

Energy Council 16 December 2024

The impacts of the gas storage neutrality charge and the need for better coordination at the European level

Background note from the Austrian, Czech and Slovak delegations

The end of the year and the end of the transit contract between Ukraine's Naftogaz and Russia's Gazprom are quickly approaching. In view of the transit contract expiring in two weeks and the resulting urgency, it is imperative to remove all the barriers standing in the way of our diversification efforts, especially to end the artificial increase in the price of gas exports to Central and Eastern Europe in the form of the gas storage neutrality charge („Gasspeicherumlage“). At the same time, introduction of similar measures by any Member State in the future could have negative impacts on the security of supply of the Union and thus it should be made clear, that such measures are not in line with our current goals and legislation.

The gas storage neutrality charge introduced in Germany in October 2022 to cover the costs associated with the requirements for gas storage levels has significantly increased costs for gas traders ultimately leading to an increase of gas prices for the consumers. The gas storage neutrality charge with its implications on the energy security of the EU has already been presented to the ministers during the Energy Council on March 4th 2024 and on 30th May 2024. It was stressed that the increased transit costs disproportionately affect the Central and Eastern European region, making it more difficult for Member States in this region to access gas imports from Western Europe and therefore to diversify its supply of natural gas. Following these discussions, Germany announced that it would stop collecting the fee at borders with neighbouring countries as of 1 January 2025.

We appreciate the commitment of the German government to amend the legislation and its efforts to do so as quickly as possible. In view of the current political developments in Germany and the subsequent delays to legislative procedures however, we once again appeal to Germany to ensure the earliest possible adoption of the amendment to article 35e EnWG in the German Bundestag and to abolish the application of the gas storage neutrality charge at the borders with neighbouring countries as of 1 January 2025.

We welcome that as a first step, Trading Hub Europe (THE) did not include cross border interconnection points and virtual interconnection points in its fee calculations for the first half of 2025, assuming that the legislative process will be implemented with effect from 1 January 2025.
