

Energy: internal market in natural gas, cross-border exchanges, access to the transmission networks

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The committee adopted the report by Esko SEPPÄNEN (EUL/NGL, FIN) amending the proposal under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure: - scope of the regulation: whereas the Commission proposal stated in Article 1 that the regulation should be applied "taking into account the specificities of national and regional markets", MEPs stressed that the main focus of the regulation should be on cross-border issues, in particular setting out rules "to enable third party network users to move their gas from one transmission system to any other physically connected gas transmission system in the European Union thus enhancing competition within the internal gas market"; - charges for network access: charges should provide incentives for investment and keep the transmission systems interoperable. In case differences in tariff design hamper cross-border trade, transmission system operators (TSOs) should actively pursue convergence of tariff structures and charging principles. In order to ensure transparent, objective and non-discriminatory tariffs, the committee also underlined the need for TSOs or national regulation authorities to publish information relating to the tariff derivation, methodology and structure; - Third Party Access services: interoperability between different transmission systems at border points should be ensured by standardised interconnection and operational balancing agreements. The committee also adopted an amendment designed to ensure that TSOs would not circumvent the regulation through another company holding the monopoly capacity rights. A company having monopoly long-term capacity rights and wishing to sell or allocate services to third parties will have the same obligations as the transmission system operator of the pipeline for which those rights are held. To facilitate network users' ability to trade across borders, TSOs should also ensure that the maximum level of capacity at all relevant points is made available; - commitment: MEPs said that the Regulatory Committee which would be set up to assist the Commission should "consult with and take due consideration of the views of" TSOs, network users and gas consumers. The committee also wanted guidelines on tariff methodology, balancing rules and secondary markets to be adopted rapidly and therefore specified that these guidelines should be adopted one year after the regulation's entry into force.