EU Commission warns members it will get tough on pollution

BRUSSELS (Reuters) – The European Commission said on Tuesday it would get tough on air quality and penalize members that breached EU rules on pollutants such as nitrogen oxide and particulate matter.

The Commission estimates that 400,000 people die every year as the result of airborne pollution, and targets introduced for 2005 and 2010 are still being exceeded in 23 of 28 EU countries.

After a meeting with the environment ministers of nine countries which face legal action because of air quality problems, including the bloc's largest economies Germany and France, EU Environment Commissioner Karmenu Vella said his

patience was running thin.

“The deadlines for meeting the legal obligations have long elapsed, and some say we have waited already too long, but we can delay no more, and I have made this very clear to ministers this morning,” Vella told a news conference.

He added that while countries had made some suggestions during the meeting, air quality standards would still be breached well beyond 2020 unless new measures were taken.

“In our exchange, there were some positive suggestions, but I have to say that at first sight, these were not substantial enough to change the bigger picture,” Vella said, adding members had until next week to improve on their proposals.

The EU Commission can take countries to Europe’s top court if they breach EU law. Poland as well as Bulgaria have already faced legal action over air quality issues.

A Trump Darling, Gas Exports, Set to Gain as Iran Deal Dies

Another darling of the Trump administration is poised to gain from the Iran deal breakup as oil surges: Natural gas exports.

With the move to curb Iran’s oil output encouraging more shale drilling, prices for natural gas produced alongside crude in West Texas could crater, falling to zero some days, according to Tudor Pickering Holt & Co. Already, the gas sold at West Texas’ Waha hub is down 51 percent for the year.
That’s bad for producers selling the fuel in the U.S., but good for companies that export it in tankers. As the market for liquefied natural gas grows in Asia, being able to source gas at its cheapest should give U.S. exports a leg up.
From Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross to the President himself, the White House has long sung the praises of increasing American LNG exports to help trim the trade deficit with Asian countries. Meanwhile, the Permian boom has filled pipelines to capacity, trapping gas in the region and making prices there the cheapest of any major U.S. shale play.

Rethink Gas for the Future EU

The degree to which Europe increases its use of gas will depend on the regulations put in place, on the efficiency of the emissions trading system and on the ability to prove the benefits brought by its use

This year Europe is facing a real winter, and many European households keep themselves warm with natural gas. Gas consumption in power generation is also growing and is a strong backup for the increasing levels of intermittent renewable energy. All told, more then a fifth of energy consumption in the EU comes from the use of gas. According to the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) gas demand in 2016 rose by 7 percent compared to 2015, reaching 4962 TWh (terawatt hours). Gas is a cost-effective part of Europe's energy mix, as the global market is well supplied and prices remain competitive with other fuels. The International Energy Agency (IEA) in its "Global Gas Security Review 2017" notes that natural gas is the cleanest and least carbon intensive fossil fuel and that it is expected to play a key role in the transition to a cleaner and more flexible energy system. In its World Energy Outlook's central scenario, the

IEA anticipates that natural gas will be the only fossil fuel that will maintain its share in the energy mix in the coming decades. The EU is an integral part of an increasingly globally interconnected gas market, but its own production, while significant, in 2016 supplied only 27 percent of demand, with a resultant huge reliance on both pipeline and LNG importation.

An efficient and liberalized interconnection

A clear asset of the European gas industry is its infrastructure network. Gas pipelines, distribution networks, LNG import terminals and underground storage provides necessary flexibility to the European energy system's variable seasonal demand. After 30 years of progressive liberalization an interconnected gas market has emerged and continues to develop in the EU. A good indicator of this is the fact that 75 percent of its gas is priced to within EUR1/MWh of the gas trading hub in the Netherlands. Also significant gas flow fluctuations are accommodated smoothly, and that results in market participants being flexible in their response to changing market fundamentals. Developments in the LNG market, such as new supply routes like the Southern Corridor, additional interconnections in the internal energy market and new focused legislation have fundamentally improved the EU's supply security. The fact that Russia has increased its market share to 34 percent doesn't create worries, because this increase is happening in the competitive environment created by the third energy market legislation package. New gas discoveries close to the EU's borders in the eastern part of Mediterranean and the final investment decisions made for the production from these sites provide an additional guarantee for a secure gas supply. Still the question is asked whether gas is a transition or destination fuel? Some voices are calling for an urgent phase-out of all fossil fuels, including natural gas.

