

JOINT DECLARATION

We, the gas supply companies, industrial consumers, gas transmission system operators operating in Austria, Hungary, Italy and Slovakia (hereinafter referred to as the “Target Region”), recognize the vital importance of natural gas as a fundamental energy transitional resource for the above countries and their economies,

Acknowledging the historical significance of the existing gas transit infrastructure, particularly the pipelines traversing Ukraine, in ensuring the reliable, cost effective and secure transmission of natural gas from the Ukrainian side to the Target Region today and beyond January 2025,

Reaffirming our commitment to the principles of energy security, diversification, and cooperation in the European energy landscape,

Recognizing the geopolitical complexities and sensitivities surrounding energy supply routes, particularly in light of recent global developments and regional tensions,

Expressing our shared interest in maintaining the uninterrupted transmission of natural gas from the Ukrainian side to the respective countries and beyond,

HEREBY DECLARE:

Our unwavering support for the continued operation and maintenance of the existing gas transit infrastructure after January 1, 2025, including pipelines and related facilities, that facilitate the transmission of natural gas from the Ukrainian side to the Target Region and beyond.

Our commitment to upholding the principles of transparency, fairness, and non-discrimination in the management and operation of gas transmission systems, ensuring equal access to all market participants in accordance with the European Union regulations and international standards.

Our determination to work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders, including governments, the EU Commission, regulatory authorities, and international organizations, to address any challenges or disputes that may arise in relation to the transmission of natural gas from the Ukrainian side, and to seek constructive and mutually beneficial solutions through dialogue and diplomacy.

Our recognition of the importance of diversifying gas supply sources and routes, including the development of alternative energy sources and infrastructure, as part of a comprehensive strategy to enhance energy security and resilience in the Target Region and Europe as a whole.

Our awareness that the continuation of gas supply from the Ukrainian side will contribute to keeping gas prices low and help support the competitiveness of industries in the Target Region.

Our commitment to promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, and sustainable energy technologies as key elements of a transition towards a low-carbon and resilient energy system, in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Our recognition of the challenges associated with the implementation of sole physical flow of gas from the West to the East, including technical complexities, regulatory frameworks, infrastructure limitations, and acknowledging that the physical flow of natural gas solely from West to East has not yet been fully tested, particularly in winter conditions, which could pose significant operational, safety and social-economic risks if not properly assessed, managed and addressed.

Our recognition that the discontinuance of operation and maintenance of the existing gas transit infrastructure facilitating the transmission of natural gas from the Ukrainian side to the Target Region could complicate the supply of gas to Ukraine and to the Target Region regardless of whether the gas originates from the East or from the West, complicate the efficient use of the underground storage facilities in Ukraine and the Target Region and lead to increased gas transmission costs, which, in turn, may result in higher gas prices for European consumers – an outcome that is undesirable given the unprecedented volatility of energy costs in the past few years. The energy-intensive industry is particularly affected in this regard, because of its high dependency on the security of (gas) supply and competitive energy prices. Also, such discontinuance could lead to an increased risk for Ukraine's energy system, jeopardize the passing of the ongoing heating season and, as a result, deepen humanitarian problems by increasing the number of refugees from Ukraine to the EU due to complicated and unfavorable living conditions.

In conclusion, we declare our interest to seek for reliable, secure, and sustainable transmission of natural gas from the Ukrainian side to the Target Region and Europe, and to contribute to the development of a more integrated, resilient, and sustainable energy market for the benefit of present and future generations. To the extent a solution for the continued transmission of natural gas from the Ukrainian side can be identified, we are prepared to implement such solution in practice.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each of the parties has duly executed this Joint Declaration.

[SIGNATURE PAGES FOLLOW]