small-scale biogas made from sustainable biomass.
- 2 Industry's version of renewable gas is unlikely to be carbon neutral when you examine how it's actually produced, and could even drive deforestation and land-grabbing.
- 3 The potential for sustainable renewable gas production in the EU is a fraction of what industry claims. It will never substitute current fossil gas use, and is estimated to meet just seven per cent of today's gas demand by 2050.<sup>iii</sup>
- 4 Industry claims any non-renewable gas demand will be 'decarbonised' in the future, but the carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology needed is still not technically or commercially available.<sup>iv</sup>
- 5 In search for new markets the gas industry is pushing for (renewable) gas to be used in transport. But transport is electrifying, and this unnecessary push has been labelled "an unrealistic attempt to greenwash the use of gas".<sup>v</sup>
- 6 Europe is unlikely to sustainably produce significant quantities of renewable gas, so despite industry claims, it will not provide energy security. Either the EU keeps its neocolonial mantle and imports it instead of fossil gas or, more likely, imports more fossil gas claiming to be able to decarbonise it.
- 7 Developing renewable and decarbonised gases is expensive, despite industry promises of savings. And if they turn out to be a dangerous distraction that slows efforts to tackle climate change, the EU's current bill of €14bn per year to deal with its impacts<sup>vi</sup> will rise dramatically – paid for by taxpayers, not the gas industry.

For more information see [Part 1, our myth buster](#)

## How the gas industry has been lobbying for so-called 'renewable gas'



The gas lobby has been using every trick in the book to persuade governments that so-called 'renewable gas' will help the EU meet its climate targets more effectively than renewable electricity. Dig a little deeper and you can see it is an underhand ploy to keep the EU hooked on ordinary fossil gas and the industry in business, rather than transforming our energy system towards real renewable solutions.





## The Commission's open door: regular meetings with industry on renewable gas






Documents obtained by Corporate European Observatory show the gas industry is regularly visiting the European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy (DG Energy) to discuss renewable gas. A freedom of information request to DG Energy Directorate B, the department responsible for gas, unearthed at least 16 meetings over a 10 month period between 2017-2018 on the topic of renewable gas<sup>1</sup> – and not just in Brussels. Additionally, numerous industry presentations, studies, and lobbying documents all show industry arguing against full electrification by 2050 in favour of gas, particularly renewable gas (see Box 2 with demands).






Regulators, local authorities, and consultancies have all been lobbying the Commission to support renewable gas, but the most frequent visitors are the companies building and operating mega-gas pipelines, as well as their trade associations. Keen not to see their pipelines rendered

obsolete, and if possible secure funding to build more, these 'transmission system operators' (TSOs), made up half of all meetings. But this should be expected as they are one of the most visible and vocal lobbies on the topic in Brussels.

This is a wish list drawn up by the gas industry to keep turning a profit rather than tackling climate change, using the notion of renewable gas to push for all gas while fighting against electricity generated by renewables.

**Box 2: Some key industry demands to policy-makers under the guise of promoting renewable gas:**

- ✓ Give "positive signals" the European gas market will remain attractive;
- ✓ Ensure "fair competition" between gas, wind, and sun;
- ✓ Treat 'renewable' gas and renewable electricity equitably;
- ✓ Don't over-electrify, don't have renewable electricity targets;
- ✓ Give incentives to renewable gas (eg feed-in tariffs, tax breaks, production targets);
- ✓ Lots of money for research and development;
- ✓ Keep using existing gas infrastructure, keep building more;
- ✓ 'Decarbonise' transport via gas.

<sup>1</sup> The documents released showed evidence of other meetings between the gas industry and the Commission on the topic, but they were not in the list of meetings provided by the European Commission.

*GIE holds a strong belief that gas – be it natural or renewable gas – and its underlying infrastructure, will play a key role in the low-carbon sustainable energy system of tomorrow*

- JEAN-MARC LEROY,  
PRESIDENT OF GAS INFRASTRUCTURE EUROPE

Members from the recently-formed 'Gas for Climate' (G4C) coalition, which brings together seven European TSOs and two biogas associations (**see case study**), were regular visitors. Their German (Open Grid Europe), Italian (SNAM) and Belgian (Fluxys) TSOs all secured meetings with DG Energy. Director for Internal Energy Market, Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, a well-known industry-friendly gas advocate, even spent a day visiting Fluxys' Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal in Zeebrugge, where all elements of the present and future gas system were discussed, including gas in transport (**see myth buster**).

*Gas is here today, it will be here tomorrow and the day after tomorrow – We will continue to use gas after 2050*

- KLAUS-DIETER BORCHARDT, DIRECTOR, DG ENERGY

The G4C coalition has employed environmental consultant Ecofys not just to produce studies for them but also coordinate the coalition and lobby for them. Ecofys met Borchardt twice to discuss renewable gas, the

second time presenting the study it carried out for G4C containing the dubious claim that using gas (including a limited supply of renewable gas) can achieve "net zero greenhouse gas emissions in the EU by 2050" at a more affordable price than electrification. (**See Part 1's myth buster to find out why this is not true**).<sup>vii</sup>

However, according to Corporate Europe Observatory's documents, Ecofys was supposed to be meeting Borchardt to discuss the Commission's "legacy document" on energy policy, as the well-respected consultancy had been invited to input into the writing process.<sup>viii</sup> So was Ecofys there as an energy expert trusted by the Commission to give objective input, or as the chief lobbyist for Gas for Climate, as they appear in the Gas for Climate transparency register entry?<sup>ix</sup> The Commission may have knowingly or unknowingly given G4C privileged access to a policy-making process the coalition had a very keen interest in.

