OPINION

of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on an EU strategy to reduce methane emissions (2021/2006(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion (*): Cristian-Silviu Bușoi

(*) Associated committee – Rule 57 of the Rules of Procedure
SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

A. whereas methane emissions are the second-largest cause of global warming, with approximately one third of global anthropogenic methane emissions coming from the energy sector;

B. whereas the concentration of methane in the atmosphere is currently approximately two-and-a-half times higher than pre-industrial levels and is constantly increasing; whereas according to the ‘Global Methane Assessment’ of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), published in 2021 ‘reducing human-caused methane emissions is one of the most cost-effective strategies to rapidly reduce the rate of warming and contribute significantly to global efforts to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C’;

C. whereas the energy transition towards reaching climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest will require a substantial reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the energy sector, including in methane emissions; whereas the impact assessment of the 2030 Climate Target Plan\(^1\) indicates that the target of at least 55 % GHG emissions reduction by 2030 requires tackling methane emissions; whereas the International Energy Agency indicates in its report entitled ‘Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector’ that methane emissions from fossil fuels should be reduced by 75 % between 2020 to 2030 in the Net-Zero Emissions Scenario; whereas 15 % of the emissions cuts required by the Paris Agreement could already be eliminated with low-cost and technically feasible methane mitigation;

D. whereas a large number of the most cost-effective methane emission savings can be achieved in the energy sector; whereas according to the UNEP report, methane emissions can be reduced by 45 % by the end of this decade and rapid and significant reductions in methane emissions are possible using existing technologies and at a very low cost; whereas the International Energy Agency’s Methane Tracker estimates that around 40 % of energy-related methane emissions can be abated at no-net cost, mainly by fixing methane leaks and eliminating vents in the fossil fuel sector;

E. whereas the biggest sources of anthropogenic methane emissions in the EU are the gas and oil sectors (19 %), the waste sector (26 %) and agriculture (53 %);

F. whereas the EU is the largest importer of oil and gas; whereas the EU imports up to 85 % of gas, and the methane footprint of the gas produced in supplier countries is estimated to be between three and eight times larger than the methane emissions generated within the Union;

G. whereas the intensity of methane emissions in the EU varies widely according to the degree of dependency on fossil fuel sources in the energy mix; whereas gas is only of a

\(^1\) SWD(2020)0176.
transitional nature taking into account the EU’s dependency on third countries for its energy supply;

H. whereas its Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services\(^2\) has noted the fact that methane emissions come from a wide range of sectors, namely agriculture, waste and energy, and that, once in the atmosphere, methane blends well with other gases, making it difficult to measure and report it; whereas uncertainty about methane emissions data is typically much higher compared to CO\(_2\) emissions when excluding forest and other land-use-related emissions; whereas recent studies\(^3\) have estimated that global anthropogenic fossil methane emissions are underestimated by about 25 to 40 %;

I. whereas fugitive emissions from leaking equipment, infrastructure or closed and abandoned sites, as well as emissions from venting and the incomplete combustion of methane, represent the majority of methane emissions in the energy sector;

J. whereas EU legislation that helps to provide information on methane emissions already exists, including Regulation (EC) No 166/2006 on the E-PRTR\(^4\) and Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions\(^5\), but there is currently no policy in the EU that is aimed specifically at reducing methane emissions;

K. whereas the improvement and implementation of fit-for-purpose and appropriately targeted technologies and practices to improve monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) and to mitigate emissions are at the backbone of the effective reduction of methane emissions;

1. Highlights the importance of rapid reductions in methane emissions as one of the most effective measures for EU climate action; notes that methane emission reductions complement the necessary reductions in carbon dioxide emissions; highlights that methane reduction brings considerable benefits not only in terms of reduced climate impacts but also from improved air quality, as methane also contributes to tropospheric ozone formation, a potent local air pollutant that causes serious health problems;

2. Agrees that an increased ambition of a GHG emission reduction of at least 55 % by 2030 will need additional efforts to address all GHGs; underlines that these efforts will mean that more investments in technologies related to MRV and leak detection and repair (LDAR) will be necessary;

3. Calls for an EU strategy to reduce methane emissions; supports a clear pathway and legislative framework to mitigate methane emissions in a comprehensive fashion across Europe and internationally by fostering synergies between sectors to strengthen the

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business case for capturing, which has commercial value and could be monetised
directly, and avoiding methane emissions, in order to contribute to achieving the EU
decarbonisation objectives; welcomes the consideration of legislation on targets and
standards to reduce methane emissions from the fossil fuels consumed, including
imports; supports the design and deployment of appropriate and cost-effective methane
mitigation tools that enable industry, across different parts of the value chain, to achieve
performance standards in an optimal way;

