

Ursula von der Leyen  
President of the European Commission

Kadri Simson  
Commissioner for Energy

Olivér Varhélyi  
Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement

*Dear President von der Leyen,* Brussels, 24 March 2022

Dear Madam President von der Leyen,  
Dear Commissioner Simson,  
Dear Commissioner Varhélyi,

The attack against Ukraine only underlines that the European Union must not rely on the Russian export of fossil fuels. The regime in the Kremlin cannot hold Europe hostage with its natural resources. The Russian Federation manipulated export and gas prices at the end of last year when Russia completely stopped gas flow through the Yamal gas pipe, which led to a sharp increase in prices. The EU managed to lower the costs of Russia's bellicose actions only through quick and targeted interventions. Additionally, since the beginning of this year, Russia has also constrained gas transport through the Ukraine-Slovak corridor.

The REPowerEU plan of the European Commission to reduce gas imports from Russia by two thirds by the end of this year is a step in the right direction. We must make sure that we are not paying indirectly for the aggression against Ukraine and stop our dependency on Russia as soon as possible.

In order to achieve this ambitious goal, the EU must immediately revive and speed up frozen gas pipe projects, support and finance the construction of new connections between the gas grids, advocate for all low-emission energy alternatives, and supply gas to our immediate neighbourhood specifically to Ukraine, Moldova and the Western Balkans. We have to act fast.

The Iberian Peninsula has the ideal infrastructure to meet some European gas demand through its many LNG gas terminals. However, the existing gas pipes between Spain and France are insufficient, and the project of construction of the gas pipe that was supposed to resolve this issue was stopped in 2019. Likewise, we need more grid connections between Germany and the Czech Republic to transport gas to Slovakia and neighbouring EU countries.

Moreover, cutting down on Russian fossil fuels can threaten gas supplies in the EU's immediate neighbourhood. The EU must make sure that it includes Ukraine, Moldova and our partners in the Western Balkans in its plan to secure gas for the following winter.



European Parliament

Therefore, we call on the European Commission to:

- Conduct a dialogue between France, Portugal and Spain to relaunch the MIDCAT gas pipeline project as soon as possible, and to increase the overall connections between Portugal, Spain and France; regard the project as "Important Projects of Common European Interest" and secure financing of the project through European funds. The goal should be to build the pipeline promptly.
- Support and finance the interconnector project in Waidhaus, Germany, to the Czech Republic to secure gas flow to Slovakia and neighbouring countries. Likewise, this project should be regarded as "Important Projects of Common European Interest." Furthermore, strengthen other alternatives to Russian gas corridors, such as the pipeline connection between the Adriatic and Central Europe, or between Greece and Bulgaria.
- Include the countries of Western Balkans, Ukraine and Moldova in the plans for gas storage and overall European strategy to secure gas supply for the following winter; support and finance new projects that will secure and interconnect the gas grids between the EU and these countries.
- All of the above-mentioned gas projects shall be fully compatible with a changeover to hydrogen.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Vladimír Bilčík, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/SK)

Álvaro Amaro, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/PT)  
Andrzej Halicki, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/PL)  
Aušra Maldeikienė, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/LT)  
Bart Groothuis, Member of the European Parliament (Renew/NL)  
Franc Bogovič, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/SI)  
Gheorghe Falcă, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/RO)  
Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/LU)  
Ivan Štefanec, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/SK)  
José Manuel Fernandes, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/PT)  
Lídia Pereira, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/PT)  
Luděk Niedermayer, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/CZ)  
Marek Balt, Member of the European Parliament (S&D/PL)  
Maria da Graça Carvalho, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/PT)  
Miriam Lexmann, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/SK)  
Paulo Rangel, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/PT)  
Peter Pollák, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/SK)  
Pilar del Castillo Vera, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/ES)  
Radan Kanev, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/BG)  
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Traian Băsescu, Member of the European Parliament (EPP/RO)