

European Gas Storage Operators keep you going

Brussels, 20 April 2020

As the world grapples with immediate priorities, European Gas Storage Operators keep sight of next winter's security of supply



Zsana gas storage facility in Hungary (Hungarian Gas Storage)

Underground gas storages across Europe provide the largest component of energy storage and, in doing so, ensure the sustained security of energy supply for the continent. When filled to the brim, as it was the case at the end of last year, they cover around 60% of typical winter European gas consumption¹. This, plus the uncertainties in gas demand caused by the current

¹ : European Commission (2020) *Quarterly Report on European Gas Markets*, Market Observatory for Energy, DG Energy, 12(4), 4th quarter of 2019. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/quarterly_report_on_european_gas_markets_q4_2019_final.pdf



crisis, have shown how crucial gas storages are to Europe to maintain a balanced and resilient energy system.

László Fritsch, the newly elected President of Gas Storage Europe (GSE)², CEO and Chairman of the Board of Hungarian Gas Storage, reflected on this, stating: *"As soon as the current crisis became apparent, gas storage operators adapted their operation and took the necessary steps to maintain normal business operation and prepare for next winter's supply. Now, after a month, GSE members are confident that during this extraordinary crisis, the gas storage business continuity is ensured and the supply of natural gas has been, and will continue to be, flawless. Our colleagues have been playing a key role in Europe's energy supply for many years, which has always been an immense responsibility. The gas storage community is absolutely aware of the significance of this responsibility and are doing their job with commitment and dedication in this pandemic situation as well."*

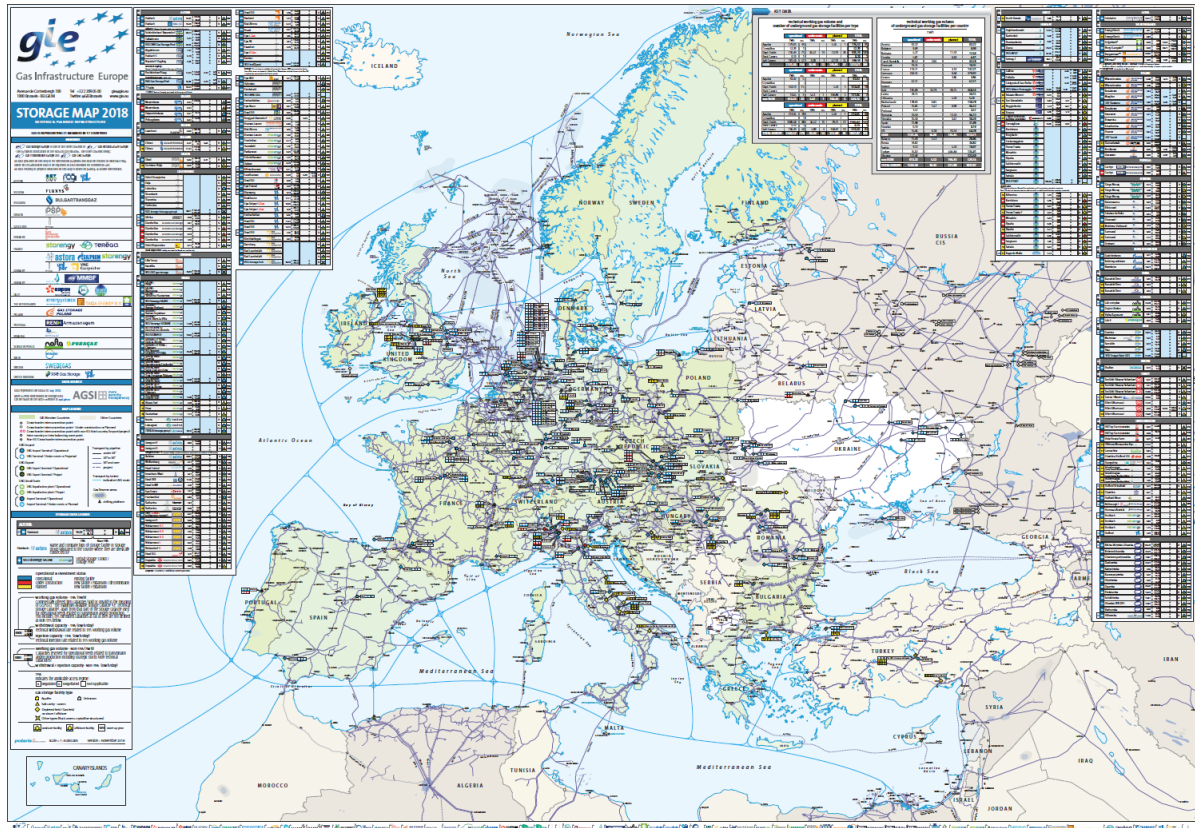
Excellence in operations is especially important during the current period (March-April) as gas storage switches from withdrawal to injection mode. Operators need the knowledge and flexibility to meet a wide range of customer requests from intra-hourly up to seasonal needs and react promptly to guarantee energy supplies.

As Axel Wietfeld, Managing Director of Uniper Energy Storage and GSE Executive Committee member, commented: *"The European storage industry as part of the critical infrastructure has been able to maintain stable storage operations and guarantee a high level of security of supply amid the current pandemic crisis. Today, gas storages are well-filled³. Despite some maintenance activities being postponed, subject to a proper risk assessment, business operations will continue during the entire filling season. We are committed to managing our business-critical assets with high safety levels and to staying effective in empowering the energy transition in Europe."*

Gas storages also provide valuable support to the targets of the EU Green Deal. At a moment when the energy transition was speeding up and whilst the current crisis is disrupting some parts of the energy supply chain, underground gas storages are an immediate solution to contribute to the switch from more carbon-intensive energy carriers to low-carbon and renewable gases. From now on, they can accommodate biomethane and synthetic methane, as well as green hydrogen, without extensive network investment for the benefit of society.

² GSE is a column under the umbrella organisation Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE).

³ European natural gas storage inventories as of 18 April 2020, were 58% full – the highest ever recorded level for mid-April, according to Gas Storage Europe's Aggregated Gas Storage Inventory (AGSI+).



GIE Storage Map 2018 – Existing and Planned Infrastructure in Europe

Available at : <https://www.gie.eu/index.php/gie-publications/maps-data/gse-storage-map>

Note to Editors

Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE) is the association representing the interests of European gas infrastructure operators active in gas transmission, gas storage and Liquefied Natural Gas (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 69 member companies from 26 countries. GIE’s vision is that by 2050, the gas infrastructure will be the backbone of the new innovative energy system, allowing European citizens to benefit from a secure, efficient and sustainable energy supply.

Photo credits :

Zsana gas storage facility in Hungary – image courtesy of Hungarian Gas Storage

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