Corporate Europe Observatory's attempt to access what should be public documents via freedom of information requests was a long-drawn out process, with many still withheld. Incredibly DG Energy handed over no minutes or notes from meetings throughout the ten month period, bar one example. Even from these meagre pickings we can see that every encounter appears to have a pro-renewable gas agenda. And not just on the side of the gas lobby. Minutes show that when trade association Eurogas visited in June 2017, Director General Dominique Ristori "highlighted the need for the sector to engage increasingly in renewable gas".<sup>x</sup> That October, Eurogas held its Annual Conference entitled "Renewable gas: balancing our energy".<sup>xi</sup> It is one of many examples of the Commission encouraging industry (**see graphic, opposite**), but Ristori was in fact preaching to the converted as **Eurogas has been at the vanguard of lobbying for renewable gas**, launching their [www.gaswindandsun.eu](http://www.gaswindandsun.eu) campaign website back in March 2017.

Expect the trade association to go even bigger on renewable gas from now on, as their incoming Secretary General James Watson comes from solar trade association SolarPower Europe,<sup>xii</sup> and was previously a director with lobby consultancy Weber Shandwick who masterminded the gas-renewables lobbying alliance as early as 2011.<sup>xiii</sup>

### Box 3: Industry's legislative target: gas market reform

DG Energy is already looking closely at what the future of gas will be, commissioning studies, bringing together 'stakeholders' and carrying out a public consultation. They plan to produce a proposal on how the future gas market should look, with a focus on 'decarbonising' gas grids and integrating renewable gases.<sup>xiv</sup> It should be ready to present by 2020, early in the next Commission (which starts November 2019), after which it will head to the European Parliament and the Council. The gas industry has already been busy influencing the Parliament and Council around the Renewable Energy Directive II, successfully ensuring renewable gas was recognised alongside renewable electricity and can count towards EU targets,<sup>xv</sup> despite serious sustainability concerns.

## Two way traffic: Commission encouraging renewable gas

20... will take place on the 22nd and 23rd of June 2017 in Riga. My services have already been in contact with you on this matter and I am very grateful that you have accepted to participate in this event as a speaker.

I am confident that your experience and knowledge in the area of Natural Gas will decisively contribute to the success of the session Workshop on "Natural gas and biomethane as fuel for Transport".

For further details on the preparation of your contribution (such as the form, the length or the specific topics) please contact me.

DG MOVE invites gas TSO Fluxys to be a speaker at its event on biomethane in transport

#### Summary of meeting DR-Eurogas, 19/6/2017

- Eurogas referred to the letter they sent to the Commission concerning the amendment of the gas directive and the lack of Impact Assessment. DR explained why the Commission considered that no impact assessment was necessary.
- Eurogas interpreted good results of the bookings in some recent pipeline projects as sign that the confidence coming back into gas markets.
- DR highlighted the need for the sector to engage increasingly in renewable gas and that carbon capture and storage was getting new impetus in terms of global support (including in the US).
- The date of the next Madrid Forum was recalled: 19 October.

Director General Dominique Rostori (DR) lobbying Eurogas

Director of Internal Energy Market Klaus-Dieter Borchardt giving "exclusive information from Brussels" on renewable gas to industry gathering

ONTRAS.NETZPUNKTE  
Informationen aus Energiepolitik & Gasversorgung, Nr. 03 | 2017



#### VERANSTALTUNG

ONTRAS-Netzforum 2017 in Leipzig - Probleme, Perspektiven und Potenziale der erneuerbaren Gaswirtschaft



Das neue Format „Coffee & Talk“ stieß ebenso auf großes Interesse wie der Blick auf die Veranstaltungsbilder von Prof. Dr. Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, Vorsitzender der Europäischen Kommission. Die Ergebnisse untermauern die gegenseitige Unterstützung der beiden Netzwerke. Die Ergebnisse untermauern die gegenseitige Unterstützung der beiden Netzwerke. Die Ergebnisse untermauern die gegenseitige Unterstützung der beiden Netzwerke.

Senior DG Energy official supports industry call for renewable gas and more infrastructure

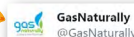


The EU pours millions of euros into 'low-carbon' gas for transport projects

Climate Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete publicly welcoming the Gas for Climate proposals



European Commissioner Arias Cañete @MAC\_europa at the #GasforClimate event. Decarbonizing the EU economy will require major investments. I welcome the #GasforClimate initiative to develop the role of renewable and low-carbon gas.



Thank you @csikow! @GasNaturally agrees that investments in EU #gas #infrastructure helps that more #renewables with a positive impact on consumers #EnergyBills, the #environment & #ClimateChange

Catharina Sikow @csikow

Building energy infrastructure is not a zero-sum game @EURACTIV euractiv.com/section/energy...

Informal and general discussion about Clean Energy Market

Discussion on the preparation of the "legacy document" on energy policy, for which Ecofys is invited to give an input in the writing process of the European Commission's legacy document on Energy Policy.

