

Regional Coordination System for Gas

as

a common network operation tool to ensure coordination of
network operation in emergency conditions

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1. Introduction

This document describes principles and procedures of the Regional Coordination System for Gas (ReCo System for Gas) which was established as a common network operation tool to ensure the coordination of network operation in emergency conditions.

Gas Transmission Systems, like any other utility infrastructure systems, are exposed to various types of hazards. These hazards have the potential to impact not only one part of the system but the system in its entirety if not adequately addressed.

The European gas market is continuously developing, and operation of the networks is becoming more complex. In this context, it is beneficial for each transmission system operator (TSO) to operate efficiently and to ensure security of gas supply.

Regulation (EU) 2017/1938 concerning measures to safeguard the security of gas supply states that the regional cooperation should gradually be complemented with a stronger Union perspective, allowing recourse to all available supplies and tools in the entire internal gas market. Union-level assessment of the emergency supply corridors should be incorporated into the regional cooperation.

Regional cooperation and coordination between TSOs play an important and significant role in the security of gas supply, handling emergencies, and helping to minimise negative effects.

Following the Regulation (EU) 2017/1938, the provisions of this document regarding cooperation and information exchange shall be regarded as binding requirements upon the EU TSOs in case regional or Union emergency crisis is declared.

2. Legal Background

Art. 26 (3) (a) of REGULATION (EU) 2024/1789 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the internal markets for renewable gas, natural gas and hydrogen stipulate that ENTISOG shall adopt common network operation tools to ensure coordination of network operation in normal and emergency conditions, including a common incidents classification scale. The purpose of this document is to discharge this obligation.

Art. 3 (6) of Regulation (EU) 2017/1938 stipulates that “in the event of a regional or Union emergency, the transmission system operators shall cooperate and exchange information using the Regional Coordination System for Gas (ReCo System for Gas) established by ENTISOG. ENTISOG shall inform the Commission and the competent authorities (CA) of the Member States concerned accordingly”.

Art. 13a (5) of REGULATION (EU) 2017/1938, as recently amended by Art. 84 (10) REGULATION (EU) 2024/1789, stipulates with regards to indirectly connected Member States using market-based measures (solidarity): “The transmission system operators of the Member States concerned shall cooperate and exchange information using the ReCo System for Gas established by ENTISOG pursuant

to Article 3(6), in order to identify the available interconnection capacities within six hours of a request of a Member State or the Commission. ENTSG shall inform the Commission and the competent authorities of the Member States concerned accordingly.”

3. Main objectives

- To avoid, prevent, or mitigate negative impact of gas disruption in Europe affected by a crisis (hereafter a crisis includes accidents within the gas infrastructure, events of an emergency, alerts, early warnings, gas supply disturbances, or preliminary information from one of the TSOs concerning possible/existing negative situations in the gas sector).
- To be well prepared for a possible crisis.
- To improve TSOs ability to react in a security of gas supply (SoS) crisis and to coordinate the necessary actions on an operational level.
- To improve international and regional cooperation between TSOs.
- To have a broader and detailed overview of gas flows in EU Member States and the gas balance per balancing zone in case of a crisis.
- To support TSOs when Member States are applying or requesting solidarity measures.
- To provide operational expertise on an ad-hoc basis to the TSOs concerned in case of a crisis as well as information to the European Commission, Competent Authorities of the Members States, and other stakeholders in such events.

4. Establishing the Regional Coordination Team Europe and communication between TSOs

To address the above-mentioned objectives, the European Union’s TSOs and ENTSG have established a community of gas TSOs and representatives of ENTSG called the Regional Coordination Team Europe (ReCo Team Europe).

The EU TSOs or ENTSG can also initiate inviting non-EU TSOs (after approval by ENTSG’s Board) to be a member of the ReCo Team Europe whenever their participation is considered helpful during possible future emergencies.

The ReCo Team Europe provides operational expertise and information to the European Commission, Gas Coordination Group (GCG), ACER, Member States, and other stakeholders.

4.1. Functioning of the ReCo Team Europe and usage of the Incident Classification Scale (ICS)

In case of a crisis, the TSO responsible for the system in which the crisis has occurred or may occur should inform other ReCo Team Europe members using the Incident Classification Scale (Annex 1).

