

## WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

### Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation

#### Hearing: "A Pathway to European Energy Security"

February 4, 2026

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Can the United States provide reliable, long-term energy security to our European allies? The answer, supported by ten years of liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments, comprehensive contract data analysis, and this administration's active promotion of USLNG exports is unequivocal: **Yes.**

Recent narratives suggesting that European reliance on USLNG creates a new "dependency" comparable to Europe's pre-2022 reliance on Russian pipeline gas represent either fundamental misunderstanding of energy markets or deliberate disinformation likely originating from the gilded halls of the Kremlin but clearly amplified through the Karaoke equipment of the global anti-fossil fuel movement. These claims collapse under scrutiny.

Europe has not traded one dependency for another. It has traded vulnerability to an adversarial petrostate for commercial relationships with a tried-and-true ally operating in competitive global markets. It exchanged pipeline lock-in for globally flexible LNG cargoes, opaque political leverage for transparent contractual obligations, and Kremlin caprice for the American rule of law.

According to our analysis, as of February 2026, USLNG export project sponsors have signed 133 binding contracts totaling 232.1 million tons per annum (mtpa) with 69 companies from 26 nations. Europe represents 40.0% of total USLNG contracted volume at 92.94 mtpa—the largest regional commitment worldwide. Energy firms from 11 European nations participate in the USLNG market, demonstrating genuine diversification. The 2022 contractual surge of 65.48 mtpa reflects Europe's market-driven response to the energy crisis.

Moreover, this administration has actively and consistently promoted expanded USLNG exports, making supply interruption concerns not merely unfounded but logically absurd.

## **SOURCE OF THE "DEPENDENCY" NARRATIVE**

The claim that USLNG creates a new "dependency" serves two constituencies with converging interests. First, Moscow. Russia lost its European gas leverage in 2022 when it weaponized energy supplies. The Kremlin has every incentive to sow doubt about USLNG reliability. Second, anti-fossil fuel organizations like the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis oppose further LNG trade on ideological grounds. Their analyses warning of "USLNG dependency" invariably conclude that Europe should accelerate renewable deployment instead.

When Kremlin interests and environmental NGOs reach identical conclusions, this subcommittee (and everyone else) should exercise appropriate skepticism.

I witnessed this dynamic at the Atlantic Council's Global Energy Forum in Washington in June 2025. At a small dinner under Chatham House Rule, a "former" Nord Stream II supporter suggested that "for 50 years Europe saw Russia as a reliable natural gas supplier, and now there is growing concern that Europe may be headed towards over reliance on LNG from the United States."

A senior U.S. industry leader responded forcefully: "There are at least ten million ways in which the United States of America differs from Russia, starting with the fact that the U.S. natural gas industry is not comprised of a single, monopolistic company that is a weaponized arm of the state."

He continued: "There are a dozen USLNG projects operating or under construction and five or six others near final investment decision. Unlike Russia, the President cannot tell any of those companies what to do or where to send their cargoes. USLNG volumes are sold under long-term contracts. Several dozen companies worldwide—from Japan, Korea, India, Europe, the Middle East, and Australia—decide where U.S. gas will be delivered. Other than to rogue states like Iran and North Korea, there are no U.S. government restrictions on delivery destinations. None."

This exchange captures the fundamental distinction that environmental NGOs deliberately obscure: commercial relationships with private companies operating under binding contracts are categorically different from state-controlled monopoly leverage.

## **THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S VIEW**

The European Commission has directly addressed these false equivalency claims. On February 2, 2026—just two days ago—the Commission's spokesperson stated unequivocally: "When 'dependency' or 'replacing one dependency with another' is being discussed, EU imports from the United States—U.S. LNG—cannot be compared to the pre-war dependency we had with Russia."

The spokesperson explained why: "Before the war started, Russia supplied around 45% of our gas. This was done via dedicated pipelines that were controlled by—belonged to—a single state-owned company that was subject to government control." She continued: "Russia has frequently and repeatedly weaponized energy supplies over the past decade."

In contrast, she noted: "Unlike pipelines, LNG is a global and liquid market. It offers more diversification options for the European Union." She emphasized that "with LNG, per definition, the

market is very liquid. The market is global and it's very, very flexible. So this makes our reliance on LNG much more manageable compared to our reliance on pipeline imports."