4. Highlights the necessity to decarbonise the gas sector in order to achieve climate
neutralit y by 2050 at the latest; takes note of the role of fossil gas in meeting today’s
global energy demand and stresses that the part it plays in the energy transition as only a
transitional source will also depend on the successful reduction of related methane
emissions;

5. Acknowledges the work done so far by the gas industry to reduce methane emissions
through voluntary initiatives, such as the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative, the Methane
Guiding Principles and the Oil and Gas Methane Partnership (OGMP 2.0), and
underlines the commitment shown to undertake even stronger steps to further mitigate
methane emissions along the entire gas value chain;

6. Welcomes the preparation of legislation for the energy sector with binding rules on
MRV, building on the OGMP 2.0 methodology and mandatory LDAR, including on
imports, building on best practices and applied across the full supply chain, as well as
the consideration of rules banning routine venting and flaring in the energy sector,
covering the full supply chain, up to the point of production, except in exceptional cases
necessary for safety reasons; insists that this ban should also apply to imports and that
the Commission should therefore develop a strong independent methodology to assess
the compliance of imports with the EU requirements;

7. Underlines that a well-structured, fit-for-purpose MRV system, as adequately outlined
by the strategy, including on imports, with the aim of ensuring that all methane leaks are
covered, a level playing field has been accomplished, the reduction of methane-
intensive imports promoted and carbon leakage avoided, and which also avoids
duplication of Union and national reporting obligations, will be core to more accurate
detection and to quantifying methane emissions along the value chains and will allow
better evaluation of the results of the mitigation measures in place; stresses that the EU
should take the lead in international cooperation in gathering data, reporting and
promoting policies and technological solutions for further reducing and eliminating
methane emissions;

8. Considers that an accurate MRV system must rely on detailed reports, a detailed study
of equipment and the application of the most updated emission factors throughout the
supply chain; notes that rules on MRV should take account of the specificities of each
sector; stresses that reporting data on methane emissions should be public or, in the case
of sensitive information, available to the competent authorities and independent
verifiers; calls on the Commission to develop a third-party verification system to assess
and verify the emissions data across the whole supply chain;

9. Calls on the Commission to adopt specific measures to address the methane leaks from
super-emitters, including the petrochemical sector;

10. Believes that research, development and innovation, and the rapid implementation of fit-for-purpose technologies and best available practices to improve MRV, LDAR, venting and flaring, and to mitigate methane emissions in all sectors are at the backbone of effective action; supports the mobilisation of funding from Horizon Europe, including technology solutions for the sustainable production of biomethane, and for establishing an international methane emissions observatory; underlines that the costs of pollution should not be passed on to the citizens in line with the polluter pays principle;

11. Stresses the importance of the Copernicus programme and its Atmosphere Monitoring Service in detecting and monitoring global super-emitters, as well as smaller scale sources; underlines that aerial monitoring is equally key in targeting venting, flaring and leak detection; highlights that satellite data allows independent verification of a company’s footprint and facilitates engagement on mitigation; strongly supports the sharing of information and technologies among stakeholders in the Union and at global level, and with the public, in order to act as a catalyst for abatement efforts; believes that independent, comparable, verifiable and transparent emissions data is key to acquiring knowledge about the size of the emissions problem and to combat the underestimation of the size and quantity of leaks also from imported fossil fuels;

12. Calls on the Commission to continue a close dialogue with regulators, as outlined in the Commission’s methane strategy;

13. Calls for a thorough assessment of the cost efficiency of the actions proposed in the energy sector, including their social and environmental benefits, as a priority, which should take account of local conditions and the specific aspects of the various parts of the value chain and provide the necessary flexibility to the industry for their implementation without undermining GHG reduction targets; calls on the Commission to consider a compulsory framework on LDAR across the whole supply chain, imports included, enabling industry, across different parts of the value chain, to achieve performance standards in an optimal and cost-efficient way, with the aim of ensuring that all methane leaks are covered, a level playing field is accomplished, the reduction of methane-intensive imports promoted and carbon leakage avoided;

14. Invites the Commission, when preparing its future legislation on methane emissions, to properly take into account that the investments undertaken by infrastructure operators to tackle methane leaks should be recognised within the scope of regulated activities as a signal of the importance of both safety and of sustainable activities, which might be incentivised by regulatory authorities;