DG Energy invites gas industry lobbyist to help write future EU energy policy.



## Case study: Gas for Climate: leader in renewable gas lobbying



The 'Gas for Climate: a path to 2050' coalition (G4C) in 2017 began to promote the idea that the EU could reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and meet its Paris Agreement commitments by using renewable (and increasingly, low-carbon) gas – and that doing so would be cheaper and better for the EU.

*A combination of renewable electricity and renewable gas will achieve net zero greenhouse gas emission [sic] in the most cost-efficient way.*

### - GAS FOR CLIMATE: A PATH TO 2050

It brings together seven leading European gas pipeline builder and operators: Enagás (Spain), Fluxys (Belgium), Gasunie (Netherlands), GRTgaz (France), Open Grid Europe (Germany), Snam (Italy), and Teréga (France); and two biogas industry associations, the European Biogas Association and Consorzio Italiano Biogas. According to their website, the group "includes leading

gas infrastructure companies in six EU Member States that are collectively responsible for 75 per cent of total natural gas consumption in Europe".<sup>xvi</sup> As they own and operate much of the infrastructure in those countries, they are very keen to keep up gas consumption so it avoids being decommissioned, with their pipelines becoming stranded assets.

G4C is coordinated by the well-respected environmental consultancy Ecofys, whose reputation they fully exploit. **G4C gains credibility and lobbying access through the research the consultancy does for them and the doors Ecofys can open.** The latter has always enjoyed a high level of

access and is a regular visitor at the Commission thanks to its involvement in numerous other EU processes.<sup>xvii</sup> Using that access for the gas industry presents a potential conflict of interest, and coincides with major changes for the consultancy.

In late 2016 Ecofys was acquired by US company Navigant Consulting, "one of the world's largest management consulting firms",<sup>xviii</sup> and a year later Bertil Heenrick was recruited as a Director of strategy development for energy and climate and put in charge of EU relations. In his own words, he "speaks the language of government and business".<sup>xix</sup> His background includes advising another global management consultancy on strategic alliances, leading industry trade associations such as the all-powerful EU chemicals lobby, CEFIC, and a stint with the European Commission.<sup>xx</sup>

G4C's transparency register entry lists Ecofys' Daan Peters as the person in charge of EU relations, with three other lobbyists declared. No figure is available for G4C's spending, but the combined lobbying budget of its members was as much as €1.4m in 2017, with an additional 25 lobbyists between them. According to the G4C register entry, they have been extremely busy: **"Gas for Climate had meetings with over 30 policy makers at the European Commission, Parliament and Council."**<sup>xxi</sup>

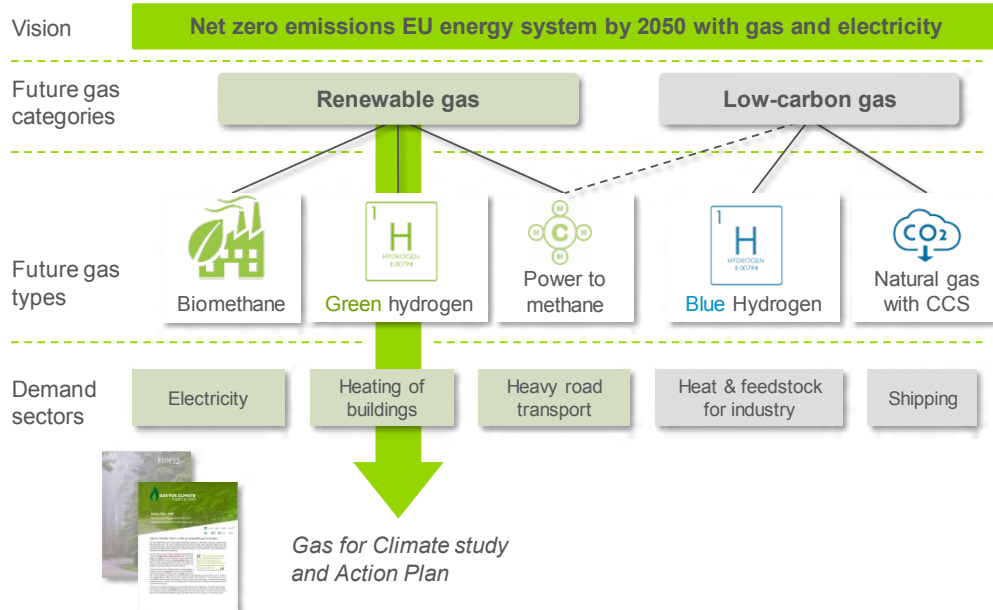
Courting politicians doesn't only happen behind closed doors. In September 2018, the coalition organised a high-level event with the key note speech from European Commissioner for Climate, Miguel Arias Cañete.<sup>xxii</sup> It was an opportunity for G4C's chief executives to publicly lobby the Commissioner and present their own renewable gas plans, as well as their 2030 Action Plan to "increase the use and production of renewable gases and [...] facilitate their trade and transport".<sup>xxiii</sup> It includes a call for a ten per cent production target by 2030. Cañete, who brought an entire team to the event, assured them the gas sector was "a key sector of our economy" with the future holding "many opportunities", and that gas infrastructure "cannot become stranded assets". The panel discussion featured Ecofys alongside a very supportive environmental NGO (see NGO section), giving G4C an important credibility boost, particularly as many of its members are being actively campaigned against for their controversial pipeline building activities.