The EU Commission recognizes what critics deliberately ignore: structural differences between pipeline monopoly and LNG market flexibility make these situations fundamentally incomparable.

## **THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S ACTIVE PROMOTION OF USLNG EXPORTS**

No let me turn to the ludicrous suggestion that this administration might limit USLNG exports. Consider these facts:

The U.S.-EU Trade Agreement concluded in July 2025 explicitly included energy cooperation—specifically USLNG—as a cornerstone element. The framework established commitments for the EU to purchase \$750 billion in U.S. energy over three years, encompassing LNG, nuclear fuel and technology, energy infrastructure services, carbon capture systems, and advanced reactors. Within weeks, EU companies signed over \$35 billion in long-term U.S. energy contracts, including Eni's new 20-year commitment (\$32 billion) and SEFE's expanded agreement. Financial markets validated the approach immediately—U.S. energy stocks surged on news of the agreement.

At the Gastech conference in Milan in September 2025, Secretary of the Interior and National Energy Dominance Council (NEDC) Chair Doug Burgum urged Europeans to increase USLNG purchases: "Peace is achieved around the world by selling our energy to our friends and allies who don't have to buy from our adversaries."

In November 2025, U.S. and EU officials convened in Athens for the sixth Partnership for Transatlantic Energy Cooperation (P-TEC) meeting, advancing frameworks for expanded LNG cooperation and completion of the "Vertical Corridor" to deliver U.S. natural gas to Ukraine and Moldova through Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania. Secretary Burgum, Energy Secretary Chris Wright, and other senior U.S. officials participated actively.

The promotion continues. On February 24, 2026, the NEDC will host a Vertical Corridor meeting in Washington. On March 14-15, 2026, USTDA, DOE, Interior, EPA, and NEDC will co-host the inaugural Indo-Pacific Energy Security Ministerial and Business meeting in Tokyo to "advance trusted partnerships, unlock investment, and strengthen resilient, secure energy supply chains across the Indo-Pacific region." Additional high-level EU-U.S. LNG meetings are slated for Washington, Pittsburgh, and Houston within the next two months.

An administration that negotiates trade agreements promoting USLNG exports, sends Cabinet secretaries to international conferences urging Europeans to buy American LNG, participates in on-the-record energy partnership meetings, and organizes multiple upcoming conferences to expand LNG markets is simultaneously planning to restrict those exports? The narrative collapses under its own logical incoherence.

## **STRUCTURAL PROTECTIONS: WHY AMERICA IS NOT RUSSIA**

Gazprom is a state-controlled monopoly answerable to the Kremlin. Putin could order supply cuts with no commercial consequences, shareholder lawsuits, contract liability, or domestic opposition. USLNG companies are private entities with binding contracts, shareholders, and legal obligations. They export LNG to maximize profits, not advance presidential foreign policy. The President cannot order ExxonMobil, Cheniere Energy, or ConocoPhillips to stop deliveries without congressional authorization, contract violations, rock-solid legal exposure, diplomatic consequences, and political backlash from energy-producing and exporting states.

USLNG exports are governed by the Natural Gas Act, requiring DOE "public interest determinations" with presumptive approval. FERC handles facility siting under different mandates. Contracts are governed by commercial law and international arbitration. Constitutional constraints limit executive authority. Gazprom's decisions were Kremlin decisions, implemented through state control.

Europe's Russian gas dependency was built on pipeline infrastructure creating monopoly power. Once German and other interests invested billions in Nord Stream, they had limited alternatives. USLNG operates differently. European buyers purchase globally flexible cargoes that can redirect to Asia, Latin America, or any market with regasification capacity. This provides price discovery and prevents monopoly pricing. EU nations can choose spot purchases or long-term contracts, build storage, use hedges, and play suppliers against each other. The United States, Qatar, Australia, and others compete for European business. These are tools of market participants, not hostages.

USLNG exports have achieved institutional entrenchment across administrations. Obama approved Sabine Pass in 2011-2012, establishing the modern framework. Trump in his first term issued policy statements reiterating export authorization sanctity. Even Biden, despite environmental pressure and a year-long authorization "pause," explicitly protected existing projects and those under construction. The second Trump administration actively promotes export expansion. This durability reflects the deep political, economic, and strategic foundations of USLNG exports.