Information exchange about crisis events at the local level or those with minimal impact on the gas system's reliability and the gas market or potential future crisis events, as well as any inability to execute data exchange, can be carried out via email. If more regional coordination and cooperation between TSOs are required, the ReCo Team Europe will convene for a virtual meeting on short notice.

TSOs have to execute the agreed measures to apply solidarity in accordance with provisions of the Regulation 2017/1938 and Regulation 2024/1789. During this meeting, TSOs exchange information, experiences and recommendations which may be important, helpful, and relevant to avoid, prevent, or mitigate negative impacts in the affected region(s).

TSO representatives taking part in ReCo Team Europe meetings should have appropriate knowledge of gas grid operations, particularly in dispatching and security of gas supply.

4.2. Facilitators

To enable the ReCo Team Europe to meet virtually on short notice, a facilitator is elected.

The facilitator's role is to receive requests for ReCo Team Europe meetings and to set up, invite and inform the ReCo Team Europe members about these meetings.

The facilitator will be appointed for two years on a rolling basis. This position will be handed over during a meeting organised by ENTSOG and will include a communication exercise to test the proper functioning of the whole communication chain.

the ReCo Team Europe can agree to prolong the appointed period for the facilitator.

4.3. Initiating the meeting

In case of an event requiring cooperation and/or exchange of information between TSOs, the affected TSO may initiate - depending on the scale of the event - the ReCo Team Europe meeting by calling the facilitator.

Other TSOs can also request the meeting if there is high demand for information due to incidents with a potentially high impact on gas supply. In such a case, the facilitator agrees the meeting time with the affected TSO(s) or those who are the closest to the incident or have the most relevant information.

If it seems helpful, the ReCo Team Europe members can propose inviting TSOs from non-EU countries, or representatives of EU and non-EU organizations, companies, governments, competent authorities

to join the ReCo Team Europe meetings. If agreed upon by the ReCo Team Europe members, the aforementioned parties will be invited to join the meetings.

4.4. Communication details

ENTSOG maintains ReCo Team Europe members' contact details of their dispatching centres (24/7 e-mail and phone number) so that they can be contacted by the facilitator or other TSOs. As a back-up, TSOs may provide additional contact details.

ENTSOG informs the ReCo Team Europe members about the current facilitator and TSOs' active contact details.

4.5. The coordinator

The coordinator (one of the TSOs or ENTSOG) chairs and coordinates the ReCo Team Europe meeting and, together with ENTSOG, may provide information to the European Commission and competent authorities of Members States, ACER, acc. to Article 3 Para 6. Reg. (EU) 2017/1938.

At the start of the meeting, the ReCo Team Europe members will agree on the appointment of the coordinator .

4.6. Communication steps

Following the ICS, the steps below will be taken:

1. The ReCo Team Europe members will act according to the ICS (contact the facilitator or send an informative e-mail to the ReCo Team Europe members).
2. If the affected TSO(s) calls the facilitator and asks to organise a meeting or there is high demand for information from the ReCo Team Europe members, the facilitator sets up the meeting and invites the ReCo Team Europe members and other parties if requested and agreed according to 4.3.
3. Invited participants join the meeting.
4. Meeting participants agree on which TSO representative or whether ENTSOG will act as the coordinator.
5. During the meeting, participants exchange information and discuss the situation and possible solutions to mitigate or eliminate the incident's impact. Based on the discussion, participants agree on the recommended actions.
6. Participants agree on the message to be communicated to the European Commission, ACER, and competent authorities of Members States.

7. Participants agree on the date of the next meeting if needed.

4.7. Communication tools and “Guidelines on setting up a ReCo Team Meeting”

To enable the facilitators to organise the meetings and to enable the ReCo Team Europe members to join them, a reliable well-functioning communication tool should be used (e.g. telecommunications application software products). The ReCo Team Europe members decide which solution should be used.

Based on the chosen method of communication, ENTSOG together with the TSOs develop the “Guidelines on setting up a ReCo Team Meeting” that specify the communication tool for meetings, instructions for the facilitator on how to set up meetings, instructions for the ReCo Team Europe members on how to join meetings, and other functions.

