



Press release

The new market area: GASPOOL

Five major German pipeline operators merge their market areas and set up a joint company

Hanover/Leipzig/Kassel/Emden/Kiel, 7 May 2009. With the conclusion of contracts for market area cooperation and establishment of a joint company, the cross-regional natural gas transport companies, *Gasunie Deutschland*, *ONTRAS – VNG Gastransport*, *WINGAS TRANSPORT* and *StatoilHydro Deutschland* and *DONG Energy Pipelines* have laid the basis for merging their market areas. The new market area and the company that will be responsible for the balancing pool management will be called “GASPOOL”. The company is to be based in Berlin. The new cooperation is subject to approval by the responsible monopolies commission.

“GASPOOL is the perfect name for our objectives. It reflects our claim that we are creating one of Germany’s leading gas trading places right in the heart of Europe. This first cooperation on an equal basis between five network operators with widespread market coverage is also open to other companies, and therefore meets the requirements for optimum acceptance on the market. The partnership practiced here on an equal footing is a fundamental reason for the project’s success,” is how the cooperation partners explained their venture on the occasion of signing the contracts.

The pipeline operators from Hanover, Leipzig, Kassel, Emden and Kiel had already announced their intention to merge their existing, separate market areas back in March. This will now create a transport and trading area for natural gas that includes more the 300 networks virtually all over Germany. The cooperation makes it easier to transport gas across and beyond ownership lines, and gives competition in the German and European gas market a crucial boost.

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WINGAS TRANSPORT GmbH & Co. KG operates a national gas pipeline network. It offers its customers state-of-the-art, competitive transport services using a high-pressure pipeline network more than 2,000 km long which covers the whole of Germany and includes nine compressor stations. More than 100 other network operators are connected to the WINGAS TRANSPORT pipeline network in Germany. More than 3 billion euros have been invested in this pipeline network overall since 1990. This infrastructure is positioned at the heart of Europe as the interface of European natural gas transportation.

ONTRAS – VNG Gastransport GmbH is a trans-regional gas pipeline operator in the European grid system. ONTRAS operates a high-pressure pipeline network, which is over 7,000 km long and has around 500 interconnection points, and markets its capacities. The pipeline system runs through six federal states in Germany from the Baltic Sea coast to the German-Polish border and from the German-Polish border to the Thuringian Forest. It cooperates with over 130 downstream network operators.

Gasunie Deutschland Transport Services GmbH based in Hannover is responsible for the management, operation and development of a long-distance pipeline grid in North Germany, which is about 3,100 kilometers long. Because of its geographical position, the Gasunie pipeline network in the Netherlands and in Germany, which is more than 15,000 kilometers long in total, acts as the 'gas roundabout' of northwest Europe. Gasunie Deutschland is a subsidiary of N.V. Nederlandse Gasunie.

DONG Energy Pipelines GmbH based in Kiel is a German subsidiary of the Danish energy company DONG Energy A/S, one of the leading energy providers in northern Europe. As a trans-regional gas pipeline network operator, DONG Energy Pipelines offers its customers gas transport capacities from Ellund on the Danish-German border through its high-pressure gas pipeline network.

StatoilHydro Deutschland GmbH based in Emden is a 100% subsidiary of the Norwegian energy provider StatoilHydro ASA. With 30,000 employees and branches in over 40 countries, StatoilHydro is one of the biggest crude oil exporters in the world and one of the most prominent natural gas producers on the European gas market. Network operator StatoilHydro Deutschland GmbH provides its customers with capacities for transporting natural gas. Its transport network is 341 kilometers long and runs from Dornum via Etzel to Steinitz in Saxony Anhalt.