

GUTTING THE EU'S METHANE RULES

**HOW THE FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY
IS LOBBYING TO WEAKEN
A LANDMARK CLIMATE LAW**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Since early 2025, the fossil fuel industry has mounted **an extremely intense lobbying campaign to delay and dilute the EU Methane Emissions Regulation**, one of the EU's most important tools to address climate change.
- The fossil fuel industry **persistently demanded a three-year delay in the implementation of the Methane Regulation, weaker requirements for companies, and lower penalties** – despite its public commitment under the Aiming for Zero Methane Emissions Initiative to support methane regulations.
- **The European Commission has welcomed the fossil fuel industry with open arms.** On average, oil and gas companies and their business associations met with the Commission **every week** between January 2025 and July 2026. **Over 80 percent of all Commission meetings with external interest representatives on the Methane Regulation involved fossil fuel lobbyists.**
- In just over 1.5 years, the European Commission discussed the Methane Regulation with **11 fossil fuel industry associations and 31 fossil fuel companies.** The International Association of Oil & Gas Producers Europe (IOGP Europe, with 16 meetings) and Eurogas (14 meetings) were the most active associations. TotalEnergies (12 meetings), ExxonMobil (8 meetings), and Shell (7 meetings) were the companies that engaged the Commission most frequently.
- Between January 2025 and July 2026, the fossil fuel industry sent **at least 18 letters, statements, and draft amendments** to the EU institutions about the Regulation – an average of almost one letter a month.
- **US business associations and fossil fuel companies**, including the American Petroleum Institute (API), ExxonMobil, and ConocoPhillips, **played a significant role in the campaign.** Over a quarter of all Commission meetings with corporate actors involved US fossil fuel companies, while US companies are also active members of European fossil fuel industry associations. Beyond direct lobbying, US fossil fuel interests leveraged their political influence in Washington, mobilising the Trump administration, Congress and US diplomatic representatives to pressure the EU to weaken or delay the law.
- The fossil fuel industry has **used fears of rising energy prices and drastic shortfalls in EU energy supplies** to pressure EU policymakers into accepting its demands. It reinforced its campaign by commissioning a Wood MacKenzie report, which has been criticised for relying on incorrect assumptions and misinterpreting the requirements of the Methane Regulation.
- **As Europe burned, the EU institutions opened its doors to the very industry driving the climate crisis.** During the record-breaking heatwaves of summer 2026, which brought unprecedented forest fires and droughts across Europe, the European Commission continued to engage extensively with fossil fuel lobbyists, while seventeen EU member states urged the Commission to delay the rules by three years and weaken the legislation. **The EU governments' non-paper closely mirrors fossil fuel industry statements.**
- **The European Commission has already begun to cave in to industry pressure.** In July 2026, it announced the postponement of penalties until 2030 and eased requirements for companies. On 14 October 2026, the Commission adopted a proposal to a further one-year delay of the Methane Regulation's obligations for importers – a move that risks opening the door to further postponement and dilution of the law.
- **Fossil fuel lobbying has also reached the European Parliament.** All seventeen Members of the European Parliament who called for the Methane Regulation to be reopened in an April 2026 letter to the European Commission had met with fossil fuel lobbyists in the preceding year.
- **The findings show the urgent need for a firewall to protect EU decision making** – including the decision-making process on the Methane Regulation – **from the undue influence of the fossil fuel industry.** Just as tobacco companies are excluded from influencing public health policies, fossil fuel companies – whose interests directly conflict with effective climate action – should be prevented from undermining the laws designed to tackle the climate crisis.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2024, the European Parliament and EU governments (the Council) adopted a ground-breaking climate law: the EU Methane Emissions Regulation.^{1,2} They did so with an overwhelming majority: over 85 percent of the voting members of European Parliament², as well as all EU member states except Hungary, backed the Regulation.¹

The law imposes an obligation on producers and importers to monitor and reduce methane emissions throughout their oil and gas supply chains. Methane is the second-largest contributor to global warming after carbon dioxide, which makes this law one of the EU's most powerful instruments to address the climate crisis.

Yet two years later, the Methane Regulation is under attack. The United States have warned the regulation could severely disrupt its gas exports to Europe and subsequently spark a new “energy crisis”, similar to the energy price hike the EU saw after the closures of the Strait of Hormuz in 2026.³ In the summer of 2026, seventeen EU governments called for the regulation to be postponed by three years, while the European Commission decided to waive penalties until 2030 and simplify the law's requirements for oil and gas producers.⁴ On 14 October 2026, the Commission adopted a proposal for a one-year postponement of specific importer-related provisions, including monitoring, reporting and verification obligations for natural gas, oil and coal importers and methane-intensity reporting requirements for importers and Union producers.

WHAT HAPPENED? HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THIS CRUCIAL CLIMATE LAW, WHICH WAS ADOPTED WITH WIDESPREAD POLITICAL SUPPORT, IS NOW HANGING BY A THREAD?

Why are EU governments, the European Commission and members of the European Parliament pushing for the law to be delayed and diluted, despite the record-breaking heatwaves in the summer of 2026?

The heart of the answer lies in the fossil fuel industry's relentless lobbying to undermine the EU Methane Regulation since its adoption in 2024. This report shows how oil and gas companies, in particular from the United States, have incessantly attacked this democratically adopted EU climate law. While the industry's narrative focuses on technical concerns, legal uncertainty, and insufficient preparation time, this report finds that below it lies a clear goal: delaying and diluting a law aimed at tackling extremely harmful greenhouse gas emissions in global oil and gas supply chains.

These efforts are the latest in a long history of fossil fuel companies disrupting climate action, including by denying climate science, lobbying to block climate regulations, and promoting false solutions.⁵ More recently, the fossil fuel lobby has been a driver behind the strong corporate push for deregulation in the EU, prompting the European Commission to delay, dilute, or even scrap a range of environmental and climate laws in the name of boosting the EU's “competitiveness”. Since 2025, the European Commission has presented twelve “Omnibus proposals”⁶, which have resulted in the deregulation of a wide range of EU rules aimed at protecting people and the planet, e.g. on sustainable supply chains, chemicals, and artificial intelligence.⁷

This report exposes the lobbying activities of the fossil fuel sector on the Methane Regulation since the law was adopted in 2024. It looks at both the efforts aimed at the EU institutions directly and the industry's influence on the United States administration, whose position closely aligns with the fossil fuel industry on this issue. It also contrasts the public commitments of fossil fuel companies on curbing methane emissions with their political actions in the EU. The report then analyses how these lobbying efforts have heavily influenced recent EU decisions on the Methane Regulation, which demonstrates the necessity of building a firewall between the fossil fuel industry and EU politics.

2

WHY THE EU METHANE REGULATION MATTERS

Emissions of methane, the primary component of natural gas, are responsible for 30 percent of current global warming⁸, which makes them the second largest contributor to climate change after carbon dioxide.⁹ Methane is also a key ingredient for the production of ozone, a greenhouse gas which drives air pollution, and as such severely harms public health and the environment.¹⁰ To achieve the 1.5°C global warming by 2100 scenario, methane emissions need to drop by 40-45 percent by 2030.¹¹

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the fossil fuel sector is responsible for around 35 percent of methane emissions from human activity.¹² The IEA sees tackling methane emissions from fossil fuel operations as one of the “quickest and cheapest ways to curb global greenhouse gas emissions”.¹² It estimates almost 70 percent of fossil fuel-related methane emissions could be avoided by using currently available technologies.

Originally proposed in 2021 and adopted in 2024, the EU Methane Emissions Regulation aims to reduce these fossil fuel-related methane emissions by requiring producers and importers of oil, gas, and coal to find and repair leaks of methane in their operations and supply chains.¹³ The Regulation also bans routine flaring and venting, two highly polluting practices through which gas is burnt (flaring) or released directly in the atmosphere (venting) during the production of oil and gas.