With its strong statements on supporting the Paris Agreement, its high-level events, its touting of renewable gas projects, its use of Ecofys and its co-optation of parts of the NGO community, the G4C coalition is doing its best to ensure its gas infrastructure keeps being used, whether by renewable gas or otherwise. Its own Ecofys study claims the EU could only sustainably produce 122 bcm (billion metres cubed) of renewable gas by 2050, meaning the remaining projected demand of 132 bcm

would still come from fossil gas (see Part 1 myth buster). But a new study by the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) is far less optimistic, claiming the EU could only feasibly produce 36 bcm of sustainable renewable gas.<sup>xxiv</sup> Thus if we accept the coalition's vision, fossil gas will keep flowing through the pipes until 2050 and likely long after. That should not bother G4C's members, many of whom are currently involved in building new unnecessary mega-gas-pipelines such as the controversial Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP). Other members are involved in coalitions with messages that completely contradict the Ecofys study,<sup>2</sup> but in Brussels policy-making circles that doesn't seem to matter. The coalition's strong emphasis on renewable gas (ie hydrogen from renewable electricity and biomethane from sustainably sourced biomass), while lumping it together with 'low-carbon' gas, provides the green progressive veneer, but peel it back and their plans are as dirty as ever.

*Renewable and low carbon gases have a valuable role to play in a future decarbonised energy system.*

- GAS FOR CLIMATE



Classification of renewable and low-carbon gases, according to the Gas for Climate Action Plan 2030.

<sup>2</sup> The European Biogas Association (EBA), a G4C member, has also released a roadmap alongside the Natural and bio Gas Vehicles Association (NGVA) Europe calling for road vehicles to have 80 per cent renewable gas by 2050, which would be 24 bcm. Yet the Ecofys study allocates a mere 5 bcm to all transport. For the EBA claim see <https://www.ngva.eu/medias/g-mobility-document/> ; for the Ecofys study, see [https://gasforclimate2050.eu/files/files/Ecofys\\_Gas\\_for\\_Climate\\_Report\\_Study\\_March18.pdf](https://gasforclimate2050.eu/files/files/Ecofys_Gas_for_Climate_Report_Study_March18.pdf)

## Capturing the Council: The Hydrogen Initiative Declaration

Advocates for renewable gas have been keen to use their national governments to promote their interests via the European Council. For example the Austrian Government used its Presidency of the Council to promote 'green hydrogen' (see Part 1's glossary) on behalf of its energy-intensive industries, organising a high-level conference on the fringes of a ministerial meeting which brought together 200 industry captains and political leaders.

The Austrians used the conference to announce the 'Hydrogen Initiative Declaration',<sup>xxv</sup> a non-binding PR exercise to promote the fuel.<sup>xxvi</sup> 25 ministers and numerous industry players took part in the elaborate signing process. The Council Presidency also organised a site visit to the premises of Austrian steel company Voestalpine,<sup>xxvii</sup> who is building the world's largest hydrogen pilot plant as part of an EU-industry public private partnership.<sup>xxviii</sup> Climate Commissioner Cañete was on hand throughout the day to promote the initiative. He gave a key note speech at the conference as well as posing for press photographers while signing the declaration (see tweet) and at the Voestalpine plant.



Miguel Arias Cañete ✓  
 @MAC\_europa

Hydrogen: a promising technology for supporting Energy transition #hydrogen #decarbonisation



5:49 am - 17 Sep 2018

68 Retweets 136 Likes



6 68 136

▲ Tweet from Commissioner Cañete at Hydrogen Initiative Declaration signing ceremony



▲ Energy ministers at the Informal Meeting in Linz, Austria



#### Box 4: Differing interests – sectors and geography

The different parts of the renewable gas lobby have opted to cooperate rather than compete (**see Trade Associations section**), but while they have interests in common, they are in no way homogenous. Their focus can vary depending on which part of the supply chain they are concerned with, as well as types of gas, and geographical location.

##### 'DOWNSTREAM' OR 'UPSTREAM' IN THE FOSSIL GAS SUPPLY CHAIN?

**Downstream gas transporters**, that is those building and operating the pipelines (TSOs) such as Belgian Fluxys, Italian SNAM, or Spanish Enagás, don't care what gas goes in their pipes as long as they are used. This makes it much easier for them and their trade association Gas Infrastructure Europe to call for all forms of renewable and low-carbon gas, as well as anything that increases gas use, such as 'decarbonising' the transport sector through gas. The same can be said for those who buy, sell, and deliver gas to homes and businesses, who are represented by the trade association Eurogas. But as studies show that the EU is not going to be able to sustainably produce significant volumes of renewable gas, they are still going to want fossil gas to be flowing through the pipes until that situation changes (if it ever does).

