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Federal Department of the Environment,
Transport, Energy and Communications DETEC

Swiss Federal Office of Energy SFOE
Energy Economy and Supply Division (AEV)

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Preventive Action and Emergency Plan for Securing Switzerland's Gas Supply

Report made on the basis of Regulation (EU) No

2017/1938 (SoS Regulation)

Introduction

Switzerland does not have any natural gas reserves, which is why the Swiss gas industry mainly procures gas from markets in Germany, France, the Netherlands and Italy. A shortage of gas in these countries could also lead to supply bottlenecks in Switzerland, since the country does not have any seasonal storage facilities. As a transit country, however, it plays a significant role in supplying gas to Europe.

As a consequence of Russia's attack on Ukraine, the Federal Council decided in May 2022 to require the gas industry to procure gas and storage capacity in neighbouring countries in order to strengthen the security of Switzerland's gas supply. A task force coordinated by the Swiss Gas Industry Association (VSG), and involving the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) and the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), drew up a concept setting out the key parameters for winter supply in 2022/23. The Federal Council established these key parameters in an ordinance (SR 531.82) based on the National Economic Supply Act (NESA, SR 531[1]). In this ordinance, it requires the gas industry – in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2017/1938 concerning measures to safeguard the security of the supply of gas[2] (hereinafter referred to as the 'SoS Regulation') – to jointly procure and secure gas storage capacities amounting to 15 per cent of annual consumption in 2021 (6TWh) for the winter of 2022/23. Furthermore, the gas industry had to ensure the availability of options for additional non-Russian gas deliveries equivalent to 20 per cent of Switzerland's average consumption.[3] The Ordinance was extended for the winter of 2023/24 with the same gas storage capacity obligations and options, which entitled holders to purchase 4,000 megawatt hours per hour (MWh/h) during the winter half-year and 200MWh/h during the summer half-year. The Ordinance has since been extended again, but for the time being only with regard to the procurement of gas storage capacity. The Federal Council also set a voluntary gas saving target, encouraging businesses and the public to reduce gas consumption by 15 per cent from October to the end of March in the winters of 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. If, despite these preventive measures, a gas shortage should occur in Switzerland that the gas industry is unable to resolve through market solutions, the National Economic Supply organisation (NES) will implement the necessary management measures. If these NES measures are not sufficient to cover the supply of protected customers, Switzerland may in future request solidarity from Germany and Italy on the basis of the Solidarity Agreement signed on 19 March 2024, or may itself be asked for support.

In view of the changes to the measures for ensuring the security of gas supply described above, and in order to comply with the amendments to the SoS Regulation as far as possible, it is appropriate to update Switzerland's 2016 preventive action and emergency plan. This plan is an important basis for providing the necessary measures to eliminate or mitigate the risks and the consequences of a disruption to the supply of natural gas. It should be noted that the Principality of Liechtenstein is integrated into Switzerland's energy crisis preparedness (gas and electricity) and therefore also participates in Switzerland's crisis preparedness and mitigation measures.

This report was prepared by the Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE) with the support of the National Economic Supply organisation (NES), the gas industry (VSG and network operators) and representatives of gas-reliant industries. The competent authority in Switzerland within the meaning of Article 3 of the SoS Regulation is the Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER).

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[1] SR 531.82 – Ordinance of 18 May 2022 on Securing Supply Capacities in the event of a Serious Shortage of Natural Gas (admin.ch).

[2] Regulation (EU) 2017/1938 concerning measures to safeguard the security of gas supply (SoS Regulation). The term 'SoS' in the title of the regulation stands for 'Security of Supply'.

[3] SR 531.82 – Ordinance of 18 May 2022 on Securing Supply Capacities in the event of a Serious Shortage of Natural Gas (admin.ch).

The full report is available in German, French and Italian.