Question for oral answer O-000007/2022
to the Commission
Rule 136
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on behalf of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

Subject: Rising energy prices and manipulation on the gas market

Fossil gas prices peaked in December 2021, when they were four-and-a-half times higher than they were in January 2021. This substantial increase was driven by global supply and demand dynamics and exacerbated by factors linked to the pandemic and geopolitical tensions, combined with lower than expected imports of fossil gas to Europe, notably from Russia. This has led to fossil gas storage reaching lower than average levels and high energy prices, resulting in increasing rates of inflation across the EU.

As the economy begins to recover from the pandemic, the EU and its Member States must find structural solutions to protect and support their households, industries and enterprises, especially SMEs and microenterprises. To this end, steps must be taken to address concerns surrounding the EU’s considerable exposure to international gas markets and vulnerability to some individual suppliers as well as attempts to manipulate the market and engage in false speculation.

1. What are the preliminary findings of the Commission’s investigation on possible anti-competitive behaviour in the gas market and when will its conclusions be made public?

2. Has an assessment been carried out into the effectiveness of Article 11 of Directive 2009/73/EC and the decision related to case AT.39816 in reducing the risks to the security of the Member States’ energy supply?

3. Do the current levels of fossil gas storage make the EU even more vulnerable to external pressures in the short term? Have specific thresholds been defined for storage levels?

4. What structural changes could be made to the market at EU level to enable the Member States to protect consumers against the volatility of the international gas market in the future?

5. What concrete action will the Commission take to better inform EU citizens about the causes of the dramatic rise in energy prices that they are having to endure?

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