

EU Sustainable Energy Week: LPG can help Lead Europe's clean energy transition

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LPG can help Lead Europe's clean energy transition, writes Antonio Neves Costa



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Brussels was once again transformed into the Green Capital of Europe earlier this month, as EU Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) returned to the city.

Dozens of events brought experts together to discuss the most innovative and efficient solutions in the field of sustainability. Under the 'Lead the clean energy transition' banner, this year's EUSEW discussed the challenges in decarbonising the energy sector.

Much has already been done in Europe, where the European Commission has taken a lead role

through policies such as the clean energy package, and in particular, the renewable energy directive.

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These policies show the EU institutions' commitment to develop guidelines to help reduce air pollution and improve air quality. It also sets ambitious targets, such as the need, by 2030, to supply half Europe's electricity from renewable sources.

EUSEW raised different perspectives on this. On the one hand, it is important to consider the fair transition of coal-dependent regions and ensuring the efficient distribution of investment. On the other hand, the next phases should take into account accessibility of natural resources and the tight deadlines for building new infrastructure.

As such, it is clear that there is an urgent need to look at gas and electricity networks together to exploit synergies such as power to gas technology.

These fundamental changes in Europe's energy sector are extremely complex and have consequences. The social impact that these changes may result in, was a key concern discussed during EUSEW.

The Commission recently launched the Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV). The progressive increase of taxation is creating a rise in inequality, with over 50 million Europeans being currently unable to pay their utility bills.

Harriet Thomson, EPOV Project Manager warned that in order to achieve practical policies, projects must focus on particular contexts. Even if a significant part of the population has access to natural gas and electricity at home, some European regions are left out by existing grids. Rural areas are therefore at risk of exclusion.

Because Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) is highly flexible and easily transportable; it is in many cases one of the only available energy sources. Almost 20 per cent of LPG consumption in Europe is residential, mostly in rural areas. The LPG industry is committed to offering energy efficient solutions and training installers to provide the most cutting edge and efficient appliances to their clients. This enables rural households to achieve significant fuel savings, helping alleviate fuel poverty.

But the benefits of LPG go much further. When used as an automotive fuel - commonly known as Autogas - its environmental benefits, by comparison with petrol or diesel, can make a real difference in improving Europe's air quality.

Autogas is the most widely used alternative fuel in Europe, with its low emissions making it an obvious choice for decision makers searching for solutions in the transport sector.

Another exciting area debated at EUSEW was the emergence of solutions for the energy sector through advances in technology and digitalisation. Progress in these areas are making it increasingly possible for consumers to control their energy use and, as consequence, reduce their utility bills.

This also brings new questions such as requirements around the exchange of data between different appliances and individuals, and the protection of personal information. The LPG industry has relied on the Internet of Things (IoT) for many years now to monitor customers' fuel consumption and to provide personalised advice on energy savings. This illustrates the forward-looking aspect of the European LPG industry and its investment in R&D.

There is a sense of optimism following this year's EUSEW. The European energy sector is a resilient and adaptable one, that has identified its objectives for the long run.

The LPG industry will continue working together with EU decision makers in highlighting the benefits of LPG and contributing to a more sustainable, competitive and safe European energy landscape.

About the author

Antonio Neves Costa is Public Affairs and Communications Manager at AEGPL, the European LPG Association

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[Energy](#) [7]

[Environment](#) [8]

Categories

[Clean energy package](#) [9]

[Energy](#) [10]

[Environment](#) [11]

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[Website](#) [14]



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