Within the EU, companies in the oil and gas sector are required to conduct regular checks of their infrastructure to detect leaks and repair these as soon as possible.¹³ Importers of oil and gas from outside the bloc need to demonstrate their supplies were produced either in countries with ‘monitoring, reporting and verification’ (MRV) requirements equivalent to those applied in the EU, or at facilities that meet the Oil & Gas Methane Partnership (OGMP) 2.0 Level 5 standard. They also need to have their measurements audited by an independent verifier. These importer requirements are set to enter into force on 1 January 2027. From August 2030 onwards, importers of oil and gas will also be required to demonstrate their supplies were produced with ‘methane intensity’ levels below the threshold set by the European Commission.

The Methane Regulation is one of the most powerful instruments the EU currently has to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and thus to address the climate crisis. Clean Air Task Force has estimated that the Methane Regulation has the potential to reduce more than 30 percent of global methane emissions from the oil and gas sector.¹⁴

3

THE FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY NARRATIVE UNDERMINING THE METHANE REGULATION

Only months after the EU adopted the Methane Regulation in 2024, the fossil fuel sector embarked on an intense lobbying campaign against the law. Operating through an “informal methane emission regulation coalition”¹⁵, fossil fuel companies and industry associations – including the International Association of Oil & Gas Producers Europe (IOGP Europe) and Eurogas – bombarded the EU institutions with meetings, letters, statements, and paid advertisements concerning the Methane Regulation. The fossil fuel industry’s goal is clear: to delay and weaken this crucial EU climate law.

The industry’s key demands center on the following aspects:

- *Delaying the implementation of the Regulation* (‘stop-the-clock’). The fossil fuel sector has repeatedly asked the European Commission to delay the application of the law’s monitoring, reporting, and verification requirements, due to start in 2027, because it claims the necessary implementing acts and standards have not yet been finalised.^{16–18} It has used the energy supply shocks caused by the closures of the Strait of Hormuz in 2026 to justify its calls for multi-year delays.¹⁹

Civil society organisations have disputed claims about regulatory uncertainty, saying that while EU countries still need to set the penalty regimes for violations of the Regulation, there is no evidence to support a three-year delay of the law.²⁰ There is also no evidence that the Methane Regulation poses a threat to the EU’s security of energy supplies (see below).

- *Easing the requirements for fossil fuel companies.* The fossil fuel sector has insisted the requirements for companies in the Methane Regulation be “simplified” – a term that in the current EU regulatory environment has become a synonym for the deregulation of legal protections of people and the planet.⁷ The industry has demanded requirements for monitoring and reporting methane emissions be lowered, e.g. by allowing the application of lower standards (e.g. OGMP 2.0 level 4 instead of level 5, see below) and the use of certification instead of directly tracing gas in supply chains.^{21,22} Another demand relates to lowering the requirements for the external verification of their emissions monitoring systems.²¹

Voluntary emissions certification is a highly contested method for measuring methane emissions, as it often leads to severe underreporting of methane emissions and “greenwashing” of highly polluting natural gas.^{23–25} A 2026 investigation by The Guardian, Drilled, and Gas Outlook found that the most prominent methane emissions certification scheme currently available, the MiQ standard, may be significantly understating the amount of emissions generated at certified gas production sites in the US.^{26,27} Labelling methane emissions regulatory frameworks in other countries as ‘equivalent’ to those of the EU can be highly problematic if these frameworks actually fail to meet the standards set out in the Methane Regulation. In the US, for example, the Trump administration has started to delay and roll back regulations aimed at restricting methane emissions.^{28,29}

- *Less and lower penalties for non-compliance.* Fossil fuel companies, such as ExxonMobil³⁰, and industry associations have called upon the EU to lower the maximum fines for violations of the law.^{21,31,32} They also suggested narrowing the criteria for imposing penalties on companies.

Environmental organisations have pointed out that the sanctions under the Methane Regulation must be “proportionate” and the maximum penalty for non-compliance of 20 percent of a company’s annual revenues can only be imposed “in cases of intentional, exceptionally serious, repeated, and unremedied violations”.³³

For these changes to be implemented, the European Commission would have to reopen the Methane Regulation. The fossil fuel industry therefore repeatedly called for the law to be included in the Commission’s “simplification agenda” and the so-called “Energy Omnibus”.^{34–36}

Some have suggested that below the fossil fuel industry’s objections to specific aspects of the Methane Regulation lies a deeper, ideological battle against EU climate policies. An anonymous oil and gas executive was quoted by Politico as saying “[s]ome people view this more ideologically about whether or not Europe should be regulating global oil and gas production”.³⁷ William Foiles, CEO of the methane emissions service provider Project Canary, told Politico: “Some folks are fearful of creep [of EU law into the US]”.³⁷

In response to the draft findings in this report, IOGP Europe said: “[we] reject the characterisation of our advocacy as an attempt to “deregulate” EU methane policy or as an “ideological battle” against climate legislation”. It also said that “[h]ighlighting these challenges is not an argument against the EU Methane Regulation. Nor are the targeted amendments we propose equivalent to weakening its environmental objectives”. Eurogas said its engagement on the Regulation “has been focused on specific practical questions, on how to make a set of obligations workable in practice, rather than [...] an attempt to dilute the Regulation”.³⁸

USING FLAWED ARGUMENTS AND FEARMONGERING TO SOUND ALARM BELLS

The fossil fuel industry consistently used fearmongering about Europe’s security of supply, rising energy prices, and supposed lack of competitiveness to underpin its campaign.

It claimed that leaving the Methane Regulation unchanged would drastically limit the EU’s access to oil and gas from 2027 onwards, resulting in severe price hikes and shortages similar to those the EU experienced following the closures of the Strait of Hormuz in 2026.³² To support this argument, IOGP Europe and Concawe, the research branch of FuelsEurope, commissioned consultancy company Wood MacKenzie to write a report on the impact of the Methane Regulation.^{39,40} The report claims that the EU could lose up to 43 percent of its natural gas and 87 percent of its oil imports in 2027 due to these supplies’ non-compliance with the Methane Regulation.

The Wood MacKenzie report has been criticised strongly for being based on flawed assumptions and a misunderstanding of the law.^{41–43} The report falsely assumes that non-compliant gas would be excluded from the European market under the Methane Regulation.^{42,43} The Wood MacKenzie report itself also states that “the market impacts shown are illustrative and should not be interpreted as a forecast” and that its assumptions are based on “considerable uncertainty”.^{39,43}

Several other research reports have found that the Methane Regulation poses no risk to Europe’s energy security. Research by Rystad Energy, commissioned by the Environmental Defense Fund, finds no evidence that the Methane Regulation contributed to the price increases and supply issues the EU experienced in the first half of 2026.⁴⁴

It also shows that the supply of OGMP 2.0 Level-5 compliant gas (see Box 1) is three times as large as the EU’s current imports, despite the US/Israel war with Iran. Investigative research organisation Data Desk found that the security of supply risks are “significantly overstated” as the Methane Regulation will only affect 4 percent of Europe’s gas supplies at the beginning of 2027, given that the regulation only covers contracts signed after August 2024.^{45,46} Research commissioned by the Environmental Defense Fund shows that the initial costs of complying with the Methane Regulation would – at most – amount to 0.6 percent of production costs.^{47–49}

The fossil fuel industry has also claimed the Methane Regulation would prevent it from supplying oil and gas to the EU.^{30,50} Yet several long-term US-EU gas deals were announced in 2025 and 2026, such as TotalEnergies’ investment in the US-based Rio Grande liquefied natural gas (LNG) export terminal, and the twenty-year gas deal between Venture Global (US) and the Greek joint-venture Atlantic-SEE.^{51,52}

BOX 1: HOW THE OIL & GAS LOBBY CONTRADICTS ITS OWN PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS

The oil and gas industry’s lobbying campaign against the EU Methane Regulation stands in stark contrast to the commitments of many major companies in the industry to combat methane emissions and support public policies aimed at curbing methane emissions.

