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Regulators formalise cooperation towards North-West European gas market

Yesterday evening the regulators of the participating countries in North and North-West Europe signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to commit to regional regulatory cooperation and co-ordination. The MoU is one of the results of the 'Gas Regional Initiative' of ERGEG, the European Regulators Group for Electricity and Gas. The signing took place at the Kurhaus in The Hague as the start of the fourth stakeholders group meeting of the region. "The signing of the MoU is an important step towards a competitive, integrated North-West European gas market," says Peter Plug, chairman North West Gas Regional Initiative and director of the Dutch Energy Regulator.

The MoU is intended to help fill the current regulatory gap that exists in legislation for regulators to coordinate on cross-border issues and it includes arrangements on how regulators should share information and consult each other on issues that impact across more than one market. The following countries have committed themselves to the MoU: Belgium, Germany, France, United Kingdom, Ireland, Northern-Ireland, Sweden, Denmark and The Netherlands.

In the Gas Regional Initiative the energy regulators have drawn up actions necessary to realise a North West European gas market; the signing of the MoU is one of the deliverables of the initiative. Other results have been booked on for example transparency and capacity. The initiative is in close cooperation with the European Commission, various Ministries, network companies and other relevant (market)parties. The Dutch Energy Regulator has invited all participants to the fourth Stakeholder Group meeting on October 24th in The Hague to evaluate one year Gas Regional Initiative and plan for the future.

In addition to North West Europe, regulators and market parties from the regions of South Europe and South East Europe, are also working on the identification and removal of barriers with a view to realising one European gas market. More information on the Regional Initiatives is available on the ERGEG website: www.ergeg.org.

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