

In order to prove the release of methane into the atmosphere, the non-profit organization Clean Air Task Force (CATF) launched the #CutMethaneEU project for which it procured a special infrared camera worth 100,000 euros with which it recorded 123 oil and gas deposits in Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany and Hungary. Italy, Poland and Romania. Videos that can be seen on the CATF website and on Youtube show that gas infrastructure across Europe releases methane into the atmosphere. Recall, methane is a poisonous greenhouse gas that is many times more harmful and dangerous than CO₂.

We asked Marija Mileta from Zelena akcija, who has been warning about the harmfulness of the LNG project in Omišalj for years, about the importance of this campaign: “On the one hand, for the first time we have visualized pollution from gas power plants, LNG terminals and pipelines, something invisible to the human eye. or oil. The aim is to present and make the public aware of what it looks like because it is difficult to communicate gas-related pollution, as well as the impact of its use on the climate and human health. ”

He also adds that “this campaign seeks to encourage the European Commission to finally systematically regulate methane emissions that have been ignored for years, and the real impact is probably much greater than we think. The industry has so far successfully avoided being responsible for such shows, but we hope that will come to an end now. ”

Mileta emphasizes that methane is the biggest cause of climate change after carbon dioxide (CO₂), is a major component of gas - fossil fuels - and over 80 times stronger than CO₂ during the first 20 years in the atmosphere. Therefore, gas can in no way be considered a transitional or transitional fuel to a low-carbon future, or rather, a future without fossil fuels.”

It is therefore such a serious contaminant, that vegetarian moral panic-prone individuals will call on the whole world to stop eating meat, because cattle produce huge amounts of CO₂. All this time, while the eyes of the public are focused on the meat industry, the gas infrastructure is unhindered polluting the planet. Moreover, neither the EU nor many other countries actually have protection, ie. ban on emissions from LNG and other gas plants. It is not that at least some filters do not exist, but there is no political will that would be stronger than lobbying payments, and allow the problem (not remedied but) to begin to be addressed scientifically.

Simply put, the EU does not regulate methane emissions in the energy sector, which means, writes Reuters, that companies that have concessions at locations where the CATF recorded methane emissions do not violate any laws due to leaks of dangerous greenhouse gas. That should change this year, and the EU is expected to introduce laws and penalties for such actions. The CATF counted 271 such incidents - intentional or accidental releases of

methane into the atmosphere. Over 90 percent of the sites visited in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Romania emit methane, while the number of sites that emitted methane in Germany and Austria was slightly lower.

Activists and journalists especially emphasized the problem of the lack of repair of holes in e.g. rusty tanks in which methane is stored, and other failures in infrastructure maintenance, which we may attribute to less stringent regulations and penalties for such treatment. In short, this means that the holes are left, because it is cheaper than repairing them. The global consequences of such business behavior are just beginning to be taken into account. The new rules will make a mess in the gas industry, but a mess that is both necessary and overdue. Given the slowness of the bureaucracy, the new rules will not start to apply until 2023, but before that, some companies that release methane into the atmosphere should be punished with some penalties. MOL and OMV, for example, are highlighted in the CAFT report as firms that have numerous methane emissions in their fields. When asked by Reuters from OMV, they replied that they support the new EU energy rules and that they will close the holes in their infrastructure, but they reacted only after the story became public.

Globally, the concentration of methane in the atmosphere is rising. The UN said in April that without a significant reduction in methane emissions over the decade, the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting warming to 1.5 Celsius would remain out of reach. Once methane is found in the atmosphere, it is almost impossible to recapture and capture it which means that all these free emissions are impossible to remediate, but also that any prolongation of the solution means additional, conscious but unnecessary pollution. Marija Mileta points out that it is important to emphasize that "regulation of methane emissions and short-term remediation must not be the main solution, but it lies in the phasing out of gas use, and the current decade is crucial according to relevant scientific reports. Compromise policies that seek to keep gas infrastructure alive and provide further subsidies for fossil fuel projects due to the strong influence of industry are not acceptable. It's simple - we live in a climate crisis and there is no room for new support for gas infrastructure, without exception. The investment must go towards renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and a fair transition for workers in industry. "

Source: bulletin.org