



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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*Mr Florin IORDACHE  
President of the  
Camera Deputaților  
Palace of the Parliament  
Str. Izvor nr. 2-4, sector 5  
RO – 050563 BUCHAREST*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Commission's Communication on an EU strategy for liquefied natural gas and gas storage {COM(2016) 49 final}.*

*This Communication forms part of the Energy Security Package implementing the Energy Union and addresses the role liquefied natural gas (LNG) and gas storage can play to ensure that all Member States have access to the liquid gas market and diversified sources of supply. This is in line with the objectives of the Energy Union which aims to provide EU consumers with secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy supplies. The Communication identifies specific actions designed to improve the security of gas supply in the EU, in particular through diversification and the completion of a well-functioning and fully integrated EU gas market.*

*Looking at the EU overall, the level of gas diversification, access to sufficient liquefied natural gas imports and storage capacity is good. However, the energy security stress tests<sup>1</sup> showed that there are still vulnerable regions, especially in the South-Eastern part of the EU, where one-sided supply dependence and missing infrastructure do not yet allow for a competitive and secure gas supply. The stress tests also pointed out that if a gas supply crisis were to occur, LNG and storage are the two main elements of the gas system that would be relied upon to replace the missing volumes of gas. Therefore, the actions identified in the Communication aim to allow all Member States to have access to regional liquid gas hubs through a wide range of sources, including LNG, and to ensure sufficient storage capacity on a regional basis with a particular focus on vulnerable regions.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/news/stress-tests-cooperation-key-coping-potential-gas-disruption>

*Diversification can come from many sources, such as domestic EU gas sources, which complement the opportunities provided by LNG. This includes the potential of new sources in the Black Sea that can enhance the security of supply for Romania as well as for the region as a whole. In this regard, the Commission shares the view that regional cooperation with both EU and neighbouring countries is of the utmost importance.*

*The Commission takes note of the Camera Deputaţilor's concerns as regards the potential impact that global LNG markets and new suppliers can have on the EU gas market. The Commission will continue to closely follow the related trade and price developments through dialogues with LNG supplying and consuming countries and through cooperation with the International Energy Agency. A study is planned to identify concrete actions that may be initiated with international partners to promote spot market trading of LNG through transparent and reliable pricing.*

*The Commission fully supports the Camera Deputaţilor's view that utilisation and access to cross-border storage needs to be further strengthened and, where necessary, investment in infrastructure addressing potential cross-border bottlenecks pursued. The Commission also agrees with the view that these elements are best discussed at the regional level as part of the development of regional preventive and emergency plans.*

*The Commission acknowledges that LNG and storage can serve the same purpose, for example in providing seasonal flexibility. In other instances however, they complement each other. The Commission takes note of Romania's interest in further developing storage capacity and is of the view that South-East Europe – being one of the most vulnerable regions of the EU from a security of gas supply perspective – could indeed benefit from such additional storage capacity. Like the existing infrastructure, all new capacity should become accessible across the region.*

*The Commission shares the Camera Deputaţilor's view that LNG can have a positive effect in reducing environmental impacts, in particular when it replaces dirtier fuels. LNG and gas storage can also play an important role in the transition to a low carbon economy.*

*The Commission welcomes the support of the Camera Deputaţilor to implement the actions identified in the Communication relating to both LNG and storage in order to improve the EU's security of gas supply. The Commission has already presented the Communication to the Energy Working Party of the Council and the European Parliament is currently discussing an own-initiative report that is expected to be voted upon by the end of 2016. The Commission has already launched several work streams based on the actions defined in the Communication. Work under the specific regional groups in the Baltic Sea Region<sup>2</sup> and South-East Europe<sup>3</sup> has also started as a consequence. These work streams will be followed by further actions with the aim of fully implementing the strategy set out in the Communication.*

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<sup>2</sup> Under the BEMIP (Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan) High-Level Group.

<sup>3</sup> Under the CESEC (Central East South Europe Gas Connectivity) High-Level Group.

*The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Miguel Arias Cañete  
Member of the Commission*