## **THE DATA: EUROPE'S STRATEGIC COMMITMENT TO USLNG**

Contract data demonstrates Europe's substantial, long-term commitments reflecting commercial confidence in American reliability.

As of February 2026, there are 133 contracts representing 232.10 mtpa across 69 companies from 26 countries. Average contract duration is 15-20 years. European commitments total 92.94 mtpa (40.0% of global volume)—the largest regional commitment worldwide. Major purchasers include TotalEnergies (France, 15.10 mtpa), Shell (U.K., 14.80 mtpa), PKN Orlen (Poland, 7.95 mtpa), BP (U.K., 6.40 mtpa), and Naturgy (Spain, 6.00 mtpa).

USLNG buyers span Iberia to Scandinavia to Central Europe: Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The 2022 signing surge of 65.48 mtpa (28.2% of total volume, 38 contracts) represents Europe's market-driven

response to crisis. Companies voluntarily entered 15-20 year contracts, demonstrating confidence. (Nobody forces companies to sign 20-year contracts with unreliable suppliers.)

## **EU-U.S. REGULATORY COOPERATION: ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP**

Recent EU-U.S. cooperation on the EU Methane Regulation (EUMR) provides compelling evidence that Europe views USLNG as long-term strategic partnership, not dependency to escape.

In December 2025, the European Commission identified two "practical pathways" for importers of USLNG to demonstrate EUMR compliance. This represents months of cooperation between the Commission, DOE, and industry stakeholders, including LNG Allies.

One pathway involves a "national book-and-claim" certified low-emissions credit trading system. The system shifts all costs and paperwork to EU buyers—where they belong, since EU governments created the regulation. This will not cost USLNG exporters or U.S. producers anything. An EU genuinely concerned about dependency would not invest months creating compliance pathways making American LNG imports easier and cheaper for U.S. suppliers.

The Commission is harmonizing implementation across all EU-27 member states for consistent treatment. This requires substantial resources and political capital—investments sensible only for long-term relationships. The framework ensures penalties don't apply when energy security is considered. The Commission recognizes that energy security, which USLNG provides, takes precedence over rigid regulatory enforcement. This is not customer behavior planning to diversify away from a supplier.

The cooperation demonstrates that both sides view the relationship as durable and strategic. The EU Commission invests significant resources facilitating USLNG compliance rather than creating import barriers. The U.S. government works cooperatively with European counterparts on regulatory alignment. Industry stakeholders on both sides collaborate on practical implementation. EU member states accept harmonized approaches that facilitate rather than restrict USLNG imports. This is how strategic partnerships are maintained, not how dependencies are managed.

## **CONCLUSION**

Europe's energy security has improved dramatically since 2022 despite recent unfounded anxiety. Total gas consumption has been reduced over 20% through efficiency and fuel switching (and, quite sadly, through destruction of demand). European LNG regasification capacity has been built out providing access to global markets. Supply sources have been diversified across multiple regions and delivery routes. Europe has demonstrated the ability to function without Russian gas during winter heating seasons. These are achievements, not vulnerabilities.

The suggestion that mutually beneficial relationships between American LNG sellers and European gas buyers create risks comparable to Russian gas dependency insults the memory of Ukraine's suffering over the past four years—suffering that continues to this very bitter winter day. Russia weaponizes energy to freeze civilians and extract political concessions. American companies sell

LNG to make money under binding contracts governed by law. We are proud that our energy provides heat, light, and hope for European families.

These are not equivalent situations. America is not Russia. Commercial contracts are not Kremlin edicts. NATO allies are not adversarial petrostates. Members of this subcommittee know the difference and must continue to ensure that energy security policy reflects these fundamental distinctions.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Fred H. Hutchison

The USLNG Association (LNG Allies)

