



RENEWED EU STRATEGY FOR THE TANK STORAGE SECTOR

Almost every industry has a professional representative office in Brussels, to represent sectoral interests with the European Commission, European Parliament, national delegations based in Brussels and other European bodies.

The purpose is similar to an embassy. It is the contact point for Brussels based officials and politicians to learn about a sector; it provides lobbying and advocacy services to the members by engaging with EU and international institutions and bodies; it provides a forum for exchanging good practices and sharing information on latest trends with peers from other countries; and it has a think tank capability, developing research and best practices. FETSA, the Federation of European Tank Storage Associations fulfils these roles and even more for the tank storage (bulk liquid storage) sector.

FETSA represents European national tank storage associations and independent private storage companies operating bulk liquid storage terminals. In total, FETSA represent more than 140 companies operating 781 terminals across Europe.

The main stakeholder for FETSA is the EU. This is because a substantial number of national rules and regulations are developed in Brussels and national policies impacting the tank storage sector often are derived from EU law and policy. The midstream sector has to engage with the EU to influence its future regulatory and policy landscape as well as future industry standards and even global policy.

It is vitally important to have strong engagement with counterparts in the European Commission, Parliament and Council now more than ever. Reflecting citizens' concerns, the new European Commission President, commissioners and MEPs are focused on net zero emissions and decarbonisation. This has major implications for the future of the tank storage sector.

ENERGY TRANSITION

This energy transition, and managing it, is a priority topic for the new Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, and it is also a top priority for the tank storage sector.

The transition will be a difficult task to manage for all concerned, be it regulators or the private sector. Many different interest groups are lobbying hard on this issue for their own purposes. One of the objectives for FETSA's development is to make sure that the association's specific voice is heard above the background noise, on this topic as well as others. To do this, we have to build relations with our counterparts in the EU institutions; we have to coordinate with other parts of the supply chain that share our interests; and we need to collect evidence from our network of national associations and companies to ensure our arguments are robust and credible.

An important area of FETSA's work in Brussels is advocacy. Not many EU decision makers realise that FETSA terminals provide an essential interface between sea, road, rail, inland waterway and pipeline logistics. Officials may not understand that these assets are critical components in the supply chain for liquid energy sources, chemicals, animal feeds and fats, oils and other substances for human consumption.

In fact, many of the association's counterparts in Brussels do not realise that many strategic terminals are even designated as critical national infrastructure by the EU and national governments due to their importance in providing energy to the transport, aviation and defence markets.

In FETSA, it is important to make sure that the association's economic importance is understood by policy makers and that its role in a diverse range of supply chains is also correctly perceived. This is important so that technical rules e.g. on customs, VAT etc. are adapted to the industry's specificities (another of our work streams).

An understanding of the importance of the tank storage sector is also important in the wider energy transition context so that existing infrastructure is maintained during an uncertain investment climate and future and climate neutral fuel types can utilise existing infrastructure. Moreover, FETSA is working in Brussels to ensure public funding also focusses on financing new storage infrastructure e.g. for hydrogen or hydrogen-based liquids, to ensure our sector can rapidly meet potential, future demand.

Work is intensifying in Brussels and FETSA is ready to support the EU and national governments in the energy transition by ensuring that existing infrastructure can be used for both traditional and alternative, sustainable fuel sources; by adapting infrastructure to accommodate alternative liquids and gases such as e-fuels; by maintaining and developing supply chain efficiency; and by storing reserves for energy resilience.

FETSA is a bridge between the sector, its companies, its national associations and the EU. The traffic can move both ways. FETSA's messages influence EU policy makers and politicians and EU developments are explained to the FETSA members.

In the coming months, FETSA will have finalised a new strategy to make the association more influential at EU level. Its work is always targeted to contribute to the prosperity of the tank storage sector and, at the same time, to support a successful and sustainable energy transition. The association wants to be leaders on the policy issues that are critical for the sector and its work is always linked to the commercial needs of tank storage companies i.e. to have a stable investment environment and to maintain their competitiveness.

The association does this by campaigning for the sector; explaining the role and importance of the sector; acting as an early warning system to alert the sector to upcoming issues; by explaining how and why important European issues can impact on the sector; and finally by enabling companies and associations throughout Europe to meet and exchange on critical issues such as safety and environment related best practices.

FETSA exists for the benefit of the tank storage sector.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This article was written by Ravi Bhatiani, executive director at FETSA. rb@fetsa.eu