

UNECE webinar: Natural gas prices and the UN development agenda

13 December 2021, 14:30-16:30 CET

Webex link:

<https://unece.webex.com/unece/onstage/g.php?MTID=ee7ced7cccb1b5e15ac90543ae4e204e1>

A. Summary

The webinar, organized by the UNECE [Group of Experts on Gas](#), explores the recent dramatic swings in natural gas prices and their impact on the United Nations development agenda -- climate action, energy transitions, and social cohesion.

The event will discuss three key questions:

1. Gas and energy prices: where we are at?
2. Can volatile energy prices kill the UN development agenda?
3. Prolonged COVID + high gas prices = deep crisis? What will 2022 bring?

B. Gas markets overview

Aside from the public health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic had caused unprecedented drops in the energy prices. On 20 April 2020, for example, the oil prices dipped for a few hours into the negative territory and settled at [minus \\$37.63](#) a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Natural gas prices mirrored the oil markets. Then the pendulum swung the other way: in the next 18 months, between April 2020 and October 2021, the energy prices increased more than seven times: on 6 October 2021, the November futures [exceeded \\$2,000 per 1,000 cubic meters](#) at Dutch TTF.

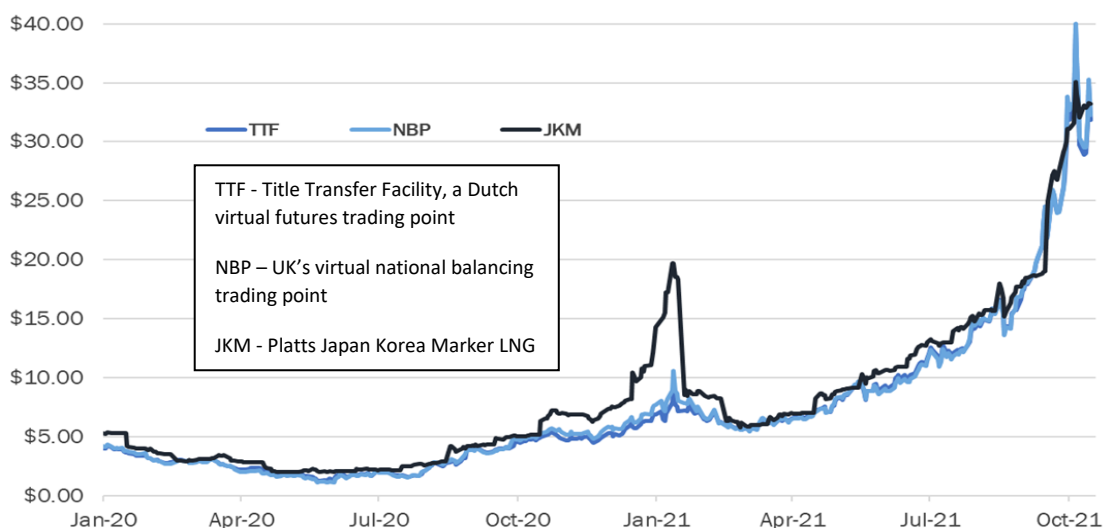


Figure 1: International Natural Gas Benchmarks, in \$/MMBtu. TTF - Title Transfer Facility, a Dutch virtual futures trading point; NBP - UK's virtual national balancing trading point; JKM - Platts Japan Korea Marker LNG Price Assessment. Source: <https://www.europeanqashub.com/european-gas-prices-no-relief-in-november.html>

C. Impact of gas prices on UN development agenda

High energy and gas prices have, to put it mildly, lowered the likelihood of achieving the UN 2030 development agenda as reflected in the [Sustainable Development Goals](#). Particularly negatively affected are goals on poverty, hunger, health, air quality, and gender.

Gas prices are particularly important to climate action, since most gas experts agree that natural gas is, and will be, the key component of an increasingly decarbonised energy system in 2050 and beyond. However, natural gas, let alone its prices, were not much discussed at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26). The discussion referred to the IPCC [special report on 1.5C](#) and the International Energy Agency's [net-zero emissions pathway](#). Both call for rapid cuts in, first of all, coal, and then in oil and gas, if the world is to stay below 1.5C.

COP26 witnessed the launch of the "[beyond oil and gas alliance](#)" (BOGA) that advocates "a managed and just transition away from oil and gas production". BOGA's key members are Denmark, Costa Rica, France, Greenland, Ireland, Quebec, Sweden, Wales, California, New Zealand and Portugal. Prominently absent were the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Saudi Arabia, China and India. The BOGA members account for less than 1 per cent of global oil and gas oil production.

High gas and energy prices have had another effect on climate action: the priorities of many well-intended people in the developed world have slid down the pyramid of the [Maslow's hierarchy of needs](#), towards keeping a status quo that warm homes and food on the table bring. Such a mindset will certainly put decarbonisation on a backburner and take the steam out of wider climate action, including the role of gas in it.

UNECE gas experts believe that natural gas, when managed sustainably, can improve affordability, availability, and accessibility of energy, and thus alleviate many economic and social plagues of both developing and developed countries.

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Timetable and Speakers

14:30 Introduction – UN development agenda and natural gas	
Welcome & GEG Workplan Natural gas prices, UN 2030 Agenda, and COP26 outcomes	Francisco de la Flor, Chair, GEG, UNECE
Paris, Texas: Global climate action and the energy industry	Scott Foster, Director, SED, UNECE
Affordability, availability, accessibility	Branko Milicevic, Secretary, GEG, UNECE
14:45 Interactive panel discussion moderated by Scott Foster	
<p>Key questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gas and energy prices: where we are at? 2. Can volatile energy prices kill the UN development agenda? 3. Prolonged COVID + high gas prices = deep crisis? What will 2022 bring? <p>More questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is LNG coming to town? • Overview of global gas market developments • Electricity markets in Europe • 2022 - happy new year or a leap into the unknown? <p>Front row speaker reactions</p> <p>Discussion, Q&A</p>	<p>Some of invited panellists</p> <p>Mike Fulwood, Oxford University</p> <p>Leslie Palti-Guzman, Gas Vista</p> <p>Jonathan Chanis, New Tide Asset Management</p> <p>Hiroshi Hashimoto, the Institute of Energy Economics, Japan (IEEJ)</p> <p>Galia Fazeliyanova, Gas Exporting Countries Forum</p> <p>Frode Leversund, CEO, Gassco</p> <p>Dennis Hesselting, Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)</p> <p>Doug Wood, Gas Committee Chair, the European Federation of Energy Traders</p> <p>Andrew Walker, Cheniere</p>
16:30 – End	

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