February 3, 2026

**Attachment: USLNG Contract Holders Analysis (February 2, 2026)**

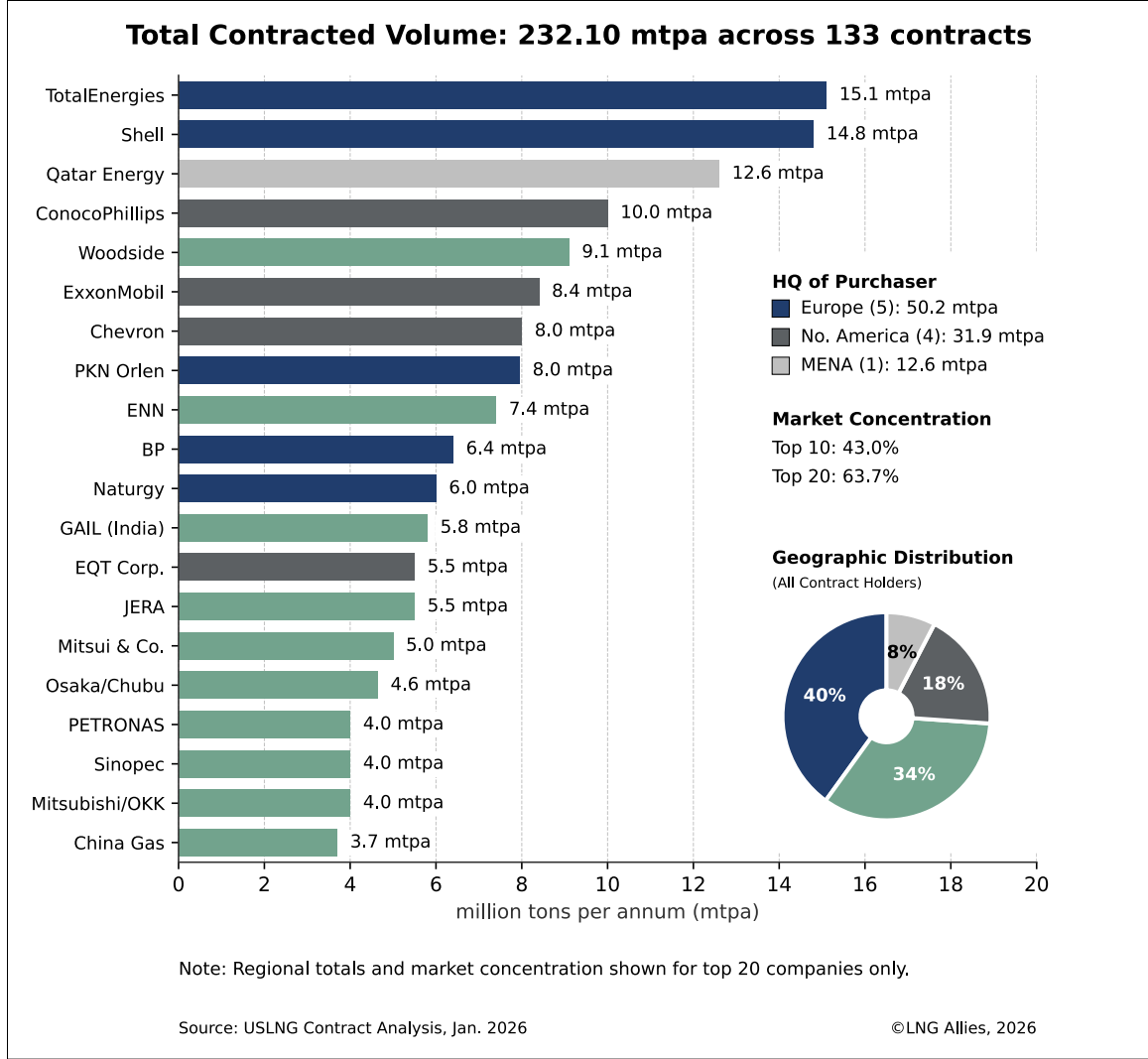
**Attachment: EU Commission Transcript (February 2, 2026)**

# USLNG CONTRACT HOLDERS ANALYSIS

Updated: February 2, 2026

- Total Contracted Volume:** 232.10 million tons per annum (mtpa)
- Total Number of Contracts:** 133
- Total Number of Individual Companies:** 69
- Total Number of Countries Represented:** 26
- Average Contract Size:** 1.75 mtpa
- Average Volume per Company:** 3.36 mtpa