**Upstream gas producers** such as Shell or Equinor (ex-Statoil), who pump it out of the ground, want to keep being able to sell their product, which means they support hydrogen, and specifically hydrogen derived from fossil gas. They claim they can make it 'low carbon' by using the unproven and costly CCS (**see Part 1 myth buster**), but they also argue that gas is itself a 'clean' fossil fuel. If the EU went for hydrogen made strictly from renewable electricity, ie 'green hydrogen', fossil gas producers would be out of business. But as 50 per cent of hydrogen today comes from fossil gas, they're betting that building support for any type of hydrogen will keep us hooked on dirty energy way past 2050.<sup>xxix</sup>

##### WHAT SORT OF RENEWABLE GAS IS BEING PRODUCED?

**Hydrogen** and **biomethane** have very different production techniques (**see Part 1's glossary**), from completely different sources (fossil gas/renewable electricity vs biomass), which means very different interests and players. Fossil gas producers have been more interested in hydrogen, while TSOs have supported biomethane as a more realistic and immediate option.

##### WHERE ARE YOU IN EUROPE?

**Germany** has a lot of renewable electricity generation, so there is a big push for power-to-gas (hydrogen, and potentially synthetic methane). They have been a very influential lobby, occupying top spots at Eurogas and driving the agenda. This is reflected in the Commission's frequent meetings with German companies.

**UK** is going big on hydrogen, developing city-wide pilot projects in the North of England with Equinor. However, it intends to source the hydrogen from fossil gas (with CCS), which is why it didn't sign up to the renewable electricity-only Hydrogen Initiative Declaration (see Capturing the Council, above).

#### Box 4 (continued): Differing interests – sectors and geography

**Netherlands** is also talking up hydrogen, driven by the government's move away from fossil gas for residential heating and the closing of the country's biggest gas field, as well as its proximity to the windy North Sea. Eventually they aim to source the hydrogen from offshore wind (green hydrogen), but in the short term it will be dependent on fossil gas (grey and blue hydrogen).<sup>xxx</sup>

**France** is a supporter of biomethane, in part to support its agricultural sector. The national environment and energy agency ADEME teamed up with gas TSOs in an attempt to show that France could meet all of its gas needs by 2050 through renewable gas, primarily biomethane.<sup>xxxi</sup> Big questions remain on where the biomass can be sourced from, how sustainable it would be, and how much it would cost (see [Part 1](#)).

*Grey, blue and green hydrogen; as long as the final picture is sustainable*

- TKI NIEUW GAS, TASKED BY THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT TO DESIGN A HYDROGEN ROAD MAP

#### Trade associations lobbying for renewable gas - and their biggest members



While interests do differ between parts of the gas supply chain (see Box 4), shared membership across trade associations makes it easier to create coherent and complementary demands.

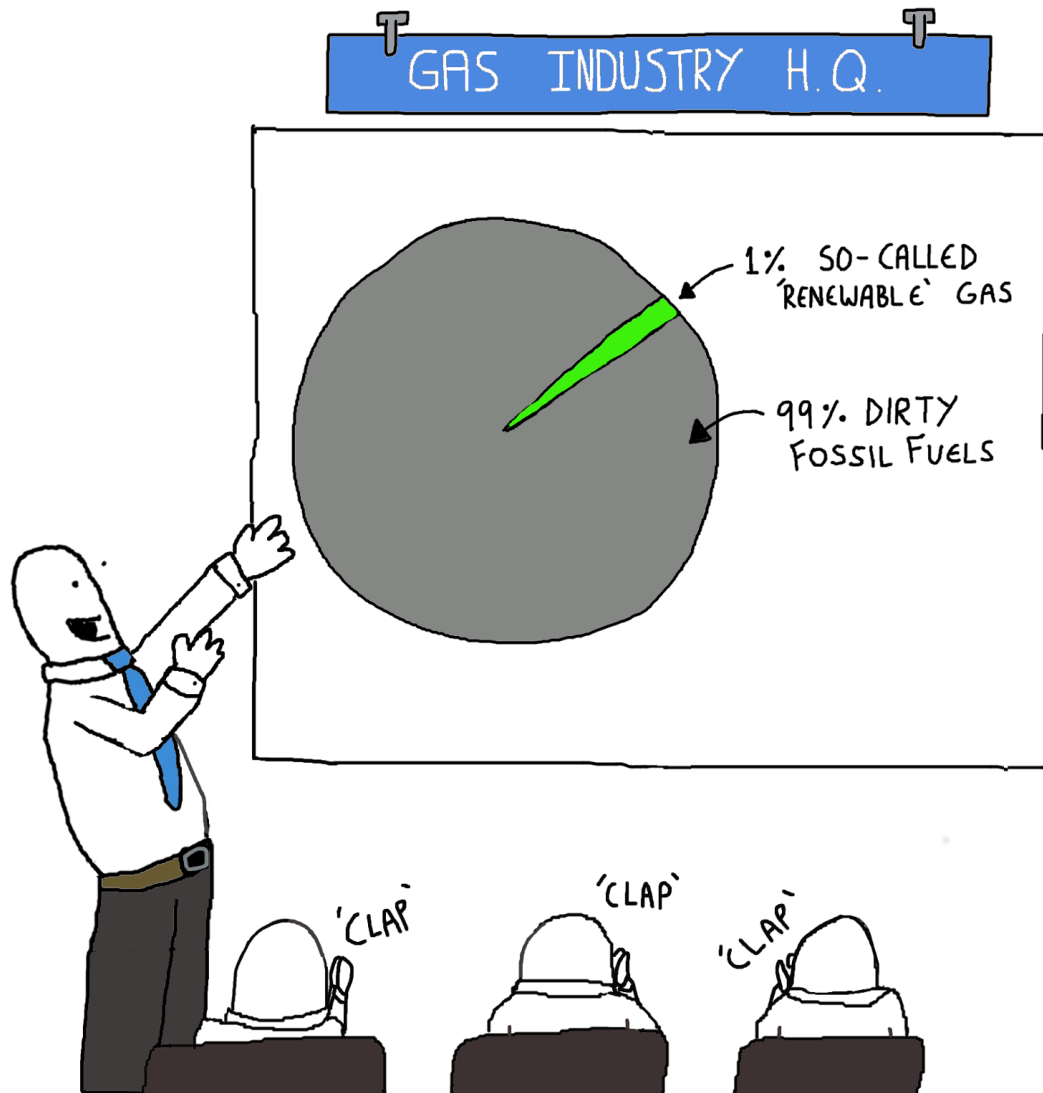
## Trade Associations: powering the renewable gas lobby