ENTSOG provides the “Guidelines on setting up a ReCo Team Meeting” and possible updates to the ReCo Team Europe members in due time.

4.8. Communication exercise

To ensure reliable and efficient communication between dispatching centres in case of a crisis, the ReCo Team Europe carries out a communication exercise at least once per year.

ReCo Team Europe members will decide on the conditions to pass communication exercise.

4.9. Responsibility

All TSOs taking part in the ReCo Team Europe meetings are acting on their own behalf and they alone are responsible for any specific actions taken.

4.10. The ReCo System for Gas process flowchart

The functioning of the ReCo System for Gas and process flowcharts are illustrated in Annex 2.

5. Support tools

ENTSOG, in coordination with TSOs, develops technological IT tools for the analysis and exchange of relevant recent historical and near real-time data on current and expected gas flows. These tools support the ReCo Team Europe members under both normal and emergency conditions, enabling them to observe and assess gas flow patterns and the gas market behaviour, including retrospective analyses of past periods.

Such tools and information contribute to more efficient and secure management and coordination between TSOs, allowing for faster preventive and remedial actions in response to crisis events.

6. Simulating emergency situations

To better prepare for a potential crisis, the ReCo Team Europe members may conduct simulated crisis scenario exercises. Initially, the ReCo Team Europe members will agree on the scenario to be simulated, detailing aspects such as gas flows and capacities from the gas supply sources, capacities between balancing zones, gas demand in each country, gas storage potentials, and a fabricated crisis or accident. During a virtual meeting, the ReCo Team Europe members will analyse risks related to the proposed crisis scenario, assess the TSOs' ability to balance their gas systems, possible gas flow patterns, risks for each country, and propose actions to cope with the negative impact of such scenarios. These exercises will enhance cooperation among TSOs, and the results will provide technical expertise on how to mitigate and manage potential crisis events.

7. ENTSOG and the ReCo System for Gas

- ENTSOG revises this document on a yearly basis and proposes changes when needed.
- ENTSOG organises internal meetings for the handover of the facilitator's role, including a communication exercise to check the proper functioning of the whole communication chain. During the meeting, the functioning of the communication between the ReCo Team Europe members will be evaluated and results will be used to improve the processes.
- ENTSOG organises communication and emergency situations exercises and with the ReCo Team Europe members according to p.4.8 and p.6.
- ENTSOG ensures that the ReCo Team Europe members are provided with all necessary information about the functioning of the ReCo System for Gas including TSOs 24/7 contact details.
- ENTSOG supports the ReCo Team Europe members with communication tools according to p.4.7.
- ENTSOG cooperates with the ReCo Team Europe members to ensure a well-functioning process of the ReCo System for Gas, e.g., by collecting and implementing recommendations and feedback. The ReCo Team Europe members can request that ENTSOG evaluates and proposes changes to this document.
- ENTSOG in cooperation with TSOs develop IT tools according to p.5.
- TSOs may with the permission of their respective National Competent Authority for Cyber Security (NCA-CS) inform ENTSOG about threats which may impact operational or dispatching procedures. ENTSOG may then coordinate with ENISA (the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity)

as the secretariat of the Network Information Security Cooperation Group (NIS-CG, Work Stream 8) and the European Commission on these cyber security threats. If allowed and instructed to do so, ENTSOG informs the ReCo Team Europe TSOs about cyber security threats which may impact operational or dispatching procedures.

- In addition to the current ENTSOG representatives in the ReCo Team Europe, other ENTSOG staff may be invited to meetings and provide their input and support as well as investigate TSOs actions, knowledge and practices.

8. Communication with the European Commission

In the event of a regional or Union emergency, the TSOs shall cooperate and exchange information using the ReCo System for Gas established by ENTSOG. ENTSOG shall inform the Commission accordingly. ENTSOG and the European Commission will also communicate in case of other events related to the security of gas supply.

ENTSOG informs the European Commission about the situation and the recommendations as agreed at the ReCo Team meeting.

The affected TSO(s) or the coordinator, and ENTSOG, may communicate directly with the European Commission in case of a crisis.

ENTSOG and the European Commission agree on and exchange the list of people to be contacted and their contact details (e.g. emails, phone numbers) or other specifics.

