

Too much control to gas lobbyists

Friends of the Earth Europe and Food & Water Action Europe warn the reforms give too much control to fossil gas companies, while the Commission has ignored civil society and scientists' concerns.

Gas industry lobbyists are expected to retain a stranglehold on Europe's energy future, with a formal role in EU decisions on energy infrastructure development and funding, a new analysis of European Commission policy proposals reveals today.

The European Commission has proposed to keep an obscure body advocating for vested gas industry interests – the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Gas (ENTSO-G) – at the heart of EU decisions on funding and prioritisation of energy projects.

The proposed reforms to laws governing EU energy infrastructure – the so-called Trans-European Energy Infrastructure (TEN-E) regulation – are set to be debated in the European Parliament this month as part of the European Green Deal.

Conflict of interest

The analysis suggests some of Europe's most powerful gas companies will be able to unduly influence the awarding of billions in EU taxpayer subsidies:

The previous TEN-E oversaw severe delays, abandoned projects, and the waste of €440 million of EU taxpayers' money on gas projects which have been or are likely to be cancelled – thanks to questionable advice from ENTSO-G.

The gas transport industry was able to help direct €1 billion in EU taxpayer funds to gas projects by ENTSO-G members, such as the controversial EastMed pipeline, designed to link Israel and Cyprus to Greece, or the abandoned MidCat pipeline between France and Spain. The European Commission has ignored the overwhelming views of the public (99.6%) opposing fossil gas in its public consultation.

The European Commission promises to stop subsidising fossil gas projects in the new TEN-E regulation, but nevertheless keeps a central role for the fossil gas industry in designing the system. The new regulation risks opening the door to gas through fossil-based hydrogen.

We need fossil free politics

The NGOs call on the EU to remove the priority seat that ENTSO-G currently enjoys, and replace it with an independent in-house body to advise on all decision-making processes on energy infrastructure; and to end the influence of fossil fuels on our politics.

Source: friendsoftheearth.eu