

Energy conservation italy

Energy transition is a high priority on the European Union's agenda. It has led to Italy introducing a radical reform to its energy supply system. This has taken place in the threefold political and regulatory direction of maximising the use of renewable energy sources, increasing domestic natural gas production and reducing the use of hydrocarbons.

This renewed geopolitical and regulatory framework has forced oil and gas industry operators to reinvent systems and business models. These operators are now called upon to play a key role in both the development of a green energy system and to achieve EU targets.

Over the past four years, energy transition has taken special priority on the EU's agenda through the Clean Energy Package and the "Fit for 55" package. Its fundamental goal is to change energy production, distribution and consumption through a shift to the use of green energy, the promotion of a sustainable economy and energy conservation.

In Italy this directive has resulted in measures to maximise the exploitation of renewable energy sources[1] and gas,[2] and impose strict bans or limits on the exploration and cultivation of fossil fuels.[3]

In 2020, Italy adopted the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC) for the period 2021-2030. In July 2023, the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security sent the European Commission a proposal to update the PNIEC, made necessary by the adoption of the 2021 "Fit for 55" Package, which upgraded the threshold for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, already set at 40 per cent, to at least 55 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030.

During 2022, Italy was greatly affected by the international crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, with primary energy demand falling by 4.5 per cent. Gross energy availability in 2022 consisted of 37.6 per cent natural gas, 35.7 per cent oil and petroleum products, 18.5 per cent renewables, five per cent solid fuels, 2.5 per cent electricity, and 0.8 per cent waste.

The share of net imports in gross energy availability increased from 73.5 per cent in 2021 to 79.7 per cent in 2022, confirming Italy's dependence on foreign sources of supply. In particular, there was an increase in imports of oil and petroleum products and solid fuels, which was partly offset by a reduction in natural gas imports.

With reference to domestic production, there was an eight per cent reduction in production from the previous year, mainly attributable to the decline in energy produced from renewable sources. This was caused by the collapse of hydroelectricity due to adverse weather, and lower production of oil and petroleum products.

Italian energy policy has been focused on issues relating to diversifying the origin of imported gas, as opposed to obtaining gas from Russia. For instance, the agreement signed for the gradual increase in gas imported from Algeria, which in itself is not going to solve the problem of dependence on foreign players for gas supplies, and the short-term increase in gas imports from the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) pipeline.

Even today, approximately 80 per cent of global energy consumption comes from fossil fuel sources: in 2020, global energy-related CO2 emissions amounted to 40 billion tonnes, of which nearly two-thirds related to the oil and gas industry.

In the "green" context of global energy development, the oil and gas industry is being called on to transform activities and business models in order to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions drastically.

In Italy, thanks to policies which support research and technological innovation in energy supply and the allocation of funds to support oil and gas companies, most of latter have made strides in reducing their carbon use and are considering which investments and technologies could facilitate further progress. Such policies include: upgrading facilities, especially those relating to methane gas extraction, to limit CO2 emissions; reducing flaring; lowering consumption in drilling operations; and introducing innovative technologies such as carbon sequestration.

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