## USLNG Contract Holders: Top 20 Purchasers



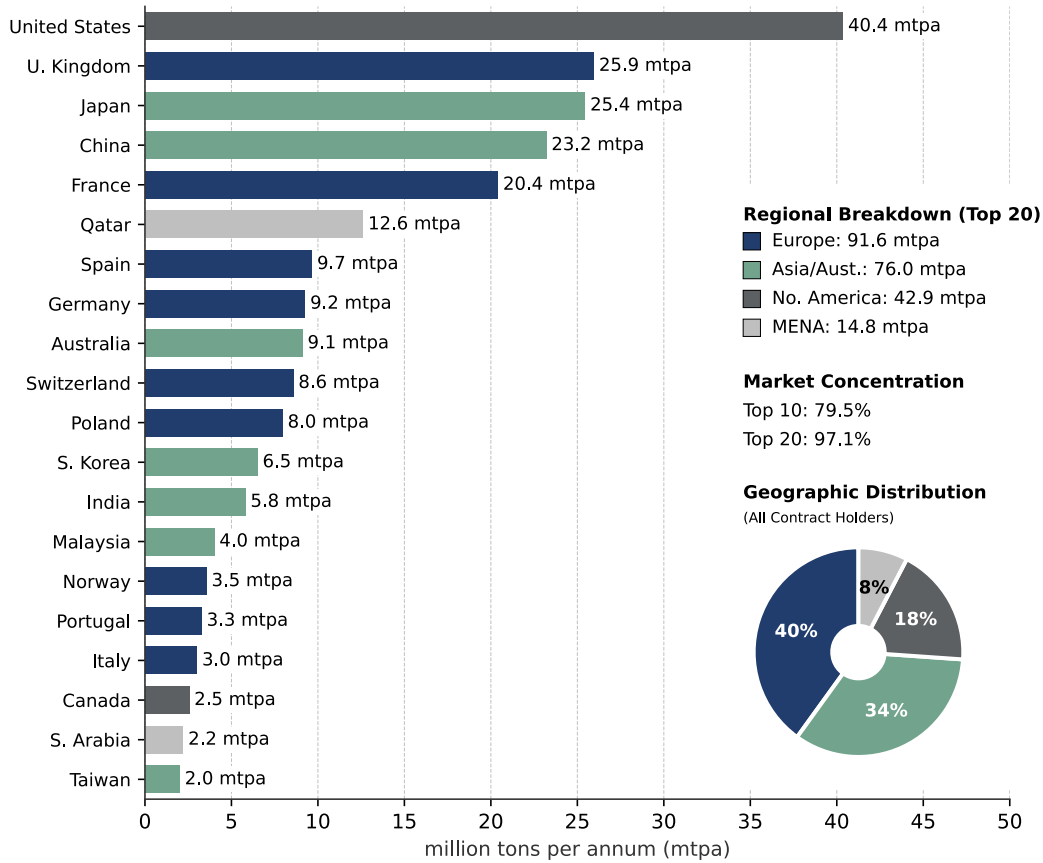
**Table 1: Individual Companies Ranked by Total Contract Volume**

Rank	Company	Country	Volume (mtpa)	Contracts	Share (%)
1	TotalEnergies	France	15.10	5	6.5
2	Shell	United Kingdom	14.80	6	6.4
3	Qatar Energy	Qatar	12.60	1	5.4
4	ConocoPhillips	United States	10.00	3	4.3
5	Woodside Energy	Australia	9.10	2	3.9
6	ExxonMobil	United States	8.40	4	3.6
7	Chevron	United States	8.00	7	3.4
8	PKN Orlen	Poland	7.95	4	3.4
9	ENN	China	7.40	4	3.2
10	BP	United Kingdom	6.40	2	2.8
11	Naturgy	Spain	6.00	3	2.6
12	GAIL (India) Ltd.	India	5.80	2	2.5
13	EQT Corp.	United States	5.50	3	2.4
14	JERA	Japan	5.50	4	2.4
15	Mitsui & Co.	Japan	5.00	2	2.2
16	Osaka Gas/Chubu Elec.	Japan	4.64	1	2.0
17	PETRONAS	Malaysia	4.00	4	1.7
18	Sinopec	China	4.00	1	1.7
19	Mitsubishi / OKK	Japan	4.00	1	1.7
20	China Gas	China	3.70	4	1.6
21	Equinor	Norway	3.55	2	1.5
22	ENGIE	France	3.53	3	1.5
23	Korea Gas (KOGAS)	South Korea	3.50	1	1.5
24	Gunvor	Switzerland	3.50	4	1.5
25	EOG Resources	United States	3.40	2	1.5
26	RWE	Germany	3.25	2	1.4
27	Petro China	China	3.00	1	1.3
28	SEFE	Germany	3.00	1	1.3
29	Glencore	Switzerland	2.80	2	1.2
30	Centrica	United Kingdom	2.75	2	1.2
31	SK E&S	South Korea	2.60	2	1.1
32	Galp	Portugal	2.50	3	1.1
33	Sumitomo / Tokyo Gas	Japan	2.30	1	1.0
34	Endesa Generación	Spain	2.25	1	1.0
35	Aramco	Saudi Arabia	2.20	2	0.9
36	CNOOC	China	2.00	1	0.9
37	New Fortress Energy	United States	2.00	2	0.9
38	Eni	Italy	2.00	1	0.9
39	CPC Corp.	Taiwan	2.00	1	0.9
40	EnBW	Germany	2.00	2	0.9
41	ADNOC	UAE	1.90	1	0.8
42	Électricité de France	France	1.77	2	0.8