9. Communication with ACER

In the event of a regional or Union emergency, ENTSOG informs ACER about the situation and the recommendations as agreed at the ReCo Team Europe meeting.

ENTSOG and ACER should agree in advance and exchange the list of people to be contacted and their contact details (e.g., emails, phone numbers).

10. Communication with the Energy Community Secretariat

In case of the ReCo Team Europe meeting because of a crisis event, ENTSOG will exchange information with the Energy Community Secretariat about the situation and the recommendations as agreed at the meeting.

ENTSOG and the Energy Community Secretariat should agree in advance and exchange the list of people (within the organisations) to be contacted and their contact details (e.g., emails, phone numbers).

11. Communication with ENISA on cybersecurity topics

ENTSOG and ENISA will keep an open communication channel for exchanging experiences, knowledge and solutions for strengthening TSOs and gas sector-specific cybersecurity. ENISA may support and help on cybersecurity issues and may communicate relevant potential cybersecurity risks to ENTSOG for further dissemination to TSOs.

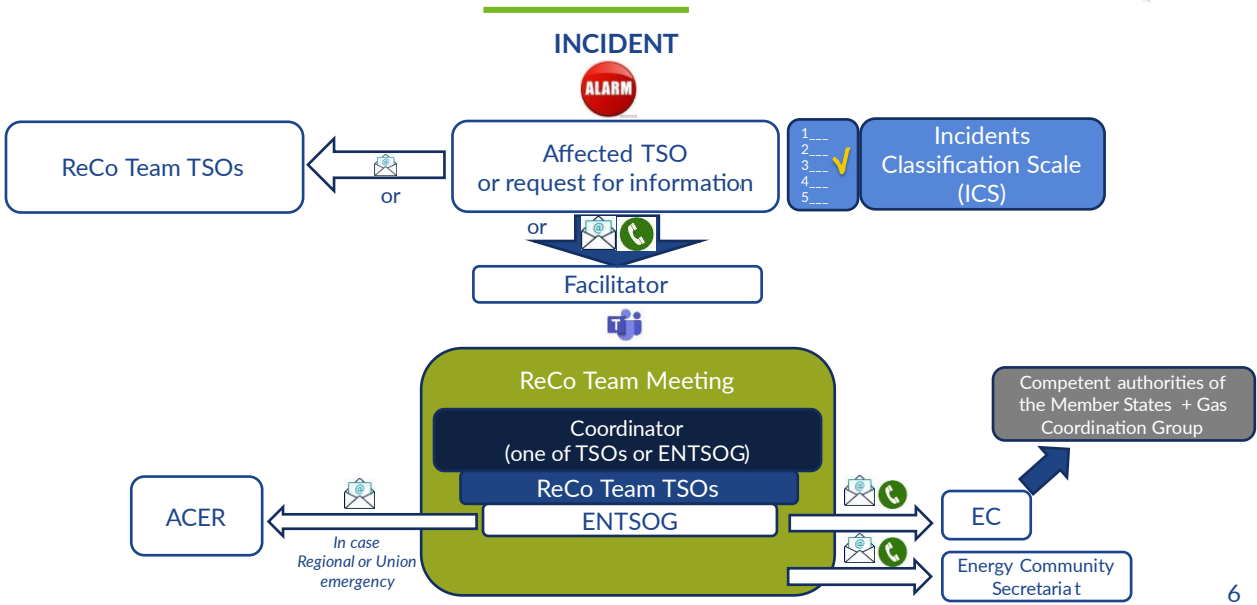
12. Information exchange between the Gas Coordination Group (GCG) and the ReCo Team Europe via ENTSOG

ENTSOG, as part of the GCG, will participate in relevant meetings and discussions, informing GCG about ReCo Team Europe activities and meetings, taking into consideration ReCo Team Europe opinions and recommendations.

ENTSOG forwards information received from the GCG or the European Commission to the ReCo Team Europe members regarding incidents, declaration of a crisis level in any Member State, or upcoming events with significant impact on the gas market or gas flows.