Launched by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2020, the Oil & Gas Methane Partnership (OGMP) 2.0 is a methane emissions reporting and mitigation programme for the oil and gas industry.^{51–53} Over 160 companies, which together account for approximately 45 percent of the world’s oil and gas production and over 80 percent of global LNG flows, have joined the partnership.^{54,55} The OGMP 2.0 provides a framework for reporting methane emissions, with the ultimate aim of encouraging companies to take measures to reduce these emissions.⁵⁶

A company can obtain the OGMP 2.0 “Gold Standard” if it meets the level 4 reporting requirements and makes demonstrable efforts to meet the level 5 requirements.⁵⁷ The EU Methane Regulation considers monitoring and reporting of methane emissions in line with the OGMP 2.0 Level 5 to be equivalent to meeting the law’s requirements, provided these measurements are independently verified.¹³

All of the eight most active companies lobbying the European Commission on the Methane Regulation have joined the OGMP 2.0. Six of these companies already obtained the Gold Standard, while the remaining companies (QatarEnergy and ExxonMobil) are on the OGMP 2.0 “pathway” to attaining the Gold Standard status within the required timeline (Table 1).⁵⁸

Table 1. Commitments of companies lobbying on the Methane to OGMP 2.0 and the Zero Methane Emissions Initiative.⁵⁸⁻⁶⁰

Company	OGMP supporter	OGMP reporting level	Zero Emissions Initiative
TotalEnergies	✓	Gold standard	✓
ExxonMobil	✓		✓
Shell	✓	Gold standard	✓
ConocoPhillips	✓	Gold standard	✗
BP	✓	Gold standard	✓
Cheniere Energy	✓	Gold standard	✗
QatarEnergy	✓		✓
Repsol	✓	Gold standard	✓

Six of these companies also joined the Aiming for Zero Methane Emissions Initiative, an industry-led commitment hosted by the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative (OGCI). By doing so, the companies committed to reaching “near zero” methane emissions from operated assets by 2030.⁵⁹ The initiative, which was launched in 2022, comprises commitments to avoid methane venting and flaring, monitor emissions, and repair detected leaks. The Aiming for Zero Methane Emissions Initiative also contains a commitment to “support[ing] the implementation of sound regulations to tackle methane emissions and encourage governments to include methane emissions reduction targets as part of their climate strategies”.⁵⁹

It is difficult to see how the fossil fuel industry’s large-scale lobbying campaign against the EU Methane Regulation aligns with the commitments made by major oil and gas companies under the Aiming for Zero Methane Emissions Initiative to support methane emissions regulations. It is also remarkable that the fossil fuel industry is so strongly opposed to complying with the regulation’s monitoring requirements by 2027 when many large companies already meet the OGMP 2.0 Gold Standard.

4

FLOODING THE EU INSTITUTIONS WITH LOBBYISTS

The fossil fuel industry's campaign against the EU Methane Regulation has been extremely intense.

In just over 1.5 years, the fossil fuel industry sent dozens of letters, reports, and draft amendments to the EU institutions, had at least over 90 meetings with policymakers at the European Commission, the European Parliament, and EU governments, and publicly pressured the EU institutions in different media outlets. The industry also mobilised non-EU governments, such as the US administration.

Between January 2025 and July 2026, the fossil fuel industry sent at least 18 letters, reports, statements, action plans, and draft amendments to the EU institutions in which it expressed its demands for delaying and diluting the Methane Regulation – or almost one letter every single month.⁶¹ Several media outlets have also reported on non-public position papers shared with EU policymakers by fossil fuel associations.^{62,63}


82

COMMISSION MEETINGS WITH THE FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY ON THE LAW


31

FOSSIL FUEL COMPANIES LOBBIED THE COMMISSION


18+

LETTERS, REPORTS AND DRAFT AMENDMENTS DEMANDING THE LAW BE DELAYED OR DILUTED


€30M+

SPENT ON EU LOBBYING IN 2025 BY THE 16 MOST ACTIVE CORPORATE ACTORS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Between January 2025 and July 2026, the fossil fuel industry flooded the European Commission with meetings in which it discussed the EU Methane Regulation.

Based on its public meeting declarations and minutes, the European Commission discussed the law and/or methane emissions of fossil fuel companies with external interest representatives in 110 meetings. 75 percent of these meetings (82 in total) were with fossil fuel companies or business associations representing the fossil fuel sector (Table 2). Another 6 percent were with cross-sector business associations that have fossil fuel companies among their members, such as the American Chamber of Commerce to the EU (AmCham EU)⁶⁴, the US Chamber of Commerce⁶⁵, and the German Bundesverband der Energie- und Wasserwirtschaft (BDEW).⁶⁶

This means that, on average, **the Commission discussed the Methane Regulation with a fossil fuel actor every single week between January 2025 and July 2026**. By comparison, only 12 percent of the Commission's meetings on the issue were with civil society organisations (13 meetings in total).

The most active actors lobbying the Commission on the Methane Regulation were IOGP Europe, which raised the issue in 16 separate meetings, and Eurogas (14 meetings) (Table 3). Nine other business associations representing the fossil fuel sector also raised their concerns about the law with the Commission, including FuelsEurope, the American Petroleum Institute (API), and LNG Allies. The Commission was also lobbied on the law by 31 different fossil fuel companies, with TotalEnergies (12 meetings), ExxonMobil (8), and Shell (7) being the most active.⁶⁷ In 2025, the total self-reported EU lobbying expenditure of the sixteen most active corporate actors on the Methane Regulation amounted to approximately €30–34 million. Annex I displays the complete list of fossil fuel actors lobbying the European Commission on the Methane Regulation or fossil fuel-related methane emissions.

Table 2. European Commission meetings covering the Methane Regulation or fossil fuel-related methane emissions, by type of actor.⁶⁸

Actor type	Number of meetings	% of total meetings
Fossil fuel companies	51	46.4%
Fossil fuel business associations	31	28.2%
Business associations with fossil fuel members	6	5.5%
Other companies	6	5.5%
Civil society organisations	13	11.8%
Other (certifier, multi-stakeholder initiative)	3	2.7%
Total	110	

Table 3. Corporate actors with the highest number of meetings on the Methane Regulation with the European Commission.⁶⁹

Ranking	Name	Type	Country	Number of meetings	EU lobbying budget 2025 (self-reported)
1	International Association of Oil & Gas Producers Europe (IOGP Europe)	Fossil fuel business association	EU	16	€1 - 1.25 million
2	Eurogas	Fossil fuel business association	EU	14	€700,000-800,000
3	TotalEnergies	Fossil fuel company	FR	12	€3 - 3.5 million
4	ExxonMobil	Fossil fuel company	US	8	€4 - 4.5 million
5	FuelsEurope	Fossil fuel business association	EU	7	€4.5 - 5 million
	Shell	Fossil fuel company	UK	7	€4.5 - 5 million
7	ConocoPhillips	Fossil fuel company	US	6	€700,000-800,000
8	BDEW Bundesverband der Energie- und Wasserwirtschaft e. V. (BDEW)	Business association with fossil fuel members	DE	4	€3.5 - 4 million
	BP	Fossil fuel company	UK	4	€2 - 2.25 million
	Cheniere Energy	Fossil fuel company	US	4	€25,000 - 50,000
	LNG Allies (USLNG Partnership)	Fossil fuel business association	US	4	€100,000 - 200,000
	US Chamber of Commerce	Business association with fossil fuel members	US	4	€3 - 3.5 million
13	Center for LNG	Fossil fuel business association	US	3	€25,000 - 50,000
	Energy Traders Europe	Fossil fuel business association	EU	3	€1.25 - 1.5 million
	QatarEnergy	Fossil fuel company	QA	3	€400,000 - 500,00
	Repsol	Fossil fuel company	ES	3	€800,000 - 900,000

The publicly available minutes from these meetings show that the fossil fuel sector delivered a clear and consistent message: the EU should delay and dilute the Methane Regulation in line with the industry's demands (see section 3).⁶⁸ Fossil fuel actors continued to raise objections against the law, ranging from implementation timelines, uncertainty about technical requirements, and the readiness of producers in non-EU countries to energy security and the cost of energy after the US/Israel war with Iran began. Fossil fuel companies and associations also asked for the Methane Regulation to be included in the Energy Omnibus.⁷⁰ According to the minutes, Shell called the law a "trade obstacle" between the US and the EU.⁷¹

While the fossil fuel sector had most of its meetings with Energy Commissioner Dan Jørgensen, his cabinet, and the Commission department responsible for energy policies (DG ENER), it also targeted the Commission more broadly. It discussed the Methane Regulation with Simplification Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis and his cabinet in five different meetings, once with the Secretariat General (which is headed by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen) and once with a cabinet member of Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič.