Rank	Company	Country	Volume (mtpa)	Contracts	Share (%)
43	ARC Resources	Canada	1.70	2	0.7
44	PT Pertamina	Indonesia	1.52	2	0.7
45	Williams	United States	1.50	1	0.6
46	INEOS	United Kingdom	1.40	1	0.6
47	Vitol	Switzerland	1.27	2	0.5
48	Foran Energy Group	China	1.20	2	0.5
49	Repsol	Spain	1.00	1	0.4
50	Trafigura	Switzerland	1.00	1	0.4
51	Edison	Italy	1.00	1	0.4
52	Guangdong Energy	China	1.00	1	0.4
53	Itochu	Japan	1.00	1	0.4
54	Uniper	Germany	1.00	1	0.4
55	INPEX	Japan	1.00	1	0.4
56	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	1.00	1	0.4
57	Tokyo Gas	Japan	1.00	1	0.4
58	Kyushu Electric	Japan	1.00	1	0.4
59	PTT Global LNG	Thailand	1.00	1	0.4
60	Sinochem Group	China	0.90	1	0.4
61	Apache	United States	0.85	1	0.4
62	Tourmaline Oil Corp.	Canada	0.85	1	0.4
63	OMV	Austria	0.85	1	0.4
64	Energias de Portugal	Portugal	0.77	1	0.3
65	Excelerate Energy	United States	0.70	1	0.3
66	Hartree Partners	United Kingdom	0.60	1	0.3
67	Atlantic-See	Greece	0.50	1	0.2
68	KOSPO	South Korea	0.40	1	0.2
69	Iberdrola	Spain	0.40	1	0.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>ALL COUNTRIES</b>		<b>232.10</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100.0</b>

# USLNG Contract Holders: Top 20 Countries

**Total Contracted Volume: 232.10 mtpa across 133 contracts**



Note: Regional totals and market concentration shown for top 20 companies only.

Source: USLNG Contract Analysis, Jan. 2026

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**Table 2: Country Breakdown by Total Contract Volume**

Rank	Country	Volume (mtpa)	Companies	Share (%)
1	United States	40.35	9	17.4
2	United Kingdom	25.95	5	11.2
3	Japan	25.44	9	11.0
4	China	23.20	8	10.0
5	France	20.40	3	8.8
6	Qatar	12.60	1	5.4
7	Spain	9.65	4	4.2
8	Germany	9.25	4	4.0
9	Australia	9.10	1	3.9
10	Switzerland	8.57	4	3.7
11	Poland	7.95	1	3.4
12	South Korea	6.50	3	2.8
13	India	5.80	1	2.5

Rank	Country	Volume (mtpa)	Companies	Share (%)
14	Malaysia	4.00	1	1.7
15	Norway	3.55	1	1.5
16	Portugal	3.27	2	1.4
17	Italy	3.00	2	1.3
18	Canada	2.55	2	1.1
19	Saudi Arabia	2.20	1	0.9
20	Taiwan	2.00	1	0.9
21	UAE	1.90	1	0.8
22	Indonesia	1.52	1	0.7
23	Thailand	1.00	1	0.4
24	Undisclosed	1.00	1	0.4
25	Austria	0.85	1	0.4
26	Greece	0.50	1	0.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>ALL COUNTRIES</b>	<b>232.10</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3: Contract Signing Activity by Year**

