

Horizon 2020 Project

In the Horizon 2020 project, gas is being considered as a low carbon form of energy, and the R&D funding originally intended only to support renewables has been altered to explicitly include fossil fuels. This alteration is likely to be disastrous for the renewables industry, and have catastrophic implications for the fight against Climate Change. This is in total conflict with the EU's own policy on Climate Change. We believe it is therefore urgently necessary to clarify what technologies should be considered to qualify as low carbon fuels, and to challenge the inclusion of gas within the Horizon 2020 project to avoid the situation where renewables compete with fossil fuels such as gas, both for research grants and private investment.

The recent alterations to the Horizon2020 project ,in order to include fossil fuels, specifically gas, and by extension, shale gas, represents an outrageous distortion of the original intentions of Horizon2020. To nominate gas , and shale gas in particular, "clean energy" is to make a **mockery of the meaning of words.**

First of all let us consider **the carbon footprint of shale gas.** Scientists at Cornell University say that the greenhouse gas footprint of shale gas is "perhaps more than twice as great as coal" when you compare the two energy sources over a 20-year time frame and "comparable" to coal over a 100-year time frame. Their conclusions are similar to those of the US National Academy of Sciences which concludes that including methane leakage “ **Gas becomes at least comparably worse for the climate than coal..**”

In addition to its carbon footprint, the extraction of shale gas is a filthy industrial process which can contaminate and deplete ground and surface water, and degrade biodiversity, land and air quality. Can this be called clean? The EU's own recent report identifies eight areas of high-risk due to the cumulative effect of multiple shale wells, and concludes Shale gas drilling poses a 'high risk' to human health and the environment and that it is also currently unregulated.

The insertion of gas energy as a low-carbon energy into the EU Horizon programme follows more than 18 months of intensive lobbying by the European gas industry, which is attempting to rebrand gas as a green alternative to nuclear and coal, and which they claim as lower cost than renewable forms of power. As a result, a large slice of billions of euros of funds that are supposed to be devoted to research and development into renewables are likely to be diverted instead to subsidising the development of the well-established fossil fuel. If we add to this damage the fact that shale gas is promoted as a cheap energy alternative, the risk is that the growth of the renewables industry will be fatally stunted and that we will fail to tackle Climate Change.

I believe that we must therefore clarify what technologies may be called low carbon fuels, and reconsider the recent alterations to the Horizon 2020 project. At this time when policy makers are discussing the energy policies we should develop for the next 20 to 30 years in the context of climate change, Europe must not lock us into another dirty fossil fuel cycle. Because of all the unacceptable risks associated with shale gas, because of the risk posed by the competition for investment in renewables and energy efficient policies, because of the inadequacy of the current European legislation, and because of the inevitable impacts on our environment , health and climate, **I believe that no further shale activities should proceed, let alone be aided by financial and political support from the EU.**