



Shale gas: member states need robust rules on fracking, say MEPs

Plenary sessions

The emergence of exploration for shale oil and shale gas in some EU countries should be backed up with "robust regulatory regimes", the European Parliament said in two resolutions voted on Wednesday. Member states should also be "cautious" about permitting exploitation of unconventional fossil fuels pending further analysis of whether EU-level regulation is appropriate, say MEPs.

Each member state has the right to decide on whether to exploit shale gas, says the Energy Committee resolution, prepared by Niki Tzavela (EFD, EL), and adopted with 492 votes in favour, 129 against and 13 abstentions.

However, a "robust regulatory regime" is needed for all shale gas activities, including hydraulic fracturing. Environmentally-friendly processes and best available techniques should be used to achieve the highest safety standards, say MEPs.

The text acknowledges that substantial investments are needed to build the necessary infrastructure, but adds that this will have to be "entirely covered by the industry".

Energy (in)dependence

Domestic gas production in Europe is set to decline in future but demand for it will continue to grow, pushing up imports to 450 billion cubic metres by 2035, notes the text. New sources of natural gas, along with other measures such as boosting take-up of renewables and energy efficiency can help to achieve security of supply for the EU, it adds..

Although the European Commission has concluded that EU rules adequately cover licensing and early exploration and production of shale gas, the prospect of expanding exploitation of unconventional fossil fuels suggests that "a thorough analysis" of EU regulation on these fuels is needed, say MEPs in an Environment Committee report drafted by Boguslaw Sonik (EPP, PL) and adopted with 562 votes in favour, 86 against and 43 abstentions.

Water and chemical use

Special plans for water use should accompany any hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") activities and as much water as possible should be recycled, says the resolution. Companies must disclose which chemicals are used, in order to comply with EU legislation, it adds.

Call for fracking ban rejected

An amendment urging Member States not to authorise any new fracking operations in the EU, tabled by MEPs from various groups was rejected by 391 votes to 262, with 37 abstentions.

Procedure: Non-legislative resolutions

Contact :

Baptiste CHATAIN

Press release

BXL: (+32) 2 28 40992
STR: (+33) 3 881 74151
PORT: (+32) 498 98 13 37
EMAIL: envi-press@europarl.europa.eu

Kristina-Antigoni ELEFTERIE

BXL: (+32) 2 28 32798
STR: (+33) 3 881 74651
PORT: (+32) 498 98 32 83
EMAIL: indu-press@europarl.europa.eu