



Berlin, 3rd March 2022

Government Draft Calls Goal for Storage Levels into Question

Today a legal draft by the German government was leaked that contains substantial interventions in German gas storage markets. The German gas storage association INES believes that the government plans put the functioning of gas storage markets and especially the goal for minimum storage levels in gas storage facilities at risk.

The draft is supposed to be implemented by a legal proposal of the parliamentary groups of SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen and FDP. It adopts changes to the Energy Economy Act (Energiewirtschaftsgesetz, EnWG). These changes include that storage system operators (SSO) would be obliged to secure the following storage levels in their facilities:

- 1st August: 65 per cent
- 1st October: 80 per cent
- 1st December: 90 per cent
- 1st February: 40 per cent

According to the draft SSO would be obligated to proof these storage levels towards the Federal Network Agency (Bundesnetzagentur), the German Ministry for the Economy (Bundwirtschaftsministerium) and the Balancing Area Operator Trading Hub Europe.

Moreover, SSO would have to withdraw storage capacities that were booked but not used by their customers, the storage users, for the time remaining until the end of the storage year. The capacity would be transferred to Trading Hub Europe in this case, namely if it becomes evident that the storage user will not fulfill the minimum storage level obligations. User's liabilities to pay charges, however, would not be affected.

Sebastian Bleschke, Managing Director at INES, comments: „A legal obligation of minimum storage levels and withdrawals of already booked capacities calls into question not only the functioning of gas storage markets but also the goal for minimum storage levels in gas storage facilities.“

BACKGROUND

INES is the association of gas and hydrogen storage system operators in Germany. INES' members represent over 90 per cent of German gas storage capacities and account for about 25 per cent of gas storage capacities in the European Union. INES' member companies also push the development of underground hydrogen storage in numerous projects and thereby form pioneers in this important technology field for the energy transition.

The members of INES are astora GmbH, bayernugs GmbH, Enovos Storage GmbH, Erdgasspeicher Peissen GmbH, Etzel-Kavernenbetriebsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG, EWE Gasspeicher GmbH, OMV Gas Storage Germany GmbH, RWE Gas Storage West, NAFTA Speicher GmbH & Co. KG, STORAG Etzel GmbH, Storengy Deutschland GmbH, Trianel Gasspeicher Epe GmbH & Co. KG, Uniper Energy Storage GmbH and VNG Gasspeicher GmbH.

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