These numbers only reflect lobbying activities that were reported on publicly – what happened behind closed doors remains unknown. Previous research by ARIA and Euronews revealed several meetings in 2025 between the European Commission and US fossil fuel companies in which they discussed the Methane Regulation.⁷² Until then, the Commission had failed to disclose these meetings in the Transparency Register. At the time of writing, the European Commission had failed to respond in time to most of the Freedom of Information requests that Fossil Free Politics filed as part of this research (see Methodology).

EU GOVERNMENTS (COUNCIL)

The fossil fuel industry also lobbied several EU governments on postponing, reopening, and diluting the Methane Regulation.

Publicly available information shows that the industry lobbied the governments of Germany, the Netherlands⁷³, Italy, and Poland, while several other EU countries, such as Czechia and Slovakia, also actively defended the fossil fuel industry's position on the Methane Regulation in the Council (see section 7).

At least six business associations linked to the fossil fuel industry, including IOGP Europe, Energy Traders Europe, and BDEW, and four fossil fuel companies, including ExxonMobil, BP, and Equinor, lobbied the German government and parliament on the law in 2025–26, according to the country's transparency register.⁷⁴ Research by Greenpeace, Deutsche Umwelthilfe and Frag den Staat revealed that in March 2026, German Economic Affairs minister Katherina Reiche met with ExxonMobil, BP, and the API at the CERAWEEK conference.⁷⁵ In late June 2026, a delegation of US and EU oil and gas companies, led by the API and the Center for LNG, travelled across Europe to lobby the governments of Poland, Italy, and Germany on the Methane Regulation.^{76,77} The trip took place shortly before EU ministers discussed the law in the Energy Council meeting of 26 June 2026.

This overview is likely to be incomplete, as many EU governments provide no or only limited transparency about their interactions with lobbyists.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

While the European Parliament does not appear to have been the main target of the fossil fuel industry's lobbying campaign against the Methane Regulation, the EU Transparency Register does show fossil fuel lobbyists, including from ExxonMobil, TotalEnergies, Shell, and IOGP Europe, discussed the Methane Regulation with at least eleven different Members of European Parliament since January 2025.⁷⁸

This is most likely an underestimate, as many MEPs do not clearly disclose the laws and topics they discussed during meetings with lobbyists. Another eleven meetings in the Transparency Register show that fossil fuel actors like Cheniere Energy, the Partnership to Address Global Emissions (PAGE), BP, and ConocoPhillips, had meetings with MEPs on topics related to the Methane Regulation, such as "LNG", "EU-US trade on LNG", or "U.S: LNG Production and Exports to Europe".⁷⁸

In April 2026, seventeen MEPs, mainly from the European People's Party (EPP), sent a letter to the European Commission calling for a reopening of the Methane Regulation, in particular the obligations for importers of oil and gas.⁷⁹ The specific demands in the letter, including the suspension of penalties for importers, simplification of requirements for companies, and the call for an impact assessment, align closely with those of the fossil fuel industry.⁸⁰ All of the signatory MEPs met with fossil fuel lobbyists, including from TotalEnergies, ExxonMobil, and FuelsEurope, in the 12 months before the letter was sent.^{78,80}

In May 2026, MEPs Brando Benifei (S&D) and Barbara Bonte (Patriots for Europe) discussed EU energy policies, including "LNG production and exports to Europe" in meetings with ExxonMobil and Cheniere Energy in the United States.^{81,82} Benifei's lobbying disclosure shows that he visited ExxonMobil's Methane Emissions Monitoring Center during that trip. Bonte also reports on having spoken to representatives of the Sabine Pass LNG Terminal, a Cheniere-owned natural gas export facility.





5 KEY PLAYERS

Having held the most meetings with the European Commission on the issue, IOGP Europe and Eurogas were key players in the fossil fuel industry's campaign against the Methane Regulation. Their members include dozens of fossil fuel companies, of which TotalEnergies, ExxonMobil, and Shell lobbied the EU most actively as part of this campaign.

Their full responses to the draft findings in this report can be [found here](#).

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OIL & GAS PRODUCERS (IOGP) EUROPE

Location:

Brussels, Belgium

EU lobbying expenditure
in 2025 (self-reported):
€1-1.25 million⁸³

Members:

*30 oil and gas companies.⁸⁴
Board members include BP, Shell,
ExxonMobil, Equinor, Chevron, Eni,
ConocoPhillips, and TotalEnergies.⁸⁵*

No. of meetings on the
EU Methane Regulation with
the European Commission
(since January 2025):
16

No. of letters/statements
on the EU Methane Regulation
(since January 2025):
13

IOGP Europe, one of the major oil and gas industry lobbying associations in the EU, has been among the most vocal opponents of the Methane Regulation. It has consistently called upon the EU institutions to delay and modify the law.^{16,40,86} It has proposed to weaken the regulation in several ways, including by introducing the use of certification, loosening verification requirements, lowering penalties, and revising the criteria used to assess whether countries or producers apply methane emissions rules that are equivalent to those of the EU.¹⁷

IOGP Europe, together with Concawe, paid for the Wood Mackenzie report, which supported the fossil fuel industry's narrative about the supposed shortfalls in the EU's oil and gas supplies caused by the Methane Regulation.³⁹ In June 2026, IOGP Europe celebrated the non-paper submitted by Czechia and Slovakia to the EU Energy Council, which called for a three-year delay of the Regulation.⁸⁷

In response to the draft findings of this report, IOGP Europe said it "remains fully supportive of the environmental ambition of the EU Methane Regulation and only calls for a limited number of targeted amendments to help ensure that the Regulation is effective and implementable".

However, InfluenceMap finds that IOGP Europe's advocacy on climate policies is "obstructive" to achieving the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement, e.g. by advocating for investments in new gas projects.⁸⁸ IOGP Europe has a partnership with FuelsEurope, another EU fossil fuel lobbying association.⁸⁴

EUROGAS

Location:

Brussels, Belgium

EU lobbying expenditure in 2025 (self-reported):

€700,000-800,000⁸⁹

Members:

106 companies operating in the European gas sector.⁹⁰ Board members include BP, Shell, Equinor, Repsol, Eni, and TotalEnergies.⁹¹

No. of meetings on the EU Methane Regulation with the European Commission (since January 2025):

14

No. of letters/statements on the EU Methane Regulation (since January 2025):

10

Eurogas is a business association representing the interests of companies operating in Europe's gas sector. Since 2025, it has consistently lobbied the European Commission on delaying and "simplifying" the Methane Regulation.^{31,92} Its proposals for such simplification included "establishing alternative primary legislation" (i.e. modifying the Methane Regulation), "flexible compliance pathways", and lowering the penalties for companies that violate the law.⁹²

Eurogas organised two conferences on the EU Methane Emissions Regulation in 2025 and 2026, at which the European Commission's Director-General for Energy, Ditte Juul Jørgensen, featured as the keynote speaker both times.^{93,94} At the 2026 conference, Jørgensen stated that the regulation should "not stand in the way of security of supply".⁹⁵ She also announced the Commission was working on recommendations for EU governments on the implementation of the law, which later turned out to contain several provisions that weaken the law (see section 7).^{96,97}

In response to the draft findings of this report, Eurogas said it "supports the objective of the Methane Regulation" and that its engagement "has been focused on specific practical questions, on how to make a set of obligations workable in practice, rather than as an attempt to dilute the Regulation".

