

## Contribution to the debate on the Green Paper

Amongst many others, GERG has been invited to take part in the debate concerning the Green Paper: "Towards a European Strategy for the Security of Energy Supply" and, as a strictly R&D organisation, has chosen to respond only to those points relevant to R&D.

It's clear that Renewable Energy is the European Union's favoured source of energy for the long-term, as reference to the level of funding it has received in recent R&D Framework Programmes will show. GERG supports this position, as there is no doubt that Renewables will be an important piece of the energy supply jigsaw in coming years. However, take-up is slow, reluctant and spasmodic because of a range of obstacles, including cost, limited availability and unreliability of hardware. Consequently, at current rates of energy usage in Europe, we will fall hopelessly short of our Kyoto CO<sub>2</sub> objectives and, in the time necessary to achieve a reasonable penetration of renewable energy technologies into the market, we will see further considerable increases in CO<sub>2</sub> levels<sup>1</sup>.

To quote from the Commission's own document,

*"Energy is the driving force behind our economy, everything we do and our way of life."*<sup>2</sup>

This is crucial, yet it is obviously forgotten, not understood, or simply overlooked, by those who absolutely rely on readily available energy every time they flick a switch, or cook a meal, or take a shower - and this means everyone.

One of the key messages from the Green Paper is that no one energy option has the capacity to provide, in the near future, for all our energy needs and that diversity is essential. It does seem, however, from the increased concentration of support on Renewables R&D, that there is a belief that it alone will solve the problems.

In the interim period which, in all probability, will last for the next 20-30 years, the pragmatists will rely on the readily available energy sources and will benefit from a progressive move to the clean and efficient energy technologies associated with natural gas and the major contribution it can make to CO<sub>2</sub> reduction<sup>3</sup>. Ignorance of these particular benefits seems to be attributable to a widely held, blinkered approach which includes natural gas in the same category as oil and coal as a serious polluter, simply because it is a fossil fuel, without applying a great deal of thought to the particular benefits it can bring in the interim.

Bearing in mind the extreme and growing importance of European Energy Security of Supply, we look at the plans for FP6 and note with disbelief the lack of joined-up thinking which has made no provision for R&D related to gas pipelines and gas storage, without which there would be no delivery of gas in Europe. It is obvious that Europe is completely dependent on the safe and efficient operation of these pipelines for the well-being of its citizens and for the competitiveness of its industry. Yet, incredibly, no provision is being made to support trans-national R&D, which is not only vital to the security of energy supply and to the safety of European citizens, but can also make a significant contribution to Europe's environmental aspirations<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Capros NTUA 1999

<sup>2</sup> 'Green Paper – Towards a European strategy for the security of energy supply', European Commission DG Energy and Transport

<sup>3</sup> GATE 2020

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, FP5 projects: VOGUE, PRESENSE, GIGA