The Commission is highly concerned by the current situation leading to a severe energy price increase and stands ready to support Member States in addressing it.

The Commission has issued two Communications (October 2021 and 8 March 2022), outlining what Member States can do under existing EU rules to help vulnerable consumers and businesses to face high prices. More recently, the Commission set out ideas for collective European action to address the root causes of the problem. The EU Leaders tasked the Commission to submit proposals that effectively address the problem of excessive electricity prices while preserving the integrity of the single market, maintaining incentives for the green transition, preserving the security of supply and avoiding disproportionate budgetary costs. The Commission has fulfilled this request on 18 May 2022, together with the REPowerEU Plan.

In view of the significant investment costs of EUR 3 billion, a phased implementation of the MidCat gas interconnector was foreseen, with the South Transit Eastern Pyrenees (STEP) pipeline as the first step. In 2019, the regulatory authorities of France and Spain decided that STEP was not yet mature and recommended that the project promoters perform further assessments. No such assessments have been carried out and both France and Spain opposed the inclusion of new gas projects in subsequent EU lists of projects of common interest.

Given the new geopolitical context, REPowerEU Plan recognises that additional investments to connect liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminals in the Iberian Peninsula and the EU network through hydrogen-ready infrastructure may further contribute to diversify gas supply in the internal market and help tap into the long-term potential for renewable hydrogen.

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1 Communication from the Commission ‘Tackling rising energy prices: a toolbox for action and support’ COM(2021) 660 final

2 Communication from the Commission ‘REPowerEU: Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy’ COM(2022) 108 final

3 on 23 March 2022

4 Communication from the Commission ‘Security of supply and affordable energy prices: Options for immediate measures and preparing for next winter’ COM/2022/138 final