InfluenceMap has labelled Eurogas' lobbying on climate policies as "obstructive" due to its predominantly negative engagement on climate regulations as well as its continued advocacy for the development of new gas infrastructure and including fossil gas in Europe's energy mix.⁹⁸

EXXONMOBIL

Headquarters:

Spring, Texas, United States

EU lobbying expenditure in 2025 (self-reported):

€4-4.5 million⁹⁹

Membership of business associations lobbying on the EU Methane Regulation¹⁰⁰:

*IOGP Europe (Board), Eurogas,
FuelsEurope, BDEW, US Chamber of
Commerce, Energy Traders Europe,
API, Concawe, Gas Infrastructure
Europe (via NAM).*

No. of meetings on the EU Methane Regulation with the European Commission (since January 2025):

8

Signatory of Zero Methane Emissions Initiative:

Yes

While ExxonMobil claims it works “around the world to advocate for strong and consistent measurement, reporting, and verification standards” to curb methane emissions, it has strongly opposed the EU Methane Regulation in 2025–26.¹⁰¹ In July 2026, ExxonMobil CEO Darren Woods called the Methane Regulation “some very bad policy” and asserted that the EU was “heading down a path that doesn’t have any real positive outcomes”.³⁰ The company also claimed that, under the current regulation, it would not be able to import crude oil or natural gas for its European refineries from January 2027 onward.³⁰

An ExxonMobil spokesperson has said that the company has a “team” in Brussels working “very actively” to lobby “the right policymakers [...] at all levels” on the EU Methane Regulation.¹⁰² In May 2026, ExxonMobil paid Politico EU €31,500 for publishing and promoting its opinion article which extensively criticises the Methane Regulation and warns for a “looming crisis” in Europe.^{103,104} In addition to its lobbying activities in the EU, ExxonMobil has also been engaging US lawmakers and the White House on “EU regulatory directives” since mid-2024.¹⁰⁵

ExxonMobil supports at least nine business associations that have opposed the EU Methane Regulation, including as a board member of IOGP Europe.

According to InfluenceMap, ExxonMobil “consistently opposes” “science-aligned climate policy” and advocates for an acceleration of the development of fossil fuel projects.¹⁰⁶ In addition to opposing the Methane Regulation, ExxonMobil actively lobbied in 2025 to scrap the climate provisions of the EU’s Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). In 2026, it initiated investor–state dispute settlement (ISDS) proceedings against the European Commission over the carbon-capture and storage requirements in the EU’s Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA).^{107–109}

TOTAL ENERGIES

Headquarters:

Paris, France

EU lobbying expenditure in 2025 (self-reported):

€3-3.5 million¹¹⁰

Membership of business associations lobbying on the EU Methane Regulation:

IOGP Europe (Board), Eurogas (Board), Energy Traders Europe (Board), FuelsEurope, BDEW, Center for LNG, Concawe.

No. of meetings on the EU Methane Regulation with the European Commission (since January 2025):

12

Signatory of Zero Methane Emissions Initiative:

Yes

TotalEnergies has stated it “supports policies aimed at measuring and reducing methane emissions aiming for zero methane emissions”.¹¹¹ The company says it supports “the implementation of the EU Methane Regulation”, but also seeks “further clarity on the compliance requirements for oil and gas importers”.¹¹² TotalEnergies advocates for several measures that weaken the Regulation, including the use of “compliance certificates” by oil and gas importers and a less demanding approach to establishing “regulatory equivalence” for non-EU countries.¹¹²

While TotalEnergies cancelled its membership of the API in 2021 due to the association’s climate policies, including on US methane emissions regulations¹¹³, it is still a member of at least seven business associations that have opposed the EU Methane Regulation. It holds board positions in three of them (IOGP Europe, Eurogas, and Energy Traders Europe).

In response to the draft findings of this report, TotalEnergies stated that it “supports the implementation of the EU Methane Regulation” but that it is currently calling for “effective and legally binding mechanisms, such as a targeted suspension, that allow to balance the implementation of the Methane Regulation with energy security for the European Union and legal security for EU operators”.

According to InfluenceMap, TotalEnergies continues to advocate for the position of fossil fuels, in particular natural gas, in the energy mix, and has lobbied for weakening several EU climate policies.¹¹⁴

SHELL

Headquarters:

London, United Kingdom

EU lobbying expenditure in 2025 (self-reported):

€4.5-5 million¹¹⁵

Membership of business associations lobbying on the EU Methane Regulation:

IOGP Europe (Board), Eurogas (Board), Energy Traders Europe (Chair of the Board), FuelsEurope, BDEW, US Chamber of Commerce, Center for LNG, API, Concawe, Gas Infrastructure Europe (via NAM).

No. of meetings on the EU Methane Regulation with the European Commission (since January 2025):

7

Signatory of Zero Methane Emissions Initiative:

Yes

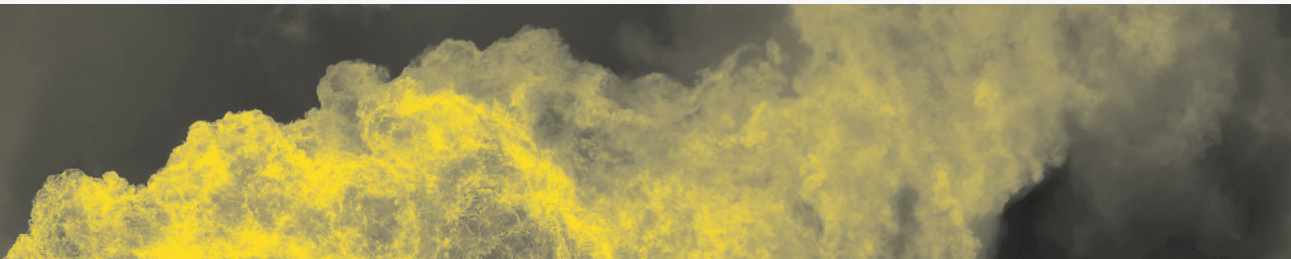
In its 2026 climate lobbying report, Shell states that it supports “regulations aiming for near-zero methane emissions (on an intensity basis) by 2030 throughout the gas value chain”, including the EU Methane Regulation.^{116,117} In a sponsored article on Euractiv in 2024, Shell CEO Wael Sawan stated the company was “proud to have led industry’s support for a strong international dimension in the EU’s flagship new Methane Regulation”.¹¹⁸

Yet at the same time, Shell reports that it is “advocating a pause of the importer requirements” and wants to see the Methane Regulation amended to “address security of supply and compliance risks”.^{116,117} It also advocates for several measures that weaken the Regulation’s requirements, including the use of certification and a “pragmatic approach” to establishing regulatory equivalence at the country level.¹¹⁷

Shell reports that it has engaged the European Commission on this directly and through the business associations it supports, such as IOGP Europe, FuelsEurope, and Eurogas.¹¹⁶ Shell’s lobbying disclosure shows the company has also lobbied the US House of Representatives on “issues related to European Union methane regulations”.¹¹⁹ Shell is a member of at least ten business associations that have opposed the Methane Regulation and holds board positions in three of them.

In response to the draft findings of this report, Shell said it “has publicly supported the objectives of the EU Methane Emissions Regulation, including its MRV framework being based on OGMP 2.0, and its international dimension. Since the Regulation entered into force in August 2024, Shell’s external advocacy has focused on supporting its effective implementation in a manner that achieves its objectives while safeguarding security of supply”.

