

Brussels, 2 July 2009

## **Gas Coordination Group identify regional cooperation and filling storages as the best means to mitigate potential gas cuts**

*The Gas Coordination Group, chaired by the Commission, has analysed in a extraordinary meeting held today in Brussels the progress made by the Member States of the EU and the Energy Community (EnCT) to increase their preparedness to a potential supply disruption. The Commission has stressed the need to fill the storages and seek further regional arrangements ahead of any possible disruption.*

During today's meeting of the Gas Coordination Group, the Commission examined together with the Member States, the Regulators and the gas industry the level of preparedness of the EU and EnCT to face a possible gas supply disruption in the coming weeks or months.

The January 2009 crisis highlighted the vulnerability of the EU to supply disruptions. A number of Member States are overwhelmingly dependent on one single supplier and one single supply route.

In the light of the uncertain gas storage situation in Ukraine, the Commission in particular recommended the Member States to be better prepared for the coming winter period and to fill their gas storages from all possible available sources. The GCG identified the risks affecting the gas supplies of the various Member States and of the EnCT countries and explored the opportunities to implement emergency measures in a coordinated manner. The GCG stressed the potential of regional cooperation to mitigate the risks identified.

A specific exercise of running supply disruption scenarios has also been performed to examine what could be the best possible responses at Community and regional level, in case of a disruption of supply in the coming months.

### **Background**

The Gas Coordination Group was created in 2006 according to Directive 2004/67 relating to measures that guarantee security of natural gas supply. Chaired by the European Commission, it is composed of gas competent representatives of Member States, the European organisations of the gas sector and consumers. The Group meets regularly (at least 4 times per year) to exchange information and to develop both short and long term concrete measures which reinforce the security of gas supply to the EU. It is now meeting each month given the uncertainty surrounding some external supply routes.

Directive 2004/67 sets out a three step approach in case of supply crisis: the industry takes the necessary measures; if these are not adequate to mitigate the crisis, national measures are activated; if still not adequate and if the crisis reaches the major supply disruption indicator (20% of all imports are missing) the Community mechanism is activated: the Gas coordination Group is convened to discuss what further steps can be taken and to assist the Member States in difficulty. The Group can then propose further measures to the Council.

The Commission in its Communication adopted on 13 November 2008 together with the Strategic Energy Review proposes the revision of the directive to strengthen the measures for more effective action in case of gas crisis. The January 2009 gas crisis showed that a more coordinated approach is needed on European level to provide stable and secure energy supply to European citizens. Therefore, the Commission suggests the elaboration of emergency plans to be activated automatically in case of the occurrence of supply disruption of a certain importance. A joint approach of these emergency plans is of great importance to ensure mutually supportive measures. The Commission will table in the coming weeks a new instrument proposing new measures on security of gas supply to be adopted by the Council and the Parliament.