

Press release

Vienna, 1 April 2020

Gas Connect Austria: Gas transport for Austria and Europe secured – even now

Energy supply in Austria is also on a safe footing in these challenging times prompted by the Coronavirus crisis. As a major gas grid operator in the European energy supply network, Gas Connect Austria carries a big responsibility for the safe supply of gas. About 40 billion m³ of gas on average flows each year through the gas hub in the Lower Austrian Baumgarten. 20% of this supply covers domestic gas demand, but the large remainder is transported on to neighbouring countries. Comprehensive measures have therefore been put in place to keep the transportation of gas running smoothly.

Unlike electricity, which is primarily generated where it is needed, gas has always been transported across borders. That is why gas and its infrastructure play a very special role in international energy logistics. Three-quarters of the gas demand in Europe, which currently stands at 367 billion m³, is imported – about 45% comes from Russia.

As a transmission system operator, Gas Connect Austria plays a central role in the redistribution of gas. Many European countries are supplied with gas via Austria. In addition to central domestic energy consumers, such as the steel and glass industry and domestic gas-fired power plants, Austria has a special responsibility to the Central and Eastern European energy supply. And it is important to maintain this seamlessly at the current time.

Five times as much gas as Austria needs for its own use is flowing through the domestic transmission network. As in many other European countries, Austria's electricity production is also dependent on gas – on an average winter day, gas is responsible for more than 30% of electricity production.

Operational continuity ensured at Gas Connect Austria

Around the clock, gas flows are being controlled by one of Europe's most modern dispatching centres and they are being reliably delivered to their destination. The ongoing exchange with other countries' upstream and downstream network operators is an integral part of the daily routine and also continues to function smoothly under these challenging conditions.

The marketing of transport capacity continues to be transparent and competitive through European capacity platforms such as PRISMA and RBP. In strict compliance with the Covid-19 laws and special protection of our employees, operational continuity is being maintained and necessary inspections and maintenance work are being carried out in an approved manner. Any work that would have led to a restriction of operations has been postponed in order to make the transport capacity available to the market at full scale.

Extensive precautions

Because the management of Gas Connect Austria is aware of the high level of responsibility, precautionary measures were taken at a very early stage. Like other companies, employees are mostly working from home in order to minimise the risk of contagion. In areas where a personal presence is absolutely necessary, however, work is being carried out separately in small teams and with enough distance between everyone. For key positions, such as central plant control, arrangements have been made for sufficient space so that these teams can work in protected areas that are isolated from the outside world.

Gas Connect Austria is in close contact with national and international institutions and is watching very closely to see how the situation develops in Austria and abroad. This means that the company is very flexible and well-positioned – and can make decisions quickly, on a daily basis, on the adaptation of measures.

European gas hub in Austria

Together with TAG GmbH (Trans Austria Gas Pipeline), Gas Connect Austria operates Austria's largest import and main distribution node for gas at Baumgarten, while at the same time running one of the most important distribution hubs for Europe. Three international pipeline systems and a domestic transport system run in different directions to centres of consumption in Austria and on to other countries – including Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia, Germany and also France. 42 billion m³ of gas flowed physically through the Baumgarten hub in 2019. Around 20% of this is used to supply Austria's households and industrial operations.

Gas Connect Austria GmbH

Based in Vienna, Gas Connect Austria is a natural gas transmission system and distribution system operator. The company has 280 employees working at a total of six locations in Vienna, Lower Austria and Upper Austria. Gas Connect Austria operates a modern and powerful high-pressure natural gas network centred on the Baumgarten hub, with connections to Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as to storage and production facilities. The pipeline system is 900 kilometres long and comprises five compressor stations, 40 metering and transfer stations and more than 100 transfer metering points. The company's core business is marketing gas transportation capacity at cross-border interconnection points, and for domestic natural gas supply in Austria. It plays a key role in the Central European gas network, with marketed entry/exit capacity of 150 billion cubic metres a year. As a logistics services provider with a strong customer focus, the company is constantly developing its products and services in line with market requirements. Gas Connect Austria is a subsidiary of the OMV Group, which holds a 51% stake, with the remaining 49% split between Allianz Capital Partners and SNAM at a ratio of 60:40. Gas Connect Austria is a shareholder in AGGM, AGCS, TAG GmbH and PRISMA, and a member of ENTSOE and GIE.

Media Contact: publicrelations@gasconnect.at

Tel: +43-1-27500-88052