

European Communities

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1982-1983

October 1982

DOCUMENT 1-653/82

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr PURVIS and Mr SELIGMAN

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on a Natural Gas Policy in the European Community

The European Parliament,

- A. recalling its motion for resolution of 18 February 1982 appealing to the Council and Commission to make rapid and energetic efforts to draw up and implement a common energy policy for natural gas supplies, such that Soviet supplies of natural gas would not endanger Community independence and security,
- B. mindful that the Soviet Union interrupted energy supplies for political purposes to Yugoslavia in 1948, to Finland in 1958, to Albania in 1961, to China in 1962, to Ghana in 1965 and to the Federal Republic of Germany in 1981,
- C. noting that the latest forecasts for the Community's imports of natural gas and oil in 1990 suggest a dependence of 54%, 58% if imported coal is included, compared with the agreed target of 50% for all imported energy, contained in the Community's 1990 Energy Objectives,
- D. considering that the price and supply of energy has dominated issues such as inflation and the level of economic activity for the past decade,
- E. concerned that the Community's economy in the coming decades should be less susceptible to increases in the price of energy which have little or no relation to market conditions,
- F. aware of the current negotiations between gas undertakings in Belgium, Italy and Spain and the Soviet agency, Soyuzgasexport,
- G. in the light of the Community's expected dependence on the Soviet Union for 45% of total imports of natural gas in 1990,
- H. stressing the benefits to fair industrial competition within the Community and to competitiveness with third countries of having ample supplies and the lowest possible common pricing of natural gas throughout the European Community,
1. Emphasises the need for the Community to make its own efforts to obtain reliable energy supplies at tolerable prices, such that they are approximately uniform and do not lead to distortions in industrial competitiveness within the Community and vis-à-vis third countries;

2. Draws attention to the dangers to the Community's economy of growing dependence on natural gas imports as well as oil, especially if these sources are not adequately diversified;
3. Expresses concern at the strategic and political implications of excessive reliance on any single source of natural gas supply;
4. Views with alarm the risk that in the coming years the world market in natural gas may replicate that of oil in the past decade;
5. Believes therefore that a policy of diversification of sources of supply of natural gas is essential to protect Europe from accidental or intentional interruptions;
6. Calls upon national gas undertakings, governments and the Commission in conjunction with the private sector oil and gas companies, to show determination in securing immediately diversified sources of supply for natural gas;
7. Calls for the creation of adequate buffer stocks, controlled within the Community, to absorb any short term difficulties;
8. Requests the Commission to submit a report to Parliament and Council on immediate, medium and long term measures to enhance the security of the Community's natural gas supplies, having regard to projections of likely demand, source of supply, relative cost and reliability;
9. Requests a technical and economic report on the following potential projects:
 - a) a European natural gas grid linking all Member States and supplied interchangeably from the northern North Sea, the Soviet Union, Middle East, North Africa and West Africa
 - b) the use of southern North Sea gas fields as replenishable reservoirs
 - c) arrangements with the ACP states for the extraction, production and transport of natural gas
 - d) further development of industrial processes for coal gasification within the Community and accessible ACP states which have substantial coal reserves;
10. Requests a political assessment of the suggested projects;

11. Calls for proposals regarding the involvement of the private and public sectors in recommended schemes with their respective management and financial roles;
12. Requests its President to forward this Resolution to Commission and Council for urgent attention and action.