

## Pressemitteilung

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## New study highlights misalignment of gas infrastructure planning and decarbonisation goals

**Reforming the regulation of gas distribution systems will be crucial to aligning future energy demand with decarbonisation goals and protecting consumers, concludes a new study by Oeko Institut and the Regulatory Assistance Project (RAP).**

Scenarios charting the emissions reductions needed to meet Europe's goal of a net-zero economy by 2050 show a plunging curve for fossil gas use to 2040 and near-zero use by 2050. Yet many Member States continue to plan for, and actively invest in, sustaining or expanding gas distribution systems. Gas consumption rates show little sign of abating.

The authors of the new study call for improved regulatory oversight, stakeholder involvement and information transparency, as well as better coherence between gas grid planning and national heat initiatives. Failure to act risks slowing down the crucial transition to a sustainable energy system. The potential consequences include imprudent investments, missed climate targets and excessive cost burdens, especially for vulnerable consumers.

Jan Rosenow, Vice president and European programme director at RAP: "Our analysis reveals that in many countries gas network operators plan to maintain or even extend existing gas grids. This is contrary to national climate scenarios which suggest that we will need to decommission at least parts of our gas networks."

"As the study shows, there are compelling examples from certain countries that offer valuable lessons", Marc Stobbe, researcher at Oeko-Institut, points out. "However, it also underlines the urgent need for stronger regulations to support the decommissioning of gas grids and drive a faster transition to cleaner energy systems."

Experts from RAP and Oeko-Institut analysed the state of gas infrastructure, regulation and development in Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Austria, and the United Kingdom. Their analysis identifies seven common regulatory barriers to gas grid decommissioning and six overarching recommendations to align planning with climate targets.

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<https://www.oeko.de/fileadmin/oekodoc/RAP-Oeko-Gas-planning-2024.pdf> Study „Breaking free from fossil gas: planning and regulating Europe's gas networks“ by Oeko-Institut and RAP

