Gas Strategies
Information Services

9 December 2023

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Publication date: 18 September 2020

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ISSN: 0964-8496

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Speed of renewables uptake poses questions over gas' role in European transition

For years, natural gas has been touted as the "transition fuel" between the age of hydrocarbons and the low-carbon future required to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

The argument has long been that widespread deployment of zero-carbon but interruptible electricity generating technologies such as wind and solar require reliable back-up sources when they are not sufficient to meet demand.

Natural gas, which emits half as much carbon dioxide per MWh of power as coal, is often considered the only climate-efficient way to fill that role. Gas offers the advantages of both rapid response time and grid scale in a way that other low-carbon technologies such as nuclear do not.

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