InfluenceMap has observed that Shell’s advocacy on climate policy has become more oppositional between 2021 and 2025.¹²⁰ Shell continues to lobby for pro-fossil fuel policies and supports industry associations that engage negatively on climate policies.¹²¹



6

THE US ATTACKS ON THE EU METHANE REGULATION

US fossil fuel companies and business associations have been particularly active in the lobbying campaign against the EU Methane Regulation in 2025-26. Nine US fossil fuel companies, including ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, and Cheniere Energy, lobbied the European Commission on the law, as well as five US-based fossil fuel business associations, including the API, the Center for LNG, and LNG Allies.⁶⁸ The US Chamber of Commerce, AmCham EU and AmCham Belgium have also engaged the Commission on the regulation. Over a quarter of all meetings the Commission had with corporate actors on the Regulation included US business associations and fossil fuel companies. US fossil fuel companies are also active members of several European business associations, such as IOGP Europe, Eurogas, and FuelsEurope.

In addition to lobbying EU policymakers directly, the fossil fuel sector used its political influence in the US Congress and the White House to pressure the EU to water down the Methane Regulation. An anonymous US executive of a major oil and gas producer, quoted by Politico, said: "It's only when we couldn't make any progress [with the EU institutions] that we turned more towards the administration to say, 'Can you help us?'"³⁷

The API, which included "push[ing] back" on the Methane Regulation and other EU sustainability laws in its political agenda for 2026, has repeatedly said it has been lobbying EU policymakers both directly and by working with the Trump administration.^{37,122,123} In July 2025, the API, the US Chamber of Commerce, and the American Exploration and Production Council (AXPC) publicly endorsed a letter sent by eleven members of Congress, which called upon the US Trade Representative to address the Methane Regulation, among other EU climate laws, in the US-EU trade negotiations.¹²⁴ In June 2026, the API and Center for LNG led a delegation of oil and gas companies which travelled across Europe to hold "EU Methane Regulation roundtables" with policymakers, think tanks, and US embassies in Poland, Italy, Germany, France, and Brussels.^{76,77}

Lobbying disclosures show that the US Chamber of Commerce, the API, Shell USA, and Occidental Petroleum Corporation (Oxy) have lobbied the US federal government (i.e. the Senate, the House of Representatives and/or the Trump administration) on the Methane Regulation between 2024 and 2026.¹²⁵ ExxonMobil has reported on engaging with US lawmakers on "Discussions related to EU regulatory directives" in each quarterly lobbying disclosure filing since mid-2024.¹²⁶

The Trump administration has supported the corporate efforts to delay and weaken the Methane Regulation. Both US Secretary of Energy, Chris Wright, and the US Ambassador to the EU, Andrew Puzder, have repeatedly criticised the Methane Regulation in the past 1.5 years. Secretary Wright, who held executive positions in the US oil and gas sector for several decades¹²⁷, called the regulation a “non-tariff barrier” to EU–US energy trade.¹²⁸ He also suggested the law would be a potential violation of the EU–US trade agreement of July 2025, which contains a commitment to address “non-tariff barriers that might restrict bilateral energy trade”.¹²⁹ In a meeting with Commissioner Jørgensen in September 2025, Wright requested the EU water down the Methane Regulation and other sustainability laws.^{122,130} The New York Times reported in December 2025 that the US administration was pushing for US oil and gas companies to be exempted from penalties for violations of the Methane Regulation.¹³¹ Shortly before the June 2026 Energy Council, Secretary Wright and his counterparts in the governments of Qatar, Nigeria, and Algeria sent a public letter to EU leaders calling for the Methane Regulation to be postponed and amended.¹³²

In an April 2026 op-ed in the Financial Times, Ambassador Puzder claimed the Methane Regulation could spark “another energy crisis” in the EU, as US companies would “redirect supplies to markets that reward reliability rather than punish it”.³ In the piece, Puzder directly linked to publications by IOGP Europe and the API. Puzder also criticised the Commission’s proposal to postpone enforcement of the Methane Regulation by three years, and called for a reopening of the law instead¹³³ – which aligns with the position of IOGP Europe.¹⁶ In an Instagram post in March 2026, Puzder said that he “had a great time exchanging views on critical energy issues” during a meeting with IOGP Europe and its member companies.¹³⁴

A Fieldnotes investigation revealed in September 2026 how US fossil fuel industry associations have extensively lobbied the Trump administration and the Congress to weaken and delay existing US methane emissions rules, despite their public claims about supporting such regulations.¹³⁵



7

HOW EU POLICYMAKERS ARE ECHOING THE FOSSIL FUEL LOBBY

The fossil fuel industry's pressure on the EU institutions to delay and reopen the Methane Regulation has borne fruit.

In June 2025, EU Energy Ministers supported Council conclusions which, among other issues, stated that “the existing energy acquis may be in need of simplification, including under the Omnibus programme, [...] for example in the context of the Methane regulation”.¹³⁶ The outcome was welcomed by IOGP Europe, Eurogas, and FuelsEurope, which used it to further support their calls to include the Methane Regulation in the Energy Omnibus.⁹²

A year later, seventeen EU governments¹³⁷, led by Czechia and Slovakia, called upon the European Commission to postpone the Methane Regulation by three years at the June 2026 Energy Council, echoing the fossil fuel industry's narrative about potential shortfalls in gas supplies to the EU (Table 5).^{87,138}

Like the fossil fuel industry, the “non-paper” on the Methane Regulation the EU governments discussed at the Council meeting cites concerns about security of supply, energy prices for consumers, and the supposed complexity of the regulation as the reasons for proposing a three-year delay. The non-paper focuses on a key priority of the fossil fuel lobby: amending the obligations for importers of oil and gas into Europe (article 28). The paper also calls on the Commission to assess the impact of the regulation and rejects the Commission's recommendation on penalties, claiming it is insufficient to address concerns about the Methane Regulation – exactly like the fossil fuel industry has been saying.

In September 2026, President of France Emmanuel Macron asked Commission President Von der Leyen to delay the application of the Methane Regulation by one year, claiming it would be necessary “to be able to count upon the full cooperation of oil and gas importers in the current [energy] crisis”.¹³⁹

Table 5. Comparison of EU Council non-paper and fossil fuel lobby letters.

EU Council non-paper of 25 June 2026 ⁸⁷	Fossil fuel demands
"we consider it necessary to introduce carefully targeted adjustments, including a postponement of the application of those EUMR obligations, whose implementation is currently not feasible, by three years [...]"	Joint industry call (April 2026)¹⁸: "Urgent call for targeted amendments to the Methane Emissions Reduction Regulation through the EU simplification agenda including the stop-the-clock" Industry recommendations (April 2026)⁵⁰: "Therefore, we propose the following: • A three-year conditional deferral of Articles 28(1)(2), and Article 29(1) after the effective date of implementation of all the necessary actions by the EC: [...] • A three-year conditional deferral of Article 29(2) after the effective date of the implementation of all the necessary actions by the EC and of Articles 28(1)(2) and Article 29(1): [...]" Wood MacKenzie report (March 2026)³⁹: "a delay of Article 28 requirements by 3-4 years may help avoid the most disruptive outcomes"
"We invite the European Commission to consider as a matter of urgency all available options to reduce barriers to natural gas and crude oil imports. In particular: 1. Targeted amendments to postpone the application of the obligations under Chapter V, article 28 of EUMR by three years should be introduced, allowing sufficient time to develop the necessary third-party verification methodologies and capacities, publish the delegated acts establishing relevant reporting methodologies, ensure availability of relevant technologies and services (e.g., certification schemes), and support compliance by third country operators. 2. Assessment of the impact of import-related provisions on short-term supply security in order to avoid unintended market disruptions and overall assessment of the administrative, technical and financial impact of EUMR application."	Industry recommendations (April 2026)³: "Set a conditional, time-bound deferral of Articles 28 & 29 until essential secondary legislation, MRV standards, methodologies, and verification systems are in place, to provide all stakeholders (incl. verifiers) with sufficient time to develop and set up compliance options." Industry recommendations (April 2026)³: "[I]t would be advisable for the European Commission to conduct a thorough impact assessment of the importer requirements, focusing on key criteria such as workability, environmental effectiveness, security of supply and competitiveness"

Continued...