Trade associations within the renewable gas lobby are constantly collaborating and finding synergies in their messaging (usefully blurring the lines between renewable and low carbon gas), their demands (which suit everyone) and ultimately their lobbying activities (more gas please, renewable if and when possible). This ensures they create an echo chamber in Brussels with repeated messages, making it harder for policy makers to ignore:

*For more info on specific gases mentioned, see [Part 1's glossary](#)*

- NGVA Europe added 'biogas' to its title, and is now officially called the Natural and bio Gas Vehicle Association, realising it needed to start talking about renewable as well as natural gas if it wanted to be listened to in Brussels. Its members are also part of Gas for Climate and Hydrogen Europe.<sup>xxxii</sup>
- The European Biogas Association, which traditionally promotes biomethane from biomass, teamed up with Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE) to organise a workshop dedicated to methane created from renewable electricity. While the workshop was still primarily on methane from renewable electricity, the first session focused on biomethane and the need for more infrastructure to make sure it could be traded across Europe.<sup>xxxiv</sup>
- For the last 18 months gas industry conferences, particularly those organised by trade associations, have had similar agendas, similar industry speakers, and similar high-level Commission representation. The intention is to drive home their shared agenda with their shared target.
- In addition to collaborating through trade associations, numerous industry coalitions (sometimes with NGOs, see below) have sprung up around renewable gas, for example Gas for Climate (G4C), the Green Gas Coalition (with many of the same TSO members as G4C), Power to Gas, the Hydrogen Initiative (**see Capturing the council**), or the Coalition for Renewable Gas in North America.
- The Hydrogen Initiative Declaration (**see Capturing the Council, above**) was all about supporting 'green' hydrogen from renewable electricity, but they still gave a speaking slot during the high-level conference to the International Association of Oil and Gas Producers (IOGP), so they could remind people not to forget about 'blue' hydrogen from fossil gas.<sup>xxxiii</sup>





"Just because the climate is changing doesn't mean our business has to!"

@CARTOONRALPH



## NGOs lend their credibility

Renewable gas is proving a useful calling card for the gas industry, allowing it to collaborate and court NGOs in Brussels and national capitals in order to enhance its own credibility. Brussels trade associations like Eurogas and Gas Infrastructure Europe have made sure they involve NGOs and those close to them in their conferences and events (see tweet below),<sup>xxxv</sup> but the frontrunner is the Gas for Climate Coalition (G4C). In its 2030 Action Plan it explicitly states that one of the key things the gas industry can do to increase social acceptance of renewable gas (and therefore its production) is to engage in an "open dialogue" with NGOs.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Engaging the well-respected sustainability consultant Ecofys to be their coordinator/lobbyist (as well as lead researcher), has allowed them to do just this, drawing on its NGO connections.



.@CANIntI welcomes fact that the gas industry is looking at #renewablegas and are willing to work with industry to make it happen #newgas4EU



12:52 am - 27 Oct 2017

5 Retweets 7 Likes



5 7

At G4C's latest high-level public event with Commissioner Cañete, sitting alongside Ecofys and G4C chief executives was Stephan Singer, Senior Advisor to Climate Action Network International (CAN-I), which represents more than 1100 civil society organisations. His presence and comments provided the kind of credibility that money can't buy, publicly congratulating the coalition for their initiative, calling it a "good thing" and offering to work with them on the details. His constant use of the phrase "we NGOs" also gave the impression that Brussels-based NGOs support G4C, when in fact, many members of the CAN-I regional branch, Climate Action Network Europe (CAN-E), are actively campaigning against the gas industry members of the G4C coalition and are highly sceptical of their renewable gas claims. This came to light when Ecofys and Singer organised a series of meetings between Brussels NGOs and G4C with the unofficial agenda of getting a signed joint statement that backed the industry coalition's plans. However, pushback from CAN-E members meant the industry-friendly Ecofys-drafted statement never saw the light of day.