On the positive side, while methane can leak if not properly

handled from well to wheel, natural gas is the fossil fuel that emits the least greenhouse gases—about half the CO2 produced by burning coal if properly produced, transported and used. Gas is also well placed to supply back-up to intermittent renewable electricity because of its flexibility and short start-up times. Because of these qualities gas is sometimes referred to as a renewables best friend.

Nevertheless, on the negative side, natural gas is a fossil fuel that emits substantial amounts of greenhouse gases—with the risk that venting, flaring and leaking can more than offset gas advantages. According to Climate Action Tracker, full lifecycle emissions, including the fuel chain and also the manufacturing of energy conversion technology, implies emissions in the range of 410-650 g CO2 eq/kwh for combined cycle plants as the most effective combustion plants.

How to look at this contradiction? From one side, the use of gas leads to good public acceptance, a vibrant internal market and extensive infrastructure, all of which could provide for Europe's future energy system. From the other side gas leads to greenhouse gas emissions that aren't consistent with the fight against climate change. Industry wants policymakers to avoid picking winners in the fuel mix and instead focus on setting frameworks for fuels to compete on the basis of the three objectives: sustainability, affordability and security of supply.

Renewables increasingly in focus

Today the EU is clearly focused on the promotion of renewable energy. In 2015, renewable energy contributed 17 percent to total final energy consumption. There are indications that the stated objective of 20 percent of renewable energy in the EU's energy mix will be reached by 2020. The European Commission in the "Clean energy for all Europeans" legislative package proposes an objective of 27 percent of the renewable energy share in total final energy consumption by 2030. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in February 2018

published a study “Renewable energy prospects for the European Union.” It concludes that the EU could double the share of the renewable energy in the energy mix from 17 percent in 2015 to 34 percent in 2030 with existing technologies if the right enabling framework is established. The study emphasizes that all EU countries have the cost-effective potential to use more renewables and that to achieve this goal a yearly investment of USD 73 billion would be required. But even using all this renewable potential a majority of the energy supply in 2030 will be provided by fossil fuels. IRENA’s model shows that gas will be the most used fossil fuel in 2030, but the presence of coal will still be strong.

The EU, which accounts for about 10 percent of global GHG emissions, is firmly committed to fighting climate change under an ambitious reading and implementation of the Paris Agreement. The target is to cut the EU’s emissions by 80-95 percent by 2050, and that change requires that the EU’s electricity, transport and heating and cooling sectors be carbon free by that time. Achieving such objectives while reusing part of the existing infrastructures and changing much, but not all, of the existing energy system suggests that the strategy has to mobilize all existing assets in the most efficient way possible.

Blue gold as the route to low carbon transition…
Gas offers substantial potential to replace higher carbon emitting fuels to work in partnership with renewables to satisfy energy demand and flexibility needs. Increased electrification will drive some change in the role of gas in the energy mix and increased coordination between power and gas will be required to ensure the most efficient interaction to deliver baseload and peak energy demand.

For a successful future of gas use it is important that carbon pricing and trading are put on the right track. The revision of the EU Emission Trading System (ETS) for the period after 2020 anticipates that sectors covered by the ETS have to

reduce their emissions by 43 percent compared to 2005. To this end the overall number of emission allowances will decline at an annual rate of 2.2 percent from 2021 onwards. This is a considerable increase from the existing phase, where an annual decline rate is 1.74 percent. We could expect a considerable increase in carbon prices, accelerating departure of coal use in the EU. Also, for gas as a fossil fuel carbon capture, usage and storage will be important. Demonstrating that all of this could be economically implemented and supported by an appropriate regulatory framework and favorable public opinion is crucial for the long-term future of natural gas use.