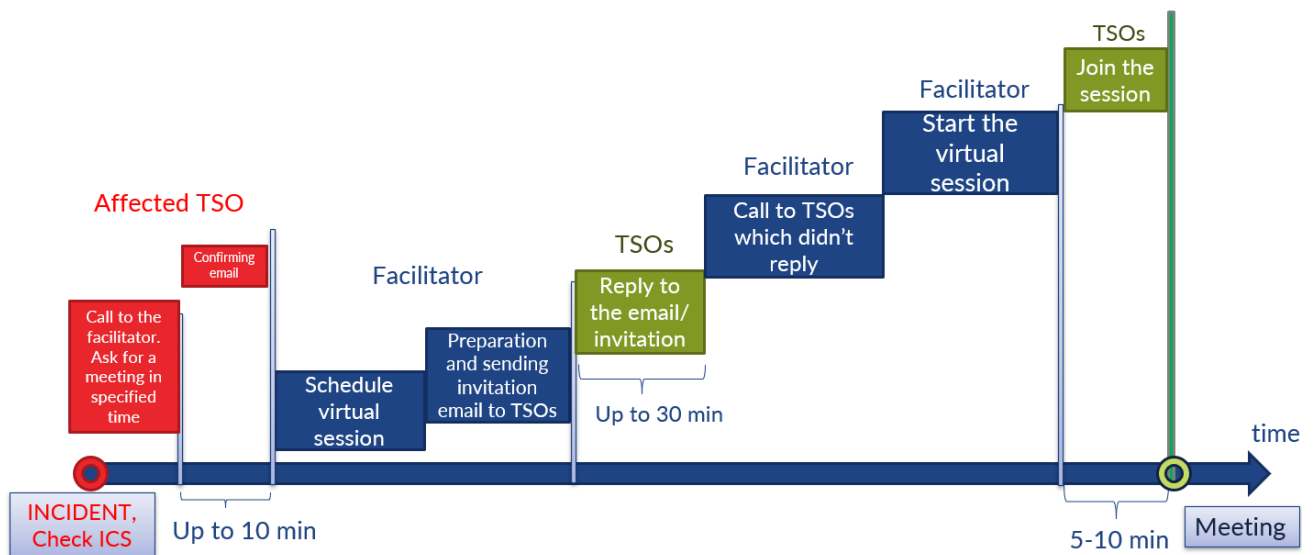
Annex 2. The ReCo System for Gas process flowchart

ReCo Team Europe Meeting. High Level Setup



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ReCo Team Meeting. High-level setup

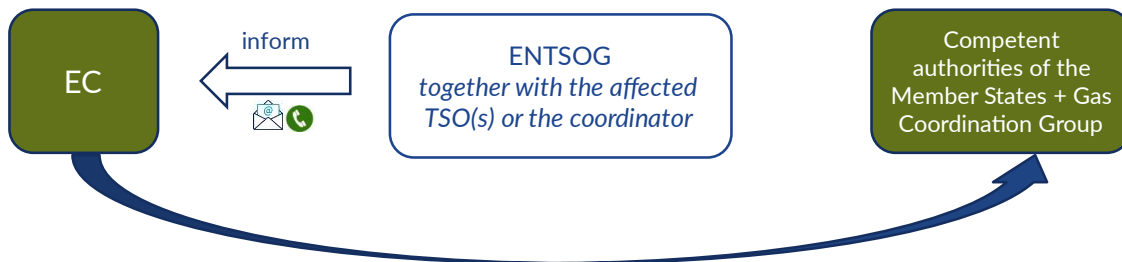


Communication with the EC in case of incidents



ReCo Team Europe meeting

After the meeting



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Communication with ACER in case in case Regional or Union emergency



ReCo Team Europe meeting

After the meeting



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Functioning of the ReCo System for Gas



- TSOs follow the agreed guidelines and incident classification scale (ICS), which foresee
 - Informing ReCo Team Europe TSOs about incidents via e-mail
 - Calling for a joint ReCo Team Europe virtual meeting

- ReCo Team Europe Facilitator
 - Fixed telephone number and e-mail
 - 24/7 reachability
 - Teleconference application
 - Getting the ReCo Team members together for a virtual meeting

- At each meeting one TSO or ENTSOG is given the role of a coordinator
- Communication with the European Commission (EC), Gas Coordination Group (GCG) and ACER

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