15. Calls for a reinforced measurement of methane emissions in coal mines, promoting good practices and disseminating best available technologies and regulatory and fiscal frameworks also in order to foster the development of commercial collection, facilitating the utilisation of methane from abandoned sites; calls on the Commission to develop a specific programme to address methane emissions from abandoned, closed coal mines and oil and gas wells by providing incentives to former coal mines to address their methane emissions, without this leading to the promotion of benefits or neglect of the responsibilities of the owners responsible for their sealing, in line with the
polluter pays principle, as enshrined in Article 191(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and to support the just transition of coal regions in developing alternative activities which are in line with the objective of climate neutrality by 2050;

16. Welcomes the new EU Strategy for Energy System Integration and its proposals to achieve a more circular energy system through the sustainable use of unavoidable waste and residues for biogas and biomethane production; calls on the Commission and the Member States to fully consider circularity first, which means less waste, reducing the consumption of resources and energy, and implementing long-term waste prevention solutions when promoting the development of biogas and biomethane; calls on the Commission to consider ways to facilitate the development of sustainable biogas and biomethane, while effectively reducing methane emissions, and ensure the deployment of the most cost-efficient solutions across the Member States, exploiting synergies between sectors and avoiding perverse incentives that could lead to an overall increase in emissions;

17. Welcomes the consideration of legislation on possible targets, standards or other incentives in relation to the fossil fuel energy consumed and imported into the EU; calls on the Commission to make all fossil fuel imports into the Union conditional on their compliance with EU regulations on MRV, LDAR and the rules on venting and flaring, applicable to the entire fossil fuels supply chain, up to and including production;

18. Recalls that the Union is the world’s biggest importer of fossil gas, with three quarters of the gas and 90% of the oil consumed in the Union being imported; calls on the Commission to continue its active involvement in international initiatives, fostering cooperation with third countries to address methane emission reductions by disseminating best practices for cost-effective methane emission reductions across value chain segments and supports the EU’s diplomatic outreach campaign to fossil fuel producer countries and companies to become active in the OGMP;

19. Recalls the importance of addressing cybersecurity risks in the energy sector to ensure the resilience of the energy system; calls on the Commission to assess whether further actions are needed to prevent attacks against information systems.

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6 COM (2020)0299.
**INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION**

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<td><strong>Result of final vote</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Substitutes present for the final vote</strong></td>
<td>Marek Paweł Balt, Damian Boeselager, Valérie Hayer, Othmar Karas, Jutta Paulus, Sandra Pereira</td>
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### FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

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<td>PPE</td>
<td>François-Xavier Bellamy, Hildegard Bentele, Tom Berendsen, Vasile Blaga, Cristian-Silviu Busoi, Maria da Graça Carvalho, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Christian Ehler, Othmar Karas, Seán Kelly, Andrius Kubilius, Eva Maydell, Angelika Niebler, Aldo Patriciello, Markus Pieper, Massimiliano Salini, Sara Skyttedal, Maria Spyra, Rño Terras, Henna Virkkunen, Pernille Weiss</td>
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<td>Nicola Beer, Nicola Danti, Martina Dlabajová, Valter Flego, Claudia Gamon, Bart Groothuis, Christophe Grudler, Valérie Hayer, Ivars Ijabs, Iskra Mihaylova, Mauri Pekkarinen</td>
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<td>S&amp;D</td>
<td>Marek Paweł Balt, Carlo Calenda, Josianne Cutajar, Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Nicolás González Casares, Robert Hajšel, Ivo Hristov, Eva Kaili, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Dan Nica, Tsvetelina Penkova, Patrizia Toia, Carlos Zorrinho</td>
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| **16** | **-** |   |
| ECR | Robert Roos |
| ID | Thierry Mariani, Joëlle Mélin |
| The Left | Manuel Bompard, Marc Botenga, Marisa Matias, Sandra Pereira |
|Verts/ALE | François Alfonsi, Damian Boeselager, Ignazio Corrao, Ciarán Cuffe, Henrike Hahn, Ville Niinistö, Jutta Paulus, Mikuláš Peksa, Marie Toussaint |

| **11** | **0** |   |
| ECR | Izabela-Helena Kloc, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Jessica Stegrud, Beata Szydło, Grzegorz Tobiszowski, Evžen Tošenovský |
| ID | Paolo Borchia, Markus Buchheit, Georg Mayer, Isabella Tovaglieri |
| NI | Clara Ponsatí Obiols |

**Key to symbols:**
+ : in favour  
- : against  
0 : abstention