

Open Letter - Gas Attack in Taxonomy

Dear President von der Leyen,
Vice-President Timmermans and Dombrovskis,
Commissioner McGuinness,

We are alarmed by a new proposal allowing fossil fuels into the EU taxonomy.

This new proposal drafted by the European Commission suggests that fossil gas does no harm to the environment, and therefore could be included as Sustainable for Finance under the EU Taxonomy. These are baseless claims and are opposed to climate science. Introducing fossil gas in the EU taxonomy is firmly against the recommendations of the Commission's Technical Expert Group and caves in to the demands of the gas lobby.

The EU taxonomy was conceived as a science-based gold standard to avoid greenwashing. With such a proposal the taxonomy itself would become a greenwashing tool.

Energy security, just transition, and grid reliability are critical for Europe, but are also fully addressed by other EU policies, funds, and regulations. The purpose of the EU Taxonomy is to correctly label green finance: this means following the best scientific evidence on an activity's environmental impact.

Counting gas as green ignores the significant environmental effects of methane, whose impact on climate change is up to 30 times greater than CO₂ (Table 8a.1, WG1 IPCC AR5). This means if only 3% of the gas leaks, it can cause more warming than coal. Furthermore, many European gas companies do not properly measure methane emissions in their supply chain and are not seizing the available opportunities to reduce these emissions (Dezem, 2021). We have no time for false solutions. This is why neither coal-to-gas nor cogeneration (CHP) should be included in the Taxonomy.

These unwarranted proposals are in direct contradiction with President von der Leyen's Green Deal and the EU ambition for higher climate targets. They would also undermine and discredit the EU's global climate leadership.

With other countries developing competing taxonomies for sustainable investments, the EU Taxonomy can be a global gold standard, but including fossil gas in the EU Taxonomy will lower global ambition and set a precedent that could result in other countries labelling a broad range of fossil fuel investments as sustainable.

For all of the above reasons, these gas lobby-promoted proposals must not be countenanced. For the EU Taxonomy to have any sustainable value, the Commission's Delegated Act must be consistent with the independent Technical Expert Group's science-based recommendations.

We urge you to reconsider this change in direction and reject the proposal. The undersigned remain ready to urgently exchange with you on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

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