

Natural Gas Lock-in: Current politics in the European Union

by Carbon Trade Watch
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Struggles to implement energy and climate policy that combine the interests of EU member states plague the future of energy politics in Europe. Policy-makers promise emissions reductions while at the same time promote increases in fossil fuel infrastructure and subsidies. Several contradictions in EU policy regarding energy are inherent. However, none of these measures include the important discussion of an energy transformation that would leave fossil fuels underground. At the forefront of this debate is the role of natural gas. Proponents claim it as an important, clean energy source needed as a 'transition' fuel, while social movements and communities increasingly organize against dangerous gas fracking techniques and increased gas flaring across the globe. Where petroleum may receive important media attention, and coal and nuclear are either loved or hated, natural gas is sold to the public as a neutral fuel.

The paper wants to start questioning the emphasis in EU policies on natural gas and three elements in particular:

• Natural gas as transition fuel

• The massive planned investments in gas-related infrastructure.

• The environmental and social impacts of these investments

This paper was born out of a debate on natural gas (referred to as "gas" interchangeably in this paper) during a series of meetings hosted by Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Brussels on energy in Europe in 2013. Three key points emerged in these discussions which have led to this publication.

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