◀ Left: Eurogas Annual Conference 2017, with NGO Climate Action Network International (CAN-I)

## *[To] increase societal acceptance of sustainable biomethane [we need an] open dialogue with NGOs.*

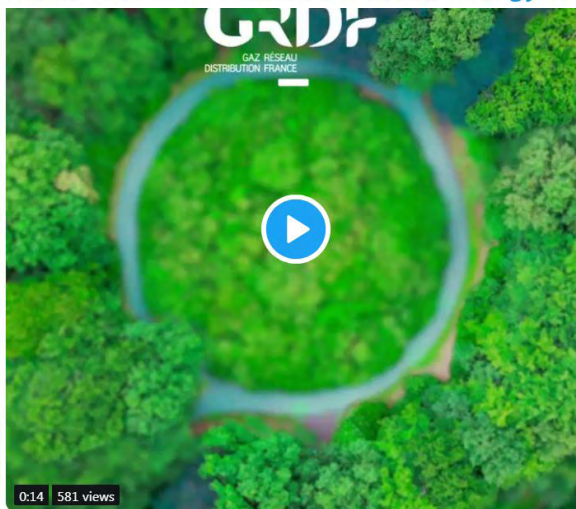
### - GAS FOR CLIMATE, ACTION PLAN 2030

New partnerships between the gas industry and NGOs are also flourishing at the national level. In France biomethane is gaining momentum thanks to a report by the Government's Environment and Energy Agency (ADEME). It was co-authored by two of France's biggest gas pipeline builders and operators, GRTgaz (owned by Engie) and GRDF, and tries to claim the country could be 100 per cent self-sufficient in renewable gas by 2050, mainly from biomethane.<sup>xxxvii</sup> GRDF has now teamed up with WWF France for the next three years to define what 'sustainable' biomethane production could look like,<sup>xxxviii</sup> a task which if not done properly could put biomethane in



Guillaume VIRMAUX  
@GVirmaux

.@GRDF & @WWFFrance 🐼 launch a partnership to foster a sustainable #biomethane 🌱🌍 development with agricultural best practices & new financing solutions ➡️ + info: [bit.ly/2xrgrNB](https://bit.ly/2xrgrNB)  
@ristori20 @European\_Biogas @gazzema @stracma  
#GreenGas #RenewableGas #CleanEnergyEU



10:04 am - 18 Sep 2018 From Paris, France

competition with food crops or forests and lead to land grabbing and deforestation (as happened with biofuels). WWF has a chequered past in this area, having worked previously on controversial certification projects such as the Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS), alongside Monsanto, which was the EU's first accredited biofuels scheme and ultimately led to deforestation and land-grabbing.<sup>xxxix</sup>

Moves by the Dutch Government away from fossil gas has seen increased interest in hydrogen from North sea offshore wind. Leading the way is not industry, but Greenpeace Netherlands, who initiated the Hydrogen Coalition (Waterstof Coalition).<sup>xl</sup> It brings together electricity and gas grid operators, energy-intensive industries, and a few other green NGOs (see tweet, below right) and is lobbying the Dutch government to support 'green hydrogen' by aiming for three gigawatts of power-to-gas electrolyzers by 2030.<sup>xli</sup> Greenpeace Netherlands is aiming for 100 per cent green hydrogen from excess wind energy, but other gas industry members of the the coalition like Gas for Climate's Gasunie are still lobbying for hydrogen from fossil gas. The Dutch government's recent 2050 hydrogen roadmap also relies heavily on fossil gas.<sup>xlii</sup> Therefore the Greenpeace initiative could be unwittingly opening the door for increased fossil fuel use. Particularly if there is not enough renewable electricity deployment. (See [Part 1 glossary](#)).



ENGIE Services NL  
@EngieServicesNL

#Groene #waterstof noodzakelijk onderdeel Klimaat & Energieakkoord. #ENGIE actief lid van #Waterstofcoalitie [ow.ly/rTY730ki0eI](https://ow.ly/rTY730ki0eI)



6:23 am - 1 Jun 2018

GRDF head of European Affairs announcing their partnership with WWF

Member of the Greenpeace-led Hydrogen Coalition (Waterstof Coalition)

## Buying positive media coverage

The gas lobby has achieved good media coverage in the Brussels bubble. But much of it has been paid for, as *Politico* and *Euractiv*, two of the bubble's most widely-read news outlets, earn much of their income through corporate partnerships. Getting positive PR coverage has never been easier, while paid-for events have proved perfect lobbying opportunities.



The screenshot shows the Euractiv website interface. At the top is a yellow navigation bar with the Euractiv logo and various menu items like 'Elections 2019', 'Agrifood', 'Digital', 'Economy & Jobs', 'Energy & Environment', 'Global Europe', 'Health', 'Politics', and 'Transport'. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home / Special Reports / Energy & Environment / Energy / Gas / Renewable gas'. The main article is titled 'Renewable gas' and is dated 'Oct 25, 2017 (updated: Oct 31, 2017)'. It features a large photo of industrial gas pipes. Below the photo is a tweet from Eurogas (@Eurogas\_Eu) dated 5h. The tweet text is: '#Gas has significant potential to reduce CO2 emissions and improve air quality at land and at sea. bit.ly/2ELy4K'. The tweet includes a graphic with the text: 'Gas has significant potential to REDUCE CO2 EMISSIONS and IMPROVE AIR QUALITY ON LAND AND AT SEA'. At the bottom of the article, there is a link to download a special report and a short paragraph about synthetic and hydrogen gas.



