PRESS-STATEMENT

INITIATIVE ENERGIEN SPEICHERN

INES

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INES Gas Scenarios: Low Gas Storage Levels Put Security of Supply at Risk During Extreme Cold

Germany entered the 2026/27 heating season with historically low gas storage levels. As of 1 November, storage facilities were only 61% full, falling nine percentage points short of the statutory filling target of 70%. The November scenarios published today by the Initiative Energien Speichern e.V. (INES) show that gas supply in Germany may not be fully secured during the coming winter in the event of extremely cold temperatures. INES sees an urgent need to strengthen the strategic framework for winter preparedness.

Gas storage refilling in 2026 remained at historically low levels compared with the same periods in previous years. This was mainly due to high withdrawals towards the end of winter 2025/26 and insufficient economic incentives for refilling, which significantly limited storage injections.

In its previous scenario update, INES had identified a storage filling level of 77% by 1 November as technically achievable. With only 61% reached, this technical potential was not fully utilised. This development demonstrates that marketed and booked storage capacities are not necessarily filled with gas. Seasonal withdrawals had already begun in October, causing storage levels to decline even before the highest-demand winter months.

The latest INES gas scenarios show that gas supply remains secure under normal and warm temperature conditions. However, in an extremely cold winter corresponding to the reference year 2010, gas demand could not be fully met in January, February and March 2027. The model indicates potential supply shortfalls of up to 6.6 terawatt-hours (TWh) in a single month. On individual days in January, shortages could reach 1.7 TWh.

Gas Storage Facilities Secure Supply on Cold Winter Days

The modelling highlights the crucial role of sufficiently filled gas storage facilities in ensuring security of supply. On particularly cold days, gas demand significantly exceeds the volumes that can be supplied through ongoing pipeline imports and LNG terminals alone. Gas storage facilities are therefore indispensable for meeting short-term peaks in demand.

The INES modelling already accounts for additional gas imports from neighbouring European countries with higher storage levels. Nevertheless, supply shortfalls still occur in the extremely cold winter scenario. Even the newly developed LNG terminal capacities, with a maximum technical send-out capacity of 0.8 TWh per day, cannot compensate for depleted gas storage facilities. The model already assumes full utilisation of the terminals' bookable capacity.

INES Calls for Stronger Winter Preparedness Measures

Adequate storage levels at the beginning of the heating season are not the only decisive factor. Storage facilities must also retain sufficient gas throughout the winter to provide the required withdrawal capacity. If storage levels fall too far or too quickly, the available withdrawal capacity may no longer be sufficient to meet peak demand, particularly towards the end of winter.

The low storage levels demonstrate that existing market mechanisms do not reliably ensure adequate winter preparedness. INES therefore believes that the instruments for winter preparedness must be further developed to ensure sufficient storage filling before the heating season and maintain storage withdrawal capabilities throughout the winter.

"*Our scenarios demonstrate how important sufficiently filled gas storage facilities are for Germany's security of supply. Imports through the available pipelines and LNG terminals alone cannot meet peak demand on cold winter days. Low gas storage levels pose a significant risk to security of supply. Germany needs a reliable long-term framework that makes it economically viable to maintain sufficient gas volumes for the winter and ensures that these volumes are secured through binding measures,"* explains **Sebastian Heinermann, Managing Director of INES**.

INES welcomes the willingness of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE) to further develop the instruments for winter preparedness. In addition to the announced strategic gas reserve, INES sees two approaches in particular: a compensation mechanism covering the difference between the market value and the costs of gas storage, or an obligation for market participants to utilise storage facilities. A combination of both approaches is also possible.

BACKGROUND ON THE INES GAS SCENARIOS:

INES continuously models the European gas markets to assess gas supply security. For the November update, the scenarios were calculated based on actual storage levels as of 1 November 2026, as well as updated temperature and consumption data.

A detailed description of the assumptions and results is provided in the documentation accompanying the November update. An accompanying slide deck provides a clear overview of the key findings.

INES publishes updates on the INES gas scenarios every two months. **The next update is scheduled for January 12th 2027.**

Up-to-date information on gas storage levels in Germany and in the individual federal states is available at any time via the **INES Storage Map**. The map also allows storage data to be filtered by storage type (cavern and porous rock storage facilities) as well as by gas quality (L-gas/H-gas and hydrogen).

ABOUT US:

The Initiative Energien Speichern e.V. (INES) is an association of operators of German gas and hydrogen storage facilities based in Berlin. With currently 17 members, INES represents over 90 percent of German gas storage capacities and about 25 percent of all gas storage capacities in the EU. INES members are also driving the development of underground hydrogen storage in numerous projects and are among the pioneers of this important energy transition technology.

The members of the initiative are bayernugs GmbH, Enovos Storage GmbH, Etzel-Kavernenbetriebsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG, EWE Gasspeicher GmbH, Gasunie Energy Solutions I

GmbH, HanseWerk AG, OMV Gas Storage Germany GmbH, NAFTA Speicher GmbH & Co. KG, RAG Energy Storage, RWE Gas Storage West GmbH, SEFE Storage GmbH, STORAG ETZEL GmbH, Storengy Deutschland GmbH, Trianel Gasspeicher Epe GmbH & Co. KG, USG Blexen GmbH, Uniper Energy Storage GmbH and VNG Gasspeicher GmbH.

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