

Press Release

GAS PIPELINE ACCIDENT IN GHISLENGHIEN (BELGIUM)

MARCOGAZ, the Technical Association of the European Gas Industry, wishes to express its deepest regrets to the victims and their relatives, and supports Fluxys and its Belgian colleagues at this difficult time, following the accident involving a high pressure transit pipeline. The accident occurred on 30th July 2004 in Ghislenghien, and the pipeline (1000mm diameter, maximum operating pressure 80 bar) supplied natural gas from Zeebrugge to Quévy, close to the French border.

Nevertheless, MARCOGAZ in the name of the European Gas Industry, would like to emphasise the following points:

- Natural gas transmission pipelines are designed, constructed and operated under the supervision of National Authorities in charge of safety, in accordance with stringent safety specifications and standards developed with the active participation of the Gas Industry at International (ISO) and European levels (CEN)
- The pipeline route, the materials used, the assembly mode (welding), the pressure tests prior to commissioning and the pipeline operation are controlled by National Authorities
- The construction phase is carefully monitored by Transmission System Operators
- Specific regulatory requirements detail the absolute necessity to coordinate with other sub-soil users and contractors working in the vicinity of pipelines, in order that precautions are taken to avoid damage to gas pipes
- The measures indicated above contribute to make natural gas transmission by high pressure pipelines one of the safest existing transportation systems. This can be demonstrated through the incident/accident statistical data collected by the European Gas Incident Group in Europe: no accident occurred between 1970 and 2003; 50% of the incidents collected during the period 1970-2001 are due to third party works.

The European Gas Industry carefully analyse the circumstances of this accident in order to take measures to maintain and improve on the already very high safety levels for gas transmission by pipelines.