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GIE calls the EU institutions to develop a Roadmap 2050 for gas and gas infrastructure

In his speech today at the GIE Annual Conference 2013 held in Venice, Jean-Claude Depail, GIE President, reminded about the role of natural gas and its underlying infrastructure for the future energy mix. Jean-Claude Depail is convinced that gas is a sector with a brilliant future that can help the EU to achieve a secure, competitive and decarbonised European energy system. However, more certainty and predictability is needed from the European policy makers. GIE President invited the industry and the EU institutions to jointly cooperate in order to draft an EU Roadmap 2050 for the gas and gas infrastructure industry.

Today more than 380 delegates from all over Europe met at the eleventh edition of the GIE Annual Conference. GIE President Jean-Claude Depail first pointed out that the conference had reached, for the third consecutive year, a record number of participants. The Annual Conference has become a high-level forum for representatives from industry, policy makers and regulators, academics, journalists and other important stakeholders. During the two following days, the conference will address the various and relevant EU policy and regulatory developments affecting the gas infrastructure industry. The conference will also discuss about the future of the gas industry and how to improve the investment climate to trigger the necessary investments. On Friday, the conference will have an outlook into the future energy market as well as into the evolution of the gas infrastructure industry not only in Europe but also in co-operation with other non-EU gas companies.

Jean-Claude Depail's speech delivered at the beginning of the conference took place in the presence of Mr Vaiciunas, Adviser to the Lithuanian Energy Minister, Mr Paolo Mosa, CEO of Italgas, and numerous high-level speakers and guests from the European gas industry. Gunther H. Oettinger, Energy Commissioner, has also confirmed his participation to this event and will deliver a key-note speech on Friday 24 May.

Jean-Claude Depail expressed its concerns about how the EU energy policies have been strongly dominated by stringent environmental policies, while Europe is suffering a lack of competitiveness and a worrying deindustrialisation: "the successful energy history of North America and the failures in Europe reflect the lesson that governments must support the realities of economics and technology". In this framework, natural gas, including non-conventional gas developed according to the appropriate environmental standards, can offer very significant advantages to the EU economy. *"The advantages of gas are almost self-explanatory. It is the cleanest fossil fuel able to significantly reduce CO₂ and other harmful emissions while bringing a high level of competitiveness to our market and enabling the integration of renewables,"* he said.

Mr Depail also invited the EU institutions to promote the move from highly-intensive CO₂ emission power plants to new more efficient and more flexible gas-fired power plants. *"Up to 2020, almost a fifth of the EU's total coal capacity, comparable to the total installed capacity for electricity in Poland, is due to be retired. This would be an excellent opportunity for replacing old coal plants by new, efficient flexible and cleaner gas-fired power plants. This would reduce drastically the CO₂ emissions without damaging the*



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competitiveness or the security of supply of Europe.”

The swift and quick implementation of the Third Energy Package, still at topic of discussion at the European Council held on May 22, was another reference in the opening speeches. GIE President said that this point was important, but there were also crucial issues that needed to be tackled urgently. He referred for instance to the importance, also outlined by the European Council of May 22, of a predictable climate and energy framework post 2020.

“GIE has repeated many times that a predictable regulatory framework, both at EU and national levels, together with a sound investment climate, are necessary for achieving the European internal energy market.” GIE President pointed out that the EU internal gas market should be more competitive, have higher level of security of supply and allow for a smooth transition towards a low-carbon economy. Gas infrastructure can definitely contribute to reach these targets.

Mr Depail suggested that effective and scalable energy policies have to be not only environmentally sustainable but also affordable in order to remain competitive. He requested the policy makers to draw a clear, coherent and positive roadmap gas and gas infrastructure until 2050. *“The gas infrastructure industry is a long-term capital-intensive business with very long pay-back periods. The infrastructure built today will be used by 2050 and beyond. Without a clear indication on where the EU energy policy wants to go, investments will be delayed or abandoned”* he underlined.

For more information about the conference and real-time information, please visit www.gie.eu and/or follow us on twitter. (@GIEBrussels, #GIEVenice 2013)

Note to Editors

Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE) is an association representing the interests of European natural gas infrastructure operators active in natural gas transmission, storage and LNG regasification. GIE is a trusted partner of European institutions, regulatory bodies and industry stakeholders. It is based in Brussels, the heart of European policymaking.

GIE currently represents 67 member companies from 25 countries. Its internal structure has three columns corresponding to the three types of infrastructure activities represented: GTE (Gas Transmission Europe), GSE (Gas Storage Europe) and GLE (Gas LNG Europe), all of which fall under the umbrella of GIE. This structure allows member companies to speak with one voice on infrastructure topics as well as to build positions on column-specific issues.

To find out more about GIE’s structure and activities, please visit our website at www.gie.eu.



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