

## PRESS RELEASE

### Why investment in gas research is important to guide the EU into a clean and efficient energy system

Brussels, 28 September 2017 – In light of the pledges made in the Paris Agreement 2015, it is clear that a secure and climate-friendly energy supply which is globally affordable can only be guaranteed by the integrated approach of electricity and gas.

Although green electricity is relatively easy to produce by means of wind or solar power, there are several technical challenges inherent in such a new electricity system in which time of production is separate from time of consumption. Furthermore, electricity consumption in Europe comprises only a share of about 20 percent of total energy consumption.

Europe wide, there are more than 2.2 million km of gas grid and about 100 billion m<sup>3</sup> of gas storage – representing about 25 percent of the annual gas consumption. The gas infrastructure is already well established in both the domestic sector and the chemical industry. Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) are further technologies close to the market, which together with pure hydrogen could also establish gas in the mobility sector. As use of natural gas alone will not suffice to fulfill the goals now established, the share of renewable gas in the grid needs to increase over time.

As gas needs to become “greener” and the renewable electricity needs to be stored subsequently transmitted to the points of final consumption, a future system relying on both gas and electricity infrastructure poses an appealing alternative to all parties.

At its annual conference from 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017 in Brussels, ERIG, the European R&D network in the field of sustainable and innovative gas and energy technologies, concluded that policy makers need to increase the efforts to break up the boundaries between electricity and gas to enable their maximum joint contribution. “ Even after the energy transition, roughly some 50 percent of the energy will still be, obviously green, molecules. So, given the overwhelming future supply of green electrons, there will be a huge demand for energy conversion and power-to-gas is the prime technology for this”, stated ERIG president Catrinus Jepma. Thus, in the upcoming EU research programme Horizon 2018 – 2020, which is dedicated to accelerating the transformation of the EU’s energy system, the great potential of gas technologies should sufficiently be

reflected. Though the European Commission has recently opened ETIP SNET, the European Technology and Innovation Platform for Smart Networks for the Energy Transition (ETIP SNET) for stakeholders of the gas industry and other sectors, more far-reaching approaches of joint electricity and gas development are needed, Hans Rasmusson, ERIG Secretary, claimed. The potential of an integrated electricity and gas approach is often vastly underestimated and reduced to only “storage of electricity”. Thereby is the connection via Power-to-Gas more of a gateway to numerous options. One of the obvious further benefits would be the realistic and timely decarbonisation of the mobility sector, as put by Andrea Gerini from NGVA Europe.

With the envisioned energy transition a significant proportion of energy will be consumed by means of green molecules rather than green electrons – due to the simple reason that molecules are much easier and cheaper to store, to transport and in many cases as in industry and mobility much easier and cheaper to apply. Therefore green molecules will remain a backbone of the green energy system of the future. A research agenda is needed which takes into account the whole energy system and all parts of the value chain.

The ERIG Conference & Workgroup Summit 2017 started with two panel discussions on the first day. The first panel dealt with the approach of industry and the strategy of the European Commission. The second one featured lighthouse projects across Europe. The conference was followed by the ERIG Workgroup Summit 2017 to set up the roadmap for the workgroups in the upcoming year.

Please check [www.erig.eu](http://www.erig.eu) for further information.

The **European Research Institute for Gas and Energy Innovation (ERIG)** is a non-profit network that serves as a focal point for European collaboration in research and innovation by planning and executing R&D in the field of sustainable and innovative gas technologies. ERIG members represent national technical and scientific gas organizations and associations. Via its members, ERIG is directly linked to existing R&D structures in EU countries such as research facilities, universities and industry. The members represent in particular the requirements of energy and gas in Northern/Western Europe. The research portfolio of ERIG members covers all aspects from the production of gas through to gas utilization in different markets.

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