

Press Release

Gas session on Future Natural Gas Supply and Demand in the Mediterranean, Barcelona, 23 November 2018



Paris, 24 November 2018: in its role of Secretariat of the UfM Gas Platform, the Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Energie (OME) co-organised with Ascamed a session on the future of natural gas supply and demand in the Mediterranean on 23 November 2018, in Barcelona. The event took place within the framework of the MedaWeek Barcelona 2018, held from 21 to 23 November 2018, and with the support of the European Commission. Around 30 delegates from institutions and the industry from both shores of the Mediterranean Sea contributed to the success of this gathering.

Opening the session, Mr. Jorge Borrego, Deputy Secretary General for Energy and Climate Action, UfM Secretariat, stated that there is a challenge of growing energy demand in the region, paired with public expectations for more secure, green and affordable energy supply. He underlined the importance of the UfM Secretariat as a platform to continue strengthening the partnership with the private sector for sustainable economic development in the region and for the transition to clean energy.

Mr. Leonidas Kioussis, Senior Expert, DG ENER, European Commission, followed in discussing the need to foster stronger regional cooperation on natural gas not only for energy security but also in developing common policies to address environmental issues and meet climate targets. Ms. Houda Ben Jannet Allal, General Director, OME, indicated that UfM Gas Platform can act as a key driver to foster this cooperation.

The Keynote speaker for the session, Ms. Rosa Maria Sanz, COO EMEA Infrastructure, Naturgy, discussed the future of natural gas supply and demand in the Mediterranean, emphasizing that this is a moment of transformation and innovation and natural gas has a key role to play. She concluded that secure, competitive and sustainable energy should be the goal of the region.

The first session “Meeting the Scene: Regional Outlooks, Key Challenges & Opportunities” laid down the context for discussion by providing a comprehensive overview of regional trends and developments.

Mr. Sohbet Karbuz, Director of Hydrocarbons, OME, presented the key results -with a focus on natural gas- of OME’s Mediterranean Energy Perspectives 2018 that will be published shortly.

Mr. Charles Ellinas, CEO, e-CNHC, provided an overview of gas developments in Eastern Mediterranean, stating that the prospects in the region are good, but securing export markets will be a key challenge for continued development.

Finally, Mr. Francis Ghiles, Associate Senior Researcher, CIDOB, presented the challenges and opportunities for enhancing energy security in the Mediterranean region, discussing Algeria as a key player in improving EU energy security through diversification of gas suppliers.

The second session “Country Specific Outlooks” delved into the details of the gas sectors in select Mediterranean countries.

Ms. Sabrina Heddar Seddas, Head of Energy Markets Analysis, Sonatrach, discussed the historical development of exploration and production in Algeria and argued that the country will continue to be a key player in the region.

Mr. Emanuele Calviello, VP Business Development, ENI, presented the role that ENI has played in Egypt’s energy sector and mentioned Egypt’s aspirations to become a regional energy hub. He concluded that this could provide an opportunity to improve economic and political intra-regional relations of the southern shore, as well as could enhance European energy security.

Mr. Amir Foster, Head of Strategy & Research, Association of Oil & Gas Exploration Industries in Israel, described Israel’s national strategy for increasing the role of natural gas in country’s energy mix, with a goal to reach 60% in the next ten years.

Finally, Mr. Emin Danis, Strategy and Research Director, GER Partners, talked about the high natural gas import dependency of Turkey and the aspirations of the country to become a regional energy trading center.

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Initiated in Malta in July 2014, confirmed in Rome in November 2014 and launched in June 2015, in Brussels, the objective of the UfM Gas Platform is to enhance the cooperation in the Euro-Med. region between all stakeholders of the gas chain, in a bottom-up approach to improve gas security by identifying barriers and opportunities. The "Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Énergie" (OME) runs the Platform's secretariat in close coordination with the UfM co-presidency.

The UfM Gas Platform is one of the three UfM Energy Platform (The two others are on regional electricity market and on renewable energy and energy efficiency) established by EU Energy Ministers, Ministers of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, and the European Commission to further strengthen regional cooperation in the Mediterranean for ensuring secure, affordable and sustainable energy for the region and beyond.

More information about the UfM Gas Platform available at <https://www.ufmgasplatform.org/>