



750 1st St, NE
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20002
202.682.6294 *Main*
202.682.3050 *Fax*
www.cleanskies.org

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New Report Underscores Linked US and EU Strategic Interest in LNG Exports

The American Clean Skies Foundation (ACSF) released a report today highlighting the joint economic and security interests the United States and Europe have regarding the export of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

The report, a “strategic primer,” details the major transatlantic connections underlying the export debate: European companies have invested heavily in developing U.S. shale gas reserves, and U.S.-sourced LNG imports may significantly affect transatlantic energy, security and environmental options.

The report stresses that, as energy markets become more integrated, increased cooperation on policy questions is required. As former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said, the U.S. “is not and cannot be an island.”

“European Views on American Natural Gas Exports” also highlights several important and rarely publicized perspectives on LNG imports:

1. Imported U.S. gas could provide new options for the European electricity sector, improving energy efficiency and promoting greater competition for cross-border energy services. Alternative supplies of natural gas may also reduce the influence of incumbent natural gas distributors as well as their foreign suppliers, (e.g. Qatar and Russia).
2. Europe’s coal industry (and coal-fired utilities) generally disfavor cheaper LNG imports, and their political power should not be underestimated. The global trade in coal is growing, and the low price of coal in Europe has pushed gas out of the energy mix in some countries. American gas could counter this trend.
3. The EU’s assessment of the environmental consequences of LNG imports (and associated shale gas production) has been conducted with limited attention to recent U.S. research and state regulation. That could adversely impact LNG imports by some countries. Conversely U.S. policy makers generally have not drawn on the ongoing public dialogues regarding shale gas in Europe.

“When it comes to natural gas, the current LNG export debate has underscored the fact that a much greater transatlantic exchange of information and dialogue is needed, especially so far as the climate and other environmental implications are concerned,” said Gregory Staple, CEO of the Foundation.

Kristine Berzins, a Berlin-based energy analyst, wrote the 39-page report. She will be discussing it at a joint ACSF-Aspen Institute forum on LNG exports on February 21, 2013, at the Aspen Institute's Washington, D.C., offices.

Copies of the ACSF report can be downloaded here: <http://www.cleanskies.org/eu-views-natural-gas>

For further details about the forum as well as print copies of this report, please contact: jdeutsch@cleanskies.org.