

20 September 2022

Serving Europe position:

Affordable and continuous access to gas for the agri-food chain

Over the past months dramatically rising costs for electricity, natural gas, fertilisers, transport fuel, and extreme weather events have severely impacted the agri-food supply chain. Uncontrollable gas prices and envisaged access restrictions could deal a critical blow to the already struggling sector.

As we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic of the past two years, the food sector is critical to ensuring citizens can readily and securely access food during times of crisis and, therefore, should be *ensured access to affordable and continuous access to gas*.

Stable and affordable gas prices

The latest increases in energy prices, especially natural gas and electricity, means that more and more of our suppliers in the EU agri-food chain are struggling to maintain their operations, with some companies faced with the choice of stopping production, laying off staff or going out of business. This threatens the continuity of agri-food production cycles and therefore the ability to continue delivering essential food ingredients and products to feed European citizens.

Serving Europe urges the Commission and Member States to *act urgently to take all possible steps to bring energy prices down* and to increase liquidity on energy markets, diversify energy supply, boost sustainable energy generation, and support the competitiveness of operators. In that regard, we welcome the first steps announced by the President of the Commission during her 2022 State of the Union speech.

Ensuring continuous access to gas

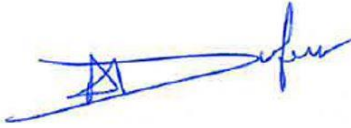
In addition, the difficulties the agri-food chain faces would be aggravated by gas rationing, and would have further consequences on food availability and affordability, bringing a serious risk of shortages.

Serving Europe welcomes that the agri-food supply chain is considered a “societally-critical” sector in the EU’s “*Save Gas for a Safe Winter*” initiative endorsed by EU Member States on July 26, 2022.

Serving Europe requests that this important recognition of *the sector’s strategic role is maintained in national emergency plans*. This will ensure that all entities critical to food supply (e.g. food and packaging producers, farmers, distribution centers, abattoirs, restaurants, etc.) are not decoupled from energy grids, thereby helping ensure that food supply levels are maintained.

In the meantime, our members are committed to the continuous improvement of the energy efficiency of our operations, and to working with public authorities and relevant stakeholders to

maintain reliable food supplies. It is important to stick together in times of crisis, that is why our restaurants will be there to help European citizens during this difficult period.



Aurélie Dufour,
Chairwoman of Serving Europe



Arnaud Dufour,
Secretary General

Serving Europe is:

