

Gastech Energy Club

LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLES

Amplifying the power of natural gas
to stabilise energy markets



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Roundtable abstract

As energy demand grows around the world, gas and LNG will be critical in the shift to a more stable energy system and a lower-carbon future. This role can't be taken for granted, however. Roundtable attendees identified how the industry can act in concert to derisk supply and markets, enhance LNG's competitiveness, and ramp-up advocate for the sector's too often overlooked environmental, operational and reliability credentials.

HOST



Dr. Egbert Laege
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MODERATOR



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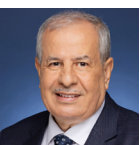
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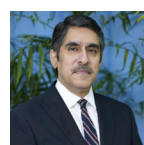
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“

This was the second time I had the pleasure of hosting a Leadership Roundtable at Gastech, and I am especially proud of the lively exchange we could sparkle among global energy leaders. From fuelling AI growth in the US to securing energy in Asia and complementing renewables in Europe, the regional specificities are clear — and they must be taken into account if we are to fully unlock the potential of global gas markets.”

Dr. Egbert Laege, CEO, SEFE

Roundtable outcomes

No comments are attributed to any one participant.

Key findings

- Gas is increasingly viewed as a destination fuel rather than a transition fuel, although more must be done to address methane emissions.
- Complex geopolitical challenges are emphasising the importance of gas as a reliable and flexible energy source.
- Contract flexibility, infrastructure and risk management are key to manage increased volatility.
- Affordability remains a key barrier to gas growth.

The enduring role of natural gas in the energy mix

The roundtable opened with a discussion on whether natural gas should be regarded as a “transition fuel” or as a lasting component of the global energy system. Several participants agreed that it is likely to remain a significant fixture beyond 2050, noting that investments in lower-carbon technologies will take considerable time to materialise. In this context, natural gas was described as a compelling option to ensure both reliability and a lower-carbon energy mix as global demand continues to rise.

Regional perspectives brought nuance to the debate. European participants underlined the importance of natural gas in stabilising the grid and balancing the intermittency of renewables. Others pointed to its role as a baseload supply in Asia, helping to reduce dependency on coal, while in the United States, gas was highlighted as a critical enabler of the fast-growing demand from data centres. The expansion of LNG trade was widely recognised as a key factor in connecting these diverse markets, though some speakers observed that this integration has also introduced new layers of price volatility.

Several participants emphasised that the long-term acceptance of natural gas will depend on the industry’s ability to reduce its emissions footprint across the value chain. Particular attention, they noted, must be given to addressing methane emissions, positioning gas not only as a partner to renewables but potentially as a “destination fuel” in the broader energy transition.

Supply reliability amid geopolitical risks

Many participants emphasised that supply reliability is increasingly important in a landscape being reshaped by rising geopolitical tensions. Several buyers highlighted the need for suppliers to provide greater contract flexibility amid uncertain market dynamics. Some argued that the industry should move away from rigid take-or-pay clauses and pivot to contracts with increased destination flexibility. They also noted that the growth of US LNG has shifted price risks from suppliers to buyers, requiring buyers to become more sophisticated in their operations and risk management.

Suppliers, however, countered that they have often adapted to buyer demands over time offering alternatives to oil-indexed contracts, including incorporating spot indexation and Henry Hub linked contracts, and offering greater supply flexibility, including fully flexible F.O.B contracts from the US. Others argued that price volatility affects both sides, and that effective risk management can help mitigate these risks for all market participants.

There was broad agreement that supply diversification remains essential to ensure the proper functioning of the market and to reduce overall risk.

The role of infrastructure

The discussion then pivoted to the strategic role of infrastructure in supporting a well-functioning market, particularly in managing volatility and the inherent seasonality of demand across the Northern Hemisphere.

Participants emphasised that expanded regasification capacity in China and Europe will be crucial to absorbing the anticipated global LNG oversupply and maintaining market balance.

Others highlighted the importance of storage facilities in managing periods of peak seasonal demand and limiting upward price pressures. One participant suggested that governments and regulators should ensure the development of additional strategic storage, similar to oil inventories, to strengthen resilience against supply shocks and improve overall availability.

There was broad consensus that expanding infrastructure capacity will be essential to better manage market volatility going forward.

The importance of gas and LNG affordability

Participants pointed how affordability remains a key barrier for gas growth and discussed how the challenge is different across different regions. In developing countries across Asia and Africa, where population growth and economic development are primary drivers, natural gas must compete with more affordable and established fuels like coal and biomass. Making gas more accessible and cost-effective in these regions is crucial for cementing long-term demand and supporting their environmental goals. But also in countries that have the capabilities to pay higher prices, including Europe, higher prices are denting its competitive position compared to markets where the cost of energy is lower.

Some participants pointed out how affordability is not solely a function of gas prices but depends on a broader set of factors, including government policy, regulatory frameworks, and technological innovation. Examples from Egypt and Nigeria show how supportive fiscal terms can unlock new gas resources, while technological advances such as fracking in the U.S. have transformed the local gas industry into one of the lowest cost markets globally.

Conclusion

Natural gas and LNG are expected to remain central to the global energy system, balancing affordability, reliability, and flexibility amid rising demand and geopolitical uncertainty. Their long-term acceptance depends on reducing emissions, expanding infrastructure, and ensuring competitive pricing across regions. With the right policies, innovation, and risk management, natural gas can serve not just as a transition fuel but as a lasting cornerstone of a stable and lower-carbon energy future.



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