Year	Contracts	Volume (mtpa)	Share (%)
2011	3	11.20	4.8
2012	2	8.14	3.5
2013	11	31.65	13.6
2014	8	8.06	3.5
2017	1	1.00	0.4
2018	11	19.72	8.5
2019	4	6.25	2.7
2020	1	1.00	0.4
2021	8	10.65	4.6
2022	38	65.48	28.2
2023	14	19.60	8.4
2024	6	15.15	6.5
2025	24	32.20	13.9
2026	2	2.00	0.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>232.10</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 4: Export Project Companies Ranked by Total Contract Volume**

Rank	Company	Volume (mtpa)	Contracts	Share (%)
1	Cheniere Energy	57.33	41	24.7
2	Venture Global	44.70	32	19.3
3	Sempra Infrastructure	30.03	11	12.9
4	NextDecade	25.25	15	10.9
5	Qatar Energy & ExxonMobil	18.00	2	7.8
6	Freeport LNG	13.44	4	5.8
7	Energy Transfer	12.90	9	5.6
8	Woodside Marketing	8.25	1	3.6

Rank	Company	Volume (mtpa)	Contracts	Share (%)
9	Kimmeridge	5.00	4	2.2
10	Berkshire Hathaway	4.60	2	2.0
11	Woodside Energy	3.50	3	1.5
12	Glenfarne Group	3.50	3	1.5
13	Delfin LNG	3.10	5	1.3
14	Kinder Morgan	2.50	1	1.1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>232.10</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Key Insights

### Contract Concentration

- Top 10 companies 43.0% (99.75 mtpa).
- Top 20 companies 63.7% (147.89 mtpa).
- Average contract 1.75 mtpa; range 0.40-15.10 mtpa.
- Moderate concentration: 69 purchasers, 133 contracts.

### Contract Signing Trends

- 2022 peak year for contract volume with 65.48 mtpa (28.2% of total).
- 2022 peak year for contract count with 38 contracts (28.6% of total).
- 2022 surge accounts for nearly one-third of total volume.
- 2022-2025 period: 132.43 mtpa (57.1%).
- 2025 robust activity with 24 contracts totaling 32.20 mtpa.

### Geographic Distribution

- Europe leads with 92.94 mtpa (40.0% of total volume) across major importing nations.
- Asia-Pacific 78.56 mtpa (33.8%); China, Japan, South Korea.
- North America 42.90 mtpa (18.5%), primarily United States-based purchasers.
- Middle East entities 16.70 mtpa (7.2%), including significant stakes in export projects.
- 26 countries represented, demonstrating global reach of USLNG exports.

### Export Project Market Leaders

- Cheniere Energy first with 57.33 mtpa (24.7% of market).
- Venture Global second with 44.70 mtpa (19.3% of market).
- Sempra Infrastructure third with 30.03 mtpa (12.9% of market).
- NextDecade fourth with 25.25 mtpa (10.9% of market).
- Qatar Energy & ExxonMobil fifth with 18.00 mtpa (7.8% of market).
- Top Five Companies control 75.5% of total volume.

### Market Dynamics

- Oil majors represent significant market participation through both direct offtake contracts and equity stakes in export projects.
- European utilities demonstrate strong long-term commitment to USLNG supply security with major volume commitments.
- Asian utilities anchor USLNG projects with substantial 20-year contracts supporting project financing.
- Trading companies and portfolio players provide market liquidity with flexible delivery terms and shorter-duration agreements.
- Independent producers participate through indexed pricing mechanisms tied to commodity benchmarks rather than traditional oil-linked pricing.

- Joint ventures combine project ownership with long-term offtake agreements, demonstrating integrated business models across value chain.

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**Methodology:** Analysis based on publicly disclosed LNG sale and purchase agreements for USLNG export projects. Volumes represent total contracted capacity in million tons per annum (mtpa). All tables generated using programmatic sorting to ensure accuracy.

**Note:** This analysis includes 133 contracts across 69 unique purchasing companies from 26 countries. Data reflects major contracts and may not include all minor or undisclosed agreements.

