



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

ENVIRONMENT

Directorate D - Implementation, Governance & Semester

Unit ENV D.2 - Enforcement, Cohesion Policy & European Semester, Cluster 2

The Head of Unit

Brussels, 15/01/2014  
ENV.D.2/PK/ts/Ares(2014) 74843

Mr George Camilleri  
Secretary General  
Din l-Art Ħelwa

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Dear Mr Camilleri,

### **National Energy Policy – Strategic Environmental Assessment**

Thank you very much for your letters of 22 November 2013 and 10 January 2014 outlining your concerns regarding the procedures followed in relation to the implementation of the new LNG powered 'stand-alone' power station at Delimara, Malta.

As you are aware, our services raised this issue directly with the competent Maltese national authorities in the context of an annual environmental package meeting held in November 2013 in Valletta. Further to that meeting, our services have now also received the following detailed written information from the authorities on the matter:

*"The introduction of natural gas has always been an integral part of the Energy Policy for Malta both in the draft version issued in 2009 and subsequently in the finalised version published in December 2012. As a result, the Strategic Environmental Assessment that was carried out on Malta's Energy Policy considered also the introduction of natural gas.*

*A chronology of events leading to the finalisation of the Energy Policy for Malta can be summarised as follows:*

- *A draft Energy policy was issued in 2009 which was subjected to an SEA.*
- *A draft Environmental Report was published in 2010.*
- *The Environmental Report was finalised in July 2012 and submitted to the SEA Focal Point (Annex I).*
- *The 2012 Environmental Report (page 129) concludes that from an analysis of two options (between scenario 1 'no natural gas' and scenario 2 'introduction of natural gas') scenario 2 resulted as the best option with significant positive impacts due to a reduction of emissions.*
- *The 2012 Environmental Report also presents an analysis of the alternative options for the infrastructure required to introduce natural gas supply to Malta. Four alternatives were assessed and the conclusions reached confirmed that from a strategic perspective there is no significant negative impact. The Environmental Report illustrates that since all options considered*

*will require the build-up of infrastructure or some sort of intervention, the next step will be decided at the project stage where more detailed studies including an EIA are recommended.*

- *A finalised version of the Energy Policy was issued in December 2012.*
- *An Evaluation Report to determine whether any further updates to the 2012 Environmental Report were needed, was issued in March 2013.*
- *This evaluation compared the 2009 Draft Energy Policy and the updated 2012 Energy Policy and stated that the SEA undertaken together with its findings are still valid, as most measures are either identical or very similar in aim to those presented in the 2009 Draft Energy Policy. The report concludes that the measures assessed in the SEA of the 2009 Draft Energy Policy are in line with the findings of the SEA.*
- *Furthermore, the Statement of Adoption that was issued in April 2013 described how the findings of the SEA have been integrated into the Energy Policy.*
- *Recently the Government, issued a Power Purchase and a Gas Supply Agreement to introduce Natural Gas in Malta for the operation of its electricity-generating equipment.*
- *The project consists of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) storage, re-gasification and natural gas supply infrastructure, together with a combined-cycle gas turbine (CCGT) electricity generating plant. A full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is being carried out on this project, as per 2012 Environmental Report Recommendation ensuring full compliance to the EIA Directive.*

*Complementing the above is infrastructure which is necessary for the implementation of Malta's Projects of Common Interest (G103) in connecting Malta to the European Gas Network. A full EIA will be carried out in this case also ensuring compliance with the relevant legislation."*

I inform you that following an assessment of all the information made available to our services, we have been unable to identify a potential breach of the relevant EU environmental legislation by the Maltese authorities in this case. We have taken good note of your concerns that the National Energy Policy has not been formally updated and therefore no consultation on the revised policy and related SEA screening has taken place; however, it should be noted that the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) does not require Member States to make or change their plans – a Strategic Environmental Assessment has to be considered only if such a decision is taken. Therefore we are not in a position to take any further action on the matter.

I trust you will find this information useful.

Yours sincerely,



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