

STAKEHOLDER MEETING ON A STRATEGIC PLAN TO REDUCE METHANE EMISSIONS IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

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The objective of the stakeholder meeting and of this note is for the Commission to present the proposed main elements of the strategic plan on tackling mineral methane (“methane”). We encourage the participants to offer their views on the issues outlined below. The Commission is looking forward to working closer with all of you on these aspects.

The European Green Deal identifies energy-related methane emissions as an important issue requiring an accelerated initiative from the Commission. Internationally, proactive action could reinforce the EU’s global leadership in climate and energy.

The global community cannot reach climate targets addressing CO₂ alone. Reducing methane emissions in the energy sector could be a valuable contribution to the increased ambition of the Commission as part of the Green Deal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by between 50-55% by 2030.

The Energy Union Governance Regulation, adopted in 2018, calls on the Commission to deliver a strategic plan for methane. The Effort Sharing Regulation covers methane on Member State level, with binding targets for a variety of sectors. However, there is to date no specific policy or regulatory framework at the company level that would address methane emissions for its climate impact. The European Union has already started to address methane emissions from other sectors such as agriculture and waste, through sector-specific and non-legislative acts since late 90’s.

Methane emissions harm the credibility of gas today as a transition fuel towards a decarbonized energy system and puts in jeopardy the potential of renewable and decarbonised gases in the longer term as gas infrastructure may be abandoned as a consequence.

In order to effectively reduce emissions, the strategic plan aims to cover the entire energy value chain. That includes production of natural gas, gas associated with oil production and handling, gas transmission, distribution and consumption – but also

emissions from active and decommissioned coal mines. We envisage a holistic approach, keeping in mind the specifics of each sector.

→ Question: do you agree with the scope? Anything else to be included?

For the energy sector, the key challenge is to measure accurately the real emissions of methane. A strategic plan on methane could address this key challenge by pushing for actual measurements, transparent reporting, verification, integrity and validation of data (MRV-IV) of methane emissions. This will lead to the identification of major emissions and leaks which then will have to be repaired. We should also address the super emitters, since 50% of emissions come from only 5% of sources.

→ Question: Do you agree with such an approach?

As a major importer of gas and oil, the EU has a responsibility; therefore, an ambitious methane policy should also have a strong international pillar. The EU should continue leading international efforts, raising this issue with its partners and build alliances as part of its energy diplomacy actions through bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

The European Commission is actively involved in a number of international initiatives on reducing methane emissions, e.g. under the UNEP-led Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) pursuing a robust and ambitious reporting framework for companies and by contributing to global scientific studies on methane emissions. These activities should continue.

→ Question: Do you agree? What should be focus for each of the groups of third countries (suppliers, buyers, international organizations?)