EU Council non-paper of 25 June 2026⁸⁷

The recommendation currently considered by the Commission not to apply penalties for three years in relation to infringements by importers for contracts concluded by the end of 2027, is a welcome step forward but remains insufficient to address the precarious situation for importers because it does not alter the underlying legal obligations, and leaves major commercial, operational and enforcement uncertainties unresolved:

- the recommendation is non-binding and therefore does not remove significant legal uncertainty for importers negotiating long-term supply contracts;
- national authorities and courts may interpret or apply the recommendation differently across the EU; [...]
- the recommendation assumes importers can continue operating while accepting a degree of non-compliance risk. In fact, many importers cannot knowingly sign contracts where compliance with EU law is uncertain due to governance, financing and litigation exposure.

Fossil fuel demands

Industry response to European Commission recommendations (September 2026)^{140,141}:

"while efforts to assist Member States are welcome, they are not able to address the serious risks EU importers are facing from January 2027."

"The Recommendation on penalties does not address the underlying issues faced by obligated parties: key elements required for compliance from 1 January 2027 and August 2028 still remain either unavailable or insufficiently developed."

"Recommendations are by nature non-binding: they cannot provide the necessary legal certainty until they are reflected in binding legal provisions at national level consistently across the Union."

"non-binding Recommendations or national enforcement discretion cannot provide legal certainty or harmonised application"

"The Recommendations, even if adopted urgently by all Member States in a harmonised manner - an unlikely scenario - would still require importers negotiating contracts today to put themselves into a position of non-compliance, with the only temporary relief that they would not be financially penalised"

"Even with financial penalties suspended, companies remain exposed to significant risks from the violation of their obligations, including:

- reputational damage
- governance, disclosure and directors' duties implications for listed companies arising from continued uncertainty around compliance with the importer requirements
- noncompliance with Company's own code of conduct/Shareholders governance
- downgrading of corporate credit ratings affecting financing conditions/contractual arrangements
- complaints, litigation or class actions by third parties
- civil disputes with commercial counterparties and financing institutions
- uncertainty regarding contractual representations and compliance obligations"

Continued...

EU Council non-paper of 25 June 2026 ⁸⁷	Fossil fuel demands
This would: • narrow Europe's supplier base at a time of heightened global competition; [...] • reduce the EU's flexibility to balance short-term supply gaps linked to Middle Eastern disruptions; • increase prices of natural gas, crude oil, and refined products, adversely affecting European households and undermining industrial competitiveness.	Joint industry call (April 2026)¹⁸: "This limits the EU's access to globally traded energy at a time when supply is constrained" "While Europe and our companies work to secure oil and gas supply to mitigate the impact of the ongoing Middle East crisis, we wish to stress that the EU Methane Emissions Reduction Regulation (EUMR), in its current form, risks undermining the Union's energy security of supply and competitiveness." "while avoiding risks to the energy supply, affordability and competitiveness of Europe's citizens, businesses, and energy-intensive industries."

IOGP Europe called the EU member states' non-paper "an important political milestone" that "echoes industry and supplier countries' concerns".¹⁴² Research by Greenpeace, Deutsche Umwelthilfe, and Frag den Staat revealed that the German government's controversial decision to support the non-paper, which was taken by Economic Affairs minister Reiche without agreement with Environment minister Carsten Schneider¹⁴³, followed upon meetings Reiche had with the API, BP, and ExxonMobil earlier that year (see section 4).⁷⁵

Initially, the European Commission refused to modify the legal text of the Methane Regulation. Commissioner Jørgensen said that there would "definitely" "not be any reopening" of the law⁶³ and the Regulation was not included in the Commission's 2026 Energy Omnibus proposal.¹⁴⁴ However, the Commission did make significant concessions to the fossil fuel industry in the two recommendations for Member States on the implementation of the Methane Regulation it published in July 2026.

The first Commission recommendation simplifies the requirements for oil and gas importers to achieve compliance with the Regulation by allowing these companies to use certification and 'trace and claim' systems to demonstrate their compliance with the law instead of physically tracing their supplies.⁹⁷ The oil and gas sector has long advocated for the introduction of certification and other alternatives for physical tracing of gas supplies under the Methane Regulation (see section 3).^{17,31,145}

In its second recommendation, the Commission recommends Member States postpone the possibility for public authorities to impose sanctions on companies for failing to comply with the Regulation by three years, i.e. up to and including 2029.⁹⁶ Climate organisations have called this recommendation a de facto "stop-the-clock" mechanism "through the backdoor".²⁰ Only weeks after the Commission published its recommendations, the Dutch Emissions Authority was the first regulatory authority in the EU to announce it would indeed not be imposing penalties until 2030.¹⁴⁶

On 14 October 2026, the European Commission adopted a proposal to postpone by one year the implementation of specific provisions of the EU Methane Regulation related to importers. The proposal concerns monitoring, reporting and verification obligations for natural gas, oil and coal importers, as well as reporting on methane-intensity requirements for both importers and Union producers. It follows Commissioner Jørgensen's September announcement that the Commission was working on such a proposal.¹⁴⁷ The proposal risks opening the door to further delays and far-reaching modifications of the Regulation.

Although the oil and gas industry has criticised the Commission recommendations as insufficient to address its objections and has continued to call for the Methane Regulation to be reopened¹⁶, the Commission's decisions nevertheless represent significant steps toward meeting the industry's demands. Since early 2025, the industry has repeatedly asked for delays and easier ways to comply with the law – and in the summer of 2026, the Commission responded by doing exactly that.

8

PREVENTING BIG POLLUTERS FROM WRITING THE RULES

The Methane Regulation is one of the most crucial tools the EU has to significantly reduce greenhouse emissions and to reach the EU and Paris Agreement climate goals. It simply requires producers and importers of oil and gas to stop wasting gas during the production process of fossil fuels through leaks, flaring, and venting. Civil society organisations, experts, and lawmakers across the EU and the US continue to support this crucial climate law.^{148–151}

The oil and gas industry, however, has mounted a full-scale campaign to delay, dilute, and disrupt the EU's methane rules. Meeting with the European Commission on average on a weekly basis since 2025, fossil fuel companies and their business associations have repeatedly demanded the Methane Regulation be postponed by three years, its provisions weakened, and penalties lowered. Piggybacking on the energy price spikes following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz in 2026, and with the support from the Trump administration, the fossil fuel industry successfully used fearmongering and flawed arguments about security of supply to convince EU policymakers to delay and weaken the Methane Regulation. The European Commission has welcomed the fossil fuel industry with open arms: more than 80 percent of all lobby meetings on the Methane Regulation between January 2025 and July 2026 were with fossil fuel companies, their business associations, or business associations with fossil fuel members.

During the record-breaking summer of 2026¹⁵², which hit Europe with unprecedented forest fires and droughts, EU governments and the European Commission decided to align with the fossil fuel industry. While initially stopping short of honouring EU Member States' call to postpone the entire implementation of the Methane Regulation by three years, the European Commission still introduced a "stop-the-clock through the backdoor" by postponing the application of penalties until 2030. The Commission also eased the requirements for companies by allowing the use of gas certification systems, which opens up the door to huge risks of underreporting and failure to meaningfully address methane emissions. On 14 October 2026, the Commission went even further by adopting a proposal to postpone by one year the implementation the Regulation – a move that opens the door to further delays and dilution of the law.