### SPONSORED CONTENT:

Eurogas paid *Euractiv* to produce a special report on renewable gas to coincide with its 2017 Annual Conference on the same topic.<sup>xliii</sup> It included an interview with then-Secretary General Beate Raabe where she repeated the inflated claim that 76 per cent of gas could be renewable by 2050 – with EU financial support, of course.<sup>xliv</sup> Eurogas even penned its own article, as well as plastering its logo and twitter feed across the *Euractiv* website.

*Enhance your corporate communications or public-affairs strategy by supporting one or more policy sections on EURACTIV or its network of 12 national affiliates across Europe.*

- EURACTIV



## POLITICO DAILY BULLETINS

# POLITICO Pro Morning Energy and Climate, presented by GasNaturally: Climate talks crunch time — Solar power boost or bust — Saving energy around the clock

By KALINA OROSHAKOFF | 9/3/18, 7:10 AM CET

GasNaturally has consistently sponsored *Politico's* morning newsletters to promote the interests of its members in renewable gas. Sent to thousands of *Politico* subscribers, including important decision makers, it is able to plant targeted messages amid the day's news, such as calling for renewable gas and electricity to be treated equally, for recognition that renewable, low-carbon, and fossil gas all contribute to the EU's climate targets, or claiming the gas industry is driving low-carbon innovation (and asking for more money).<sup>xlv</sup> GRTgaz, a French pipeline builder and operator owned by Engie, has also used its sponsorship to promote biomethane and the decarbonisation of transport via gas.<sup>xlvi</sup>

## SPONSORING EVENTS

Shell, a keen advocate of natural gas wherever possible (eg power generation, transport, etc), as well as a dabbler in hydrogen projects, has paid an undisclosed sum to *Politico* for the organisation of its Energy Visions series of events, videos, articles, and surveys in which it gets to play a leading role. Events have brought key figures from industry, the Commission, the European Parliament, and civil society to discuss questions Shell gets to frame, all with an opening address by a Shell executive.

*Politico's* follow-up videos with panelists have posed leading questions such as "Other than gas, how else can Europe's energy utilities deal with intermittent supply from renewables?" or "Should gas be the fossil fuel of choice to partner with renewables in the energy transition?" In response to the latter, DG Energy's Klaus-Dieter Borchardt responds, "Definitely. Yes!"<sup>xlvii</sup> The most recent event and multimedia package has focused on liquified natural gas (LNG) in trucks, all framed to fit

Shell's business interests (for why (bio)methane is not a solution for transport, see **Part 1 myth buster**).<sup>xlviii</sup>

**DAVE KING, POLITICO:** *Should gas be the fossil fuel of choice to partner with renewables in the energy transition?*

**KLAUS-DIETER BORCHARDT, DG ENERGY:** *Definitely. Yes!*

In a constrained media climate, securing public lobbying opportunities and positive coverage has never been easier for those with the resources. Luckily the gas lobby has deep pockets, spending more than €100m a year on lobbying in Brussels.<sup>xlix</sup> For those pushing renewable gas, *Politico* and *Euractiv* have lubricated the way.



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The past 18 months have seen an intensification of the gas industry's push for 'renewable gas', while the European Commission has reciprocated with friendly public reassurances. Worryingly, it is clear that truly sustainably produced renewable gas in the EU is not going to appear in anywhere near the quantities or within the timeframes needed to decarbonise our gas system and avoid temperature rises above 1.5°C as laid out in the Paris Agreement ([see Part 1](#)). If the EU commits to widespread use of 'renewable' or 'low-carbon' gas, it will give the green light to continued extraction, transportation, and burning of fossil gas, which has a huge impact on local communities, their environments, and the climate. And setting an ambitious 2030 renewable gas production target as demanded by industry could drive deforestation, land-grabbing, and competition between food and fuel, as we saw with the biofuels targets debacle.<sup>1</sup> In short, it is a very dangerous distraction.

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**We need to plan a phase-out of all fossil fuels and their associated infrastructure in line with climate science, while protecting workers over corporate profits.**

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Rather than trying to decarbonise our gas system by putting our faith in unproven technologies such as carbon capture and storage or 'renewable gas' which can never be sustainably delivered in the

necessary quantities, we need to plan a phase-out of all fossil fuels and their associated infrastructure in line with climate science, while protecting workers over corporate profits. The EU needs to remain focused on rolling out wind, sun, and tidal energy, electrification, smart storage, and energy demand reduction, rather than locking us in to a future of fossil fuels.

This briefing is just a snap-shot of the lobbying situation from what can currently be observed, but as the EU Commission continues develops its vision for our future gas system, due in 2020, industry pressure will undoubtedly intensify. If we want climate and energy policies that deliver the ambition laid out in the Paris Agreement, as well as respecting local communities and their ecosystems, we need to end the grip the gas lobby exerts over policy-making and introduce a firewall between their lobbyists and public officials. The World Health Organisation introduced such a policy to protect the ambition of tobacco control policies, creating a firewall between public health policy-makers and the tobacco lobby, known as 'Article 5.3'.<sup>li</sup> The dangerous distraction of renewable gas is one more example why EU climate policy-makers need protection from the gas lobby.

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**...we need to end the grip the gas lobby exerts over policy-making and introduce a firewall between their lobbyists and policy makers.**

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