

The EU's supposed 'gold standard' for sustainable investments could in fact provide an incentive to build more gas plants while failing to close more coal plants. WWF, along with 225 scientists, financial institutions and NGOs, is sounding the alarm about a proposal by the European Commission to classify new fossil gas projects as environmentally sustainable under the EU Taxonomy of Sustainable Investments.

In the Commission's proposal, key criteria are that new gas cogeneration plants could be counted as green until the end of 2025 if they replace coal plants closing. However, early analysis finds that there are many more coal plants scheduled to close in the EU than gas cogeneration plants scheduled to open. If this criterion were applied across the entire EU, up to 100% of new cogeneration gas plants constructed until the end of 2025 would be eligible to be labelled as green: this shows the scale of the loophole, which will be applied in EU just transition regions. Allowing gas to be labelled as green ignores the massive environmental effects of methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas which is released during the extraction of fossil gas. Methane's impact on climate change is up to 84 times greater than CO₂ in a 20-year timeframe and, if fossil gas leaks only 3% of its methane content, it causes even more warming than coal.

The proposal is also completely contradictory to the recommendations of the Commission's own Technical Expert Group, which were published last year. A few months after the recommendations' release, over 45,000 E.U. citizens responded to the public consultation on the taxonomy and underlined the importance of a taxonomy based on science — a position representing 97% of all consultation responses. A petition calling for the EU to commit to cutting fossil fuels out of EU public recovery funds has reached nearly 400,000 signatures.

Sebastien Godinot, Economist at WWF European Policy Office said:

'Gas is a fossil fuel - the very idea of classifying it as environmentally sustainable is a disgrace. The EU taxonomy was originally created to stop greenwashing by financial institutions: it must not turn into one of the leading greenwashing tools in the world, this time with the EU's seal of approval.

The European Green Deal and the EU global climate leadership are at stake here. If the Commission completely discards the TEG science-based recommendations and the long consultation process, what is the point of ever consulting them in the first place?!

President von Der Leyen, Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner McGuinness must listen to the scientists' recommendations and not cave into the vested interests of the gas lobbies and the falsehoods they have been promoting.

We urge them to reconsider this change in direction and revise the Delegated Act to



European Commission classifies fossil gas projects as green ignoring science-based recommendations

eliminate fossil fuels once and for all.'

Source: wwf.eu