



16th BES SEMINAR

DECARBONISING THE GAS SECTOR

From natural gas to green molecules: inside the 16th Balkan Energy School seminar

In a world racing toward climate neutrality by 2050, the energy sector is undergoing a deep transformation. This shift was the central focus of the **16th Balkan Energy School (BES) Seminar**, held in Milan on June 10, 2026. Titled “Decarbonising the gas sector” the event brought together regulators, industry leaders and policy experts to map out how Europe will swap fossil fuels for cleaner alternatives like hydrogen and biomethane.

The regulatory backbone

The seminar explored the complex legal engine driving this change. Experts from the Italian regulator ARERA highlighted the importance of the EU's **"Fit for 55"** package and the newer **"Hydrogen and decarbonised gas market package"**. These rules are designed to create a competitive market for green gases while setting strict, mandatory requirements to slash methane emissions across the entire supply chain.

Biomethane and the balkan connection

One of the most immediate solutions discussed was **biomethane** - a renewable gas produced from organic waste. Because it is chemically identical to natural gas, it can be injected into existing pipelines with minimal changes. Prof. Dr. Dirk Buschle explored the strategic potential for the **Western Balkans** to become a key exporter of this green energy to the EU. However, success depends on strict adherence to EU sustainability criteria to ensure the gas is truly eco-friendly.

Defining "Green": the certification challenge

A major hurdle for the industry is ensuring that a molecule labeled as "renewable" actually is. Eunice Ribeiro from STX Group explained the critical role of **guarantees of origin (GO)** and **proofs of sustainability (PoS)**. These digital certificates act like a passport for energy, tracking its environmental value from production to the final consumer and preventing "double counting" of green benefits. Without this transparency, the market for low-carbon gases cannot scale.

LNG: more than just a safety net

The role of **liquefied natural gas (LNG)** terminals is also evolving. While they were vital for energy security following the 2022 crisis, they are now being reimaged as **"multi-molecule hubs"**. Future terminals will be adapted to handle more than just natural gas: they are being designed to import and export green ammonia, bio-LNG and liquid hydrogen.

BES 16th BES SEMINAR

DECARBONISING THE GAS SECTOR

Capturing the future: the Ravenna hub

For "hard-to-abate" industries like cement and steel, which cannot easily switch to electricity, carbon capture and storage (CCS) is considered a fundamental solution. Snam and Eni presented the Ravenna CCS project as a flagship hub for the Mediterranean. By utilizing exhausted offshore gas fields to permanently store CO₂, Ravenna aims to achieve an injection capacity of 4 million tonnes per year by 2030, offering a lifeline to heavy industry across Southern Europe.

A vision of a diversified ecosystem

The takeaway from Milan was clear: the future of energy is no longer about a single fuel. It is an integrated ecosystem where pipelines carry hydrogen, terminals manage green ammonia and old gas fields store carbon. As the seminar concluded, the consensus was that while the transition is complex Europe's future lies in a sustainable, diversified and highly regulated "multi-molecule" ecosystem.



The Ravenna CCS project