

Italgas co-signs the Open Letter to the European Commission for the recognition of the strategic role of gas networks to deliver hydrogen/natural gas blends

Milan, 18 March 2021 – Italgas has co-signed the open letter sent to the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, for the recognition of the strategic role of blending hydrogen into the existing gas networks, in order to achieve the European decarbonisation targets and the EU Hydrogen Strategy released in July 2020.

The initiative was joined by around 70 European companies in the gas sector, including GD4S, the main association of continental DSOs, chaired by Italgas CEO Paolo Gallo. Among the addressees of the letter, in addition to Vice-President Timmermans, are Commissioners Kadri Simson (Energy), Thierry Breton (Internal Market) and Virginijus Sinkevičius (Environment, Oceans and Fisheries).

The letter emphasises, among other things, how the use of hydrogen/natural gas blends in the short and medium term can achieve significant environmental results at a lower systemic cost than by using only new dedicated infrastructures and constitutes the ideal formula for accompanying the progressive development of hydrogen supply on the market. In this sense, existing distribution infrastructures, digitalized and technologically adapted, are an important asset to provide hydrogen directly to consumers currently connected to gas networks. Moreover, blending allows for the immediate activation of sector coupling, providing the electricity sector with flexibility and storage capacity. Finally, the co-signatories highlighted the need for hydrogen blending to be properly recognised within the European energy regulatory framework in order to enable its rollout.

Italgas CEO Paolo Gallo commented: *"Distribution networks are already the main driver of the energy transition. In terms of extension, capillarity and flexibility, they are a central asset already available and capable of both transporting and storing energy. It is therefore important for DSOs to be able to count on a stable regulatory framework that promotes and supports investments aimed at digitally upgrading the network, so as to provide Europe with an infrastructure capable of receiving and distributing renewable gases, such as hydrogen, biomethane and synthetic methane, which will enable us to achieve the right net zero energy mix".*