The current deregulation of EU climate policies, including the Methane Regulation, the EU's supply chain law (Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, CSDDD), and the Emissions Trading System (ETS), is only the latest outcome of a long tradition of climate obstruction by the fossil fuel industry. For decades, fossil fuel companies have used misleading narratives, greenwashing false solutions, and fearmongering based on climate science denial or flawed research to block and weaken climate regulations.⁵ Lawmakers in the EU institutions and national governments, enabled by the absence of effective lobbying accountability rules, have repeatedly proved all too susceptible to these tactics.

While the fossil fuel industry continues to push for delaying EU climate regulations, there is no “stop-the-clock” mechanism for the climate crisis. Households across Europe – especially those with lower incomes – are already suffering from the consequences of extreme heat and droughts¹⁵³ and are paying the price for the EU’s inability to prevent the corporate capture of democratic decision-making.

Allowing the fossil fuel industry to shape EU policies represents a fundamental democratic problem. Trust in democracy is harmed if EU policymakers let private, corporate interests prevail over public interests, such as the protection of people against dangerous climate change. Letting fossil fuel companies from Europe, the US, and beyond rewrite the climate rules they are supposed to follow also raises serious questions about EU sovereignty, particularly at a time of geopolitical expansionism.

The EU urgently needs to stand up against the harmful political power of the fossil fuel industry. As the profit-driven objectives of oil and gas companies are fundamentally opposed to the public interest of protecting people and the planet against the harms caused by climate change, there is no way fossil fuel lobbying contributes to better policies. To prevent oil and gas interests from capturing EU policymaking, it is essential to establish a firewall between the fossil fuel lobby and EU politics – just as the tobacco industry has been banned from lobbying on public health policies.¹⁵⁴ EU institutions should no longer engage with fossil fuel lobbyists in any way. Interactions should only occur if strictly necessary for the effective regulation of the industry, and should be entirely transparent. This way, the EU can safeguard vital climate protections, such as the Methane Regulation, against companies trying to destroy them.



METHODOLOGY

This report is based on publicly available sources, including the lobbying transparency registers of the EU, Germany, US, and other jurisdictions. Meetings in which European Commissioners, their cabinets, or management-level staff in the Directorates-General discussed the Methane Regulation or fossil fuel-related methane emissions were identified by scraping and searching meeting titles and minutes published by the European Commission. The following Directorates-General and their respective Commissioners and cabinets were included in the search:

- Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)
- Climate Action (CLIMA)
- Competition (COMP)
- Economic and Financial Affairs (ECFIN)
- Energy (ENER)
- Environment (ENVI)
- Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union (FISMA)
- Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW)
- International Partnerships (INTPA)
- Justice and Consumers (JUST)
- Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO)
- Trade (TRADE)
- the Secretariat-General.

By extending the search to include publicly available minutes, we identified an additional 49 Commission meetings whose titles did not mention methane or the Methane Regulation. Irrelevant meetings (e.g. on methane emissions in the agricultural sector) were filtered out of the dataset. The figures showing the number of meetings each actor had with the European Commission include meetings attended by multiple actors. The data were retrieved between 17 and 20 August 2026.

ACTOR CATEGORIES

Fossil fuel companies were labelled as such if they met one of the following criteria:

- Companies involved in the extraction of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas);
- Companies involved in building and operating infrastructure used to transport and/or store fossil fuels;
- Companies involved primarily (more than 51% of their turnover) in trading and selling fossil fuels;
- Energy utilities who primarily (more than 51% of their turnover) consume fossil fuels to generate electricity.

Fossil fuel business associations were labelled as such if the majority of their members are fossil fuel companies.

Cross-sector business associations with one or more fossil fuel companies among its members were labelled as such.

If a meeting was attended both by one or more fossil fuel companies and one or more business associations, it was assigned to the fossil fuel company category, in order to avoid double counting of meetings. Meetings attended both by fossil fuel and cross-sector business associations were assigned to the fossil fuel business association category.

ACCESS TO DOCUMENT REQUESTS

As part of this research, Fossil Free Politics filed requests with seven European Commission departments on 17 and 18 June 2026 for access to documents they had received from fossil-fuel actors regarding the Methane Regulation, including documents related to meetings and the Wood Mackenzie report. Only two departments (DG CLIMA and the Secretariat-General) provided access to (some) documents. By 23 September 2026, the other five departments had still not provided any access to documents, thereby far exceeding the legal timelines the European Commission is supposed to adhere to under Regulation 1049/2001.

Fossil Free Politics invited IOGP Europe, Eurogas, TotalEnergies, ExxonMobil, and Shell to respond to the draft findings of the report. All entities except ExxonMobil provided a response. The replies have been integrated in the report where relevant and are [available in full here](#).



ANNEX

EUROPEAN COMMISSION MEETINGS WITH FOSSIL FUEL ACTORS ON THE METHANE REGULATION OR METHANE EMISSIONS

The following table shows all fossil fuel actors that met with the European Commission between January 2025 and July 2026 in which the Methane Regulation and/or methane emissions to fossil fuels were discussed. Fossil fuel actors include fossil fuel companies, fossil fuel industry associations, and business associations whose membership includes fossil fuel companies. The overview is based on the European Commission's public meeting disclosures, including the meeting minutes. See the Methodology for more details and definitions.

Name	Type of actor	Number of meetings
International Association of Oil & Gas Producers Europe (IOGP Europe)	Fossil fuel industry association	16
Eurogas	Fossil fuel industry association	14
TotalEnergies	Fossil fuel company	12
ExxonMobil	Fossil fuel company	8
FuelsEurope	Fossil fuel industry association	7
Shell	Fossil fuel company	7
ConocoPhillips	Fossil fuel company	6
Bundesverband der Energie- und Wasserwirtschaft e. V. (BDEW)	Business association with fossil fuel members	4
BP	Fossil fuel company	4
Cheniere Energy	Fossil fuel company	4
LNG Allies (USLNG Partnership)	Fossil fuel industry association	4
US Chamber of Commerce	Business association with fossil fuel members	4
Center for LNG	Fossil fuel industry association	3
Energy Traders Europe	Fossil fuel industry association	3
QatarEnergy	Fossil fuel company	3
Repsol	Fossil fuel company	3
American Petroleum Institute (API)	Fossil fuel industry association	2
Berkshire Hathaway Energy (BHE) & BHE GT&S	Fossil fuel company	2
Concawe	Fossil fuel industry association	2
		Continued...

Name	Type of actor	Number of meetings
Eni	Fossil fuel company	2
Excelerate Energy	Fossil fuel company	2
Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE)	Fossil fuel industry association	2
ORLEN	Fossil fuel company	2
Sempra	Fossil fuel company	2
Trans Adriatic Pipeline	Fossil fuel company	2
Woodside Energy	Fossil fuel company	2
A2A	Fossil fuel company	1
American Chamber of Commerce in Belgium (AmCham Belgium)	Business association with fossil fuel members	1
American Chamber of Commerce to the European Union (AmCham EU)	Business association with fossil fuel members	1
Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V. (BDI)	Business association with fossil fuel members	1
European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic)	Business association with fossil fuel members	1
ENGIE	Fossil fuel company	1
Association of European Energy Exchanges (Europex)	Business association with fossil fuel members	1
Fluxys SA	Fossil fuel company	1
GE Vernova	Fossil fuel company	1
Glencore plc	Fossil fuel company	1
HELLENiQ Energy Holdings	Fossil fuel company	1
Moeve	Fossil fuel company	1
MOL Hungarian Oil and Gas Company	Fossil fuel company	1
Gasunie	Fossil fuel company	1
Neste Oyj	Fossil fuel company	1
NextDecade	Fossil fuel company	1
North Atlantic Energies	Fossil fuel company	1
Partnership to Address Global Emissions (PAGE)	Fossil fuel industry association	1
RWE	Fossil fuel company	1
Uniper	Fossil fuel company	1
United States Energy Association	Fossil fuel industry association	1
Venture Global	Fossil fuel company	1
Vitol	Fossil fuel company	1

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