

**Question for written answer E-000641/2018  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Carolina Punset (ALDE)**

Subject: Measuring of methane emissions and the global warming potential of methane

Science shows that – in particular if we do not tackle methane emissions – we have barely any time left to tackle greenhouse gas emissions if we are to avoid runaway climate change<sup>1</sup>. An urgent phase-out of all fossil fuels – oil, coal and gas – is required. Nevertheless, the Commission supports natural gas as a transition fuel. Given its high global warming potential, natural gas is an unsustainable fossil fuel that channels investment away from renewables and energy efficiency measures. It is incompatible with the much-needed energy transition.

Even the oil and gas industry acknowledges methane as a problem and that with a leakage rate above 3.5 % the climate impact of gas is comparable to that of coal<sup>2</sup>.

Yet, the quality of data on methane leakage in Europe is very poor, and existing figures are based on industry estimates.

Does the Commission envisage establishing an independent methane measurement programme?

Does it intend to use current, not outdated, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) figures in the future<sup>3</sup>, and will it include the much more appropriate 20-year timeframe of methane global warming potential<sup>4</sup>?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-only-five-years-left-before-one-point-five-c-budget-is-blown> and [http://www.eeb.cornell.edu/howarth/summaries\\_CH4.php](http://www.eeb.cornell.edu/howarth/summaries_CH4.php)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-12-20/as-shell-gambles-on-gas-leaks-cast-cloud-over-clean-credentials>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg1/WG1AR5\\_Chapter08\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg1/WG1AR5_Chapter08_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.putclimateonpause.org>