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**TETYANA VYSOTSKA EUROPEAN PRAVDA - UKRAINE:** I've got two questions, both on gas. The first is on the REPowerEU regulation, which I expect is published today in the Official Journal. What are the next steps? What is the timeline for this regulation? And as Slovakia and Hungary still think that the regulation was adopted through, as they say, "legal fraud," and they want to go to the European Court of Justice—what is the European Commission doing to prevent those court hearings? Are you planning some meetings? What is the state of play for now? The second question is about American gas. Because recently, Commissioner Ribera said that Europe is becoming overly dependent on American natural gas exports. How can you comment on that statement?

**ANNA-KAISA ITKONEN EC SPOKESPERSON:** Okay, so let's cover all of the gas today.

**First, on the REPowerEU regulation...** That is indeed published in the Official Journal today... That means that from tomorrow, it starts to apply. And there's a very clear timeline, and I invite everybody to also check out our DG Energy website. They have put up a timeline there as well.

So basically, the dates for banning the short-term LNG contracts [from Russia], short-term pipeline gas contracts, as well as long-term contracts—meaning imports from Russia—the dates are all there. It is basically six weeks after the regulation enters into force. New short-term and long-term contracts will be prohibited, but all these timelines with the different dates are available online.

You mentioned the Slovakian and Hungarian legal challenge that they have filed. A member state can bring direct action against an EU institution such as the European Parliament or the Council to challenge an act that it considers unlawful. This has happened before. This would not be the first time. They are allowed to bring an action for annulment seeking the annulment of a measure—for instance, a regulation adopted by the institutions of the European Union.

This legal procedure before the Court of Justice of the European Union guarantees conformity of EU legislative acts, regulatory acts, and individual acts with the superior rules of the EU legal order. As privileged applicants, member states can do it without proving any interest on their side, simply in the interest of legality. The right to bring an action for annulment does not depend on their stance during the legislative proceedings. That means that a member state could have voted in favor of an act in the Council but later question its legality before the Court of Justice.

That is the process. This is not specifically applicable to this case. I understand that these are, for the time being, statements. But we will, of course, defend our proposal there.

**[On USLNG Dependency]...** Then on the United States—I want to be very clear. Without taking any position or commenting on the comments made by either College members or anyone else in the press on the dependencies of the EU buying LNG from the United States: We have a well-developed security of supply framework in place. It is based on diversification of suppliers, it is based on an integrated and interconnected EU energy market, and the deployment of homegrown clean energy.

We monitor very, very closely the supply, the global markets, and demand to avoid any over-reliance on any one supplier. Current figures that we have available to us do not point to any concerns regarding this. And importing more energy supplies from the United States is part of our strategy to phase out energy imports from Russia. The legislation literally enters into force tomorrow. We do this while we diversify energy sources, and we spread the risks. By doing this, we spread the risks globally. So it's one of our tools that we use to help mitigate supply risks.

We have built a very, very close energy relationship with the United States in 2022 when Russia started the war in Ukraine. The US has become an important source of gas imports into the European Union.

**There's one thing that I want to make very, very clear: When "dependency" or "replacing one dependency with another" is being discussed, EU imports from the United States—U.S. LNG—cannot be compared to the pre-war dependency we had with Russia.**

**The first point** is that before the war started, Russia supplied around 45% of our gas. This was done via dedicated pipelines that were controlled by—belonged to—a single state-owned company that was subject to government control.

**Second point:** Russia has frequently and repeatedly weaponized energy supplies over the past decade.

**Third point:** Unlike pipelines, LNG is a global and liquid market. It offers more diversification options for the European Union.

**The final point** is that the replacement of the lost volumes of Russian pipeline gas was a challenge. Why? Because we had to rely on limited pipeline import corridors. These are, per definition, physical infrastructure... [So if our companies say:] "I don't want to buy gas from Russia anymore, but where am I going to get it? Because this is the actual pipeline coming from point A to point B."

With LNG, per definition, the market is very liquid. The market is global and it's very, very flexible. So this makes our reliance on LNG much more manageable compared to our reliance on pipeline imports.

**So these aspects are very, very important to keep in mind when we have these discussions that we are replacing [one dependency with another].**