An interesting and promising avenue for the future of gas is decarbonization by increased use of renewable (green) gas. Renewable gas—biomethane and hydrogen notably—can be transported in existing gas pipes, even if with some adaptations. This would be at a fraction of the cost to carry the same amount of energy in the form of electrons, a ratio as much as one to ten in favor of gas. There is also clear political support for renewable gas. A good example is the recent announcement by France's President Emmanuel Macron to support green gas production with a fund of 100 million euros. Macron has also promised to remove some administrative bottlenecks related to this project. Actually France's energy transition law has a very ambitious target to provide 30 TWh from renewable gas in final energy consumption by 2030. Some experts believe that with appropriate support, the ambition could be even greater.

The EU has some experience in producing and using biomethane and hydrogen, but it is fair to say that there is a long way to go before renewable gas becomes a significant part of the energy mix, as volumes of biogas and biomethane have been very modest. In 2015 EU member countries—most notably the northwestern countries—produced biogas equivalent to less than 20 bcm of natural gas, thereby covering a mere 4 percent of total EU demand for gas. Only in Germany, which accounts for

half of total EU production, can this be considered a significant resource at this stage. For reasons of cost and technical constraints, only a small part of the gas thereby produced has been injected into the natural gas grid, most of it being used to produce heat and power locally. To understand how ambitious objectives could be in the years to come, one must consider a variety of bottlenecks in the production, transport, storage and application of renewable gas.

… And the near future is in biogas

To start with what already works, sufficient knowledge and techniques are presently available to produce biogas from landfills and sewage mostly using anaerobic digestion technology. CO2 needs to be removed from produced biogas and other purification must be carried out to get biomethane that meets the necessary standards to be injected into the natural gas grid. Such upgrading is, of course, costlier if applied to the relatively small volumes available from given farm or landfill. The gasification of woody biomass could produce higher volumes and help scale up installations, but so far such technology is still used only in pilot projects.

A lot of expectations are put on producing renewable gas from renewable electricity. The surplus of intermittent solar and/or wind energy could be stored in the form of hydrogen by running at least part of such surplus through electrolyzers. Today, such a surplus translates into negative prices in the wholesale power market. Doing so on a large scale is being considered in connection with large North Sea offshore-wind projects. Breakthroughs are still needed, however, in power-to-gas technologies, as electrolyzers able to work intermittently are presently costlier to build and operate. The significant capital costs also need to be spread over enough hours and days of operation to make the per gas-unit cost acceptable.

Renewable gas could be transported by trucks, dedicated pipelines and the EU-wide natural gas grid. It would be

especially convenient to use the existing grid for transporting renewable gas. Hydrogen can be injected into the natural gas grid, but it influences combustion behavior and materials integrity, which sets limits. Also, a higher flow rate is required to meet demand, because hydrogen's volumetric energy density is substantially lower than natural gas. As for biomethane, its injection is less constrained than that of hydrogen, provided that gas quality checks have been carried out. Today each EU country has established its own limitations, and regulations related to injections of hydrogen can differ widely even between neighboring coun-tries. Challenges also exist when one envisions the storage of significant volumes of renewable gas, notably hydrogen. Methanization can then appear as an attractive alternative, as hydrogen can also be turned into methane when combined with CO2, and this does away with technical constraints regarding transport and use. The challenge then arises as to which sources of CO2 would be acceptable and/or preferable to produce biomethane.

Biomethane could substitute natural gas in almost every sector and application. In industry, renewable gas could serve both as an energy source and a feedstock. It could be used for residential sector heating. By contrast, hydrogen today is used mostly in industry. A hydrogen-driven economy will therefore require a more pro-found transformation. In mobility the potential use of renewable gas is substantial with the exception of air transport. While some countries have developed very significant fleets of gas-powered vehicles, in many others use of renewable gas in transport is hampered by the lack of refueling infrastructure. The interesting breakthrough for the use of renewable gas could come with decreasing costs for hydrogen fuel cells vehicles.

The decarbonization of the gas sector could develop step by step. In this respect certificates, whether Guarantee of Origin (GoOs) certificates for green gases or CO2 certificates

used as offsets could play a role in facilitating acceptance and lowering costs. Altogether, it is correct to say that measures to promote renewable gas are relevant to all elements of the gas value chain.

A key role in Europe's energy economy