



GIE Annual Conference 2017

## **Conference Opening speech by Mr. Jean-Marc Leroy, GIE President**

Dear Minister

Dear Andreas,

Dear Alexander,

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen

It's my pleasure to be with you today in this wonderful city of Prague and to open this new GIE annual conference.

First of all, let me warmly congratulate my dear friend and host Andreas Rau CEO of NET4 gas and all his staff for the very nice welcome. They really deserve a round of applause.

Andreas, Boyana, this conference room may be seen as somehow inspired by the British political debate. It really looks like the English Parliament, even though the more we steer clear from politics, the better it is for the gas business.

And so I really hope that like in England we will enjoy very controversial, fair and smart discussions during the coming two days.

The only difference is that I don't see any conservatives around, at least not in the gas business.

And it is probably not only the main asset of our industry but also the main reason of my confidence in the future of our business.

For sure our industry is facing very important challenges. But we are strong enough, reasonable enough and innovative enough to positively face these. We will demonstrate the key role of gas in the European energy transition. We will demonstrate that our infrastructures are a key asset and a backbone to make this energy transition possible, accessible and affordable.

Thanks to the all-energy, holistic vision with a well balanced energy mix, we will be able to seize the advantages of the different energy sources and to foster innovative development. The thus conceived Energy Transition will be a facilitator, not a burden, of the European economic growth and competitiveness. The Enegiwende will not go hand in hand with the Energiearmut.

That will be the main issues we will discuss during these two days.

We have also strived this year to make this conference ever more innovative and interactive. And, I would like to take this opportunity to thank one of our members, Gazprom Germania, for lending GIE a helping hand in the conference's tweeter management. I'm also very impatient to hear about the vision of the young generation on the energy future. We have decided this year to include in the program a special session to give the floor to those who represent the future of our business. No doubt, it should a very stimulating and out of the box debate.

Let me wish you a very nice conference. I hope you will enjoy the ample opportunities to network and develop your business during this 2017 GIE Annual Conference.

