

Press Release

Capacity building session of the UfM working group on Gas, Emissions Abatement and Hydrogen on the Mediterranean Energy Perspectives to 2050



Paris, 18 December 2024 – The Organisation Méditerranéenne de l'Énergie et du Climat (OMEC), as Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) working group on Gas, Emissions Abatement and Hydrogen, and with the support of the European Commission, organized an online meeting to present the preliminary results of the upcoming *OMEC Mediterranean Energy Perspectives (MEP) to 2050*. The event brought together nearly 40 delegates from institutions and the industry from both shores of the Mediterranean Sea, who actively engaged with OMEC analysts and modelers ensuring the success of the event.

In their welcoming remarks, OMEC and the European Commission highlighted the critical importance of collaboration, innovation, and strategic partnerships in energy matters between all stakeholders of the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The newly established Directorate-General for the Mediterranean at the European Commission led by its own Commissioner is tasked with creating a “new Pact for the Mediterranean”, focusing on economic stability, job creation, environmental sustainability, and fostering trans-Mediterranean energy and green technology cooperation.

The T-Med initiative, launched by EC DG NEAR with the active implication of other Directorate Generals (ENER, JRC), industry stakeholders, financial institutions, and international organisations including OMEC, seeks to assess the potential for cross-border cooperation between the EU and the South Mediterranean on renewable electricity and renewable hydrogen to the 2030 horizon. The initiative aims to identify policy measures and tailored market solutions to develop a cost-effective pipeline of projects.

During the meeting, OMEC experts presented two scenarios of OMEC's flagship publication to be launched in spring 2025. These scenarios explore different pathways for the Mediterranean energy system to 2050. Among others, OMEC experts raised the following points:

- The Mediterranean region is still under explored although undiscovered hydrocarbon resource potential is estimated to be much greater than reserves. Oil production is expected to stagnate in the future, coal production to decline before 2040, and gas production to peak around 2040 before falling sharply. OMEC is working on an alternative fossil fuel production scenario (in line with the Net-Zero scenario), which will be included in the upcoming MEP.
- A clear divide exists between the North and the South energy demand trends, reflecting in part differences in population growth. In the North, energy demand is already on a decreasing trend, driven by slower population growth and already rigorous energy efficiency policies in place. However, in the South, energy demand is on the rise, driven by a rapidly growing population. It is projected to nearly double, despite the need to keep it close to today's levels to meet carbon neutrality targets.
- Decarbonization would lead to a significant shift away from traditional hydrocarbons (oil, natural gas and coal) towards renewables and non-fossil energy sources. Natural gas is set to be a transitional fuel, while nuclear energy will play varying roles across the region, with some countries phasing it out and others expanding its use.
- South Mediterranean countries could cover a significant share of EU green hydrogen import needs beyond 2030. However, achieving this will require substantial investments and close collaboration. In the Net-Zero Scenario, both oil and coal would be nearly totally displaced by 2050.
- But reaching current climate targets requires a much faster transition to renewables than current trends suggest. This will also require stringent energy efficiency policies and measures, including significant behavioural changes, and strengthened regional cooperation.

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Initiated in Malta in July 2014, confirmed in Rome in November 2014 and launched in June 2015, in Brussels, the objective of the UfM Gas Platform is to enhance the cooperation in the Euro-Med. region between all stakeholders of the gas chain, in a bottom-up approach to improve gas security by identifying barriers and opportunities. The "Organisation Méditerranéenne de l'Énergie et du Climat" (OMEC) runs the Platform's secretariat in close coordination with the UfM co-presidency.

The UfM Gas Platform is one of the three UfM Energy Platforms (the two others are on regional electricity market and on renewable energy and energy efficiency) established by EU Energy Ministers, Ministers of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, and the European Commission to further strengthen regional cooperation in the Mediterranean for ensuring secure, affordable and sustainable energy for the region and beyond.

More information about the UfM Gas Platform available at <https://www.ufmgasplatform.org/>