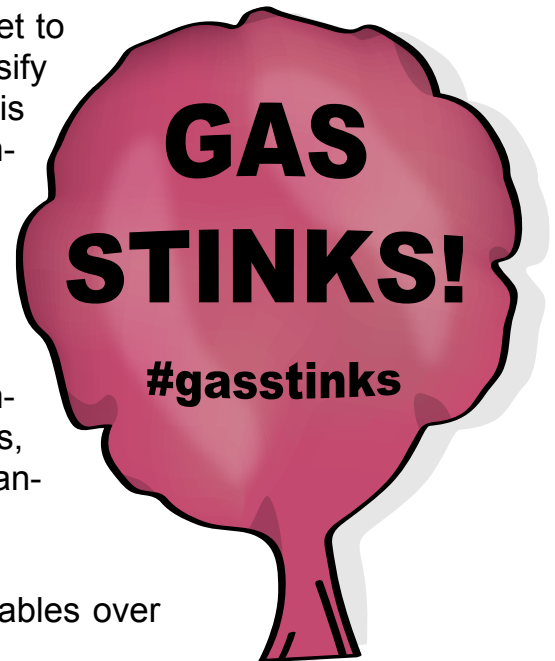


Why gas stinks — and why the EU must prioritise efficiency and renewables

2014 was the warmest year on record. Now 2015 is set to be hotter still. To fight climate change it's vital to intensify efforts to save energy and switch to renewables. But this means ending the 200-year reign of the fossil fuel companies, and they won't go quietly.

Not least the gas lobby. We must beware the toxic and invasive influence of the gas industry – much like gas itself. Whether it's spinning gas as a solution to climate change and energy security, or taking up a dominant position in the Brussels' renewables associations, the gas lobby is doing all it can to delay the energy transition.



The top two reasons to prioritise efficiency and renewables over gas:

1) Gas is incompatible with the EU's climate commitments

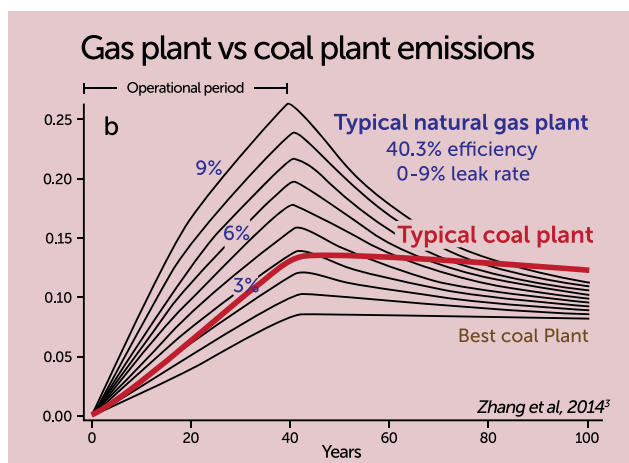
The overwhelming scientific consensus is that the huge majority of fossil fuels, including gas, will need to remain in the ground if we are to avoid the worst effects of climate change¹.

Emissions from gas are comparable to coal when methane leakages during extraction and transportation are factored in².

The EU needs to divest from – not invest in – gas. Vice-President Šefčovič has repeatedly said it takes ten years to plan and build a gas pipeline or LNG

“Before we import more gas or generate more power, we should ask ourselves: can we first take cost-effective measures to reduce our energy?”

— Commissioner Arias Cañete



terminal. We agree – and by the time projects are completed, they would need to be decommissioned to stay in line with the EU's climate commitments.

The EU must prioritise renewables and efficiency, especially in the follow-up to the Paris climate summit. Whatever the agreement made in Paris, it will have to be enacted through real policy and investment decisions that move countries away from fossil fuels well before the middle of the century.

2) Billions are being wasted on stranded fossil fuel assets

Subsidies for fossil fuels are roughly ten times higher than for renewables⁴. Meanwhile, the EU spends over €400 billion a year on oil and gas imports, often from unstable regions.

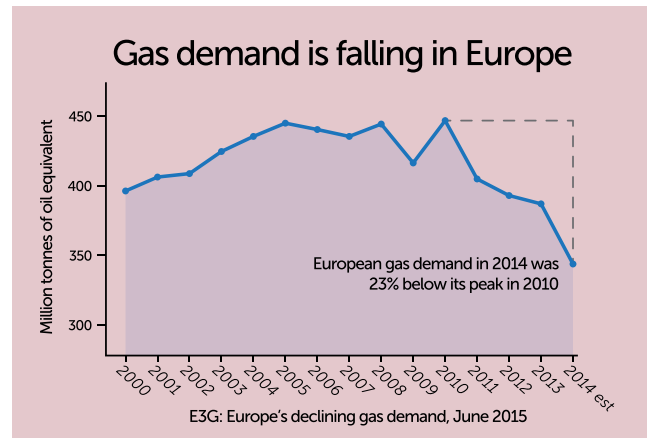


There's no denying this is an unacceptable haemorrhage of public and private money. But, 'thanks' to gas lobby pressure, the security of supply debate is often dominated by gas diversification strategies – as if increased dependence on Azerbaijan, Algeria and other foreign suppliers fixes the problem.

We need to think different. Gas demand is already falling fast. There's no need to subsidise external energy suppliers when there are many more benefits to be had from investing in domestic renewables and energy efficiency. And hoping for supplies of US shale gas is foolish when production trends are becoming ever less predictable and Asian markets are far more attractive.

According to Commission analysis, gas imports would be reduced by 2.6% for every additional 1% in energy savings⁵. That's the real solution to energy dependence.

As for the economic benefits of prioritising efficiency and renewables, they're overwhelming.



GDP is

“Onshore wind and solar are already price-competitive if you factor in the cost imposed on society by carbon emissions from gas” — UK Climate Change Committee

is expected to increase by 4.45% by 2030⁶, if the EU meets its full cost-effective energy savings potential. Meanwhile, in 2012 there were 1.2 million direct and indirect jobs in the EU renewable energy sector. This is expected to increase to 1.7 million jobs in 2030⁷.

Europe can't afford to pass up on these benefits. It's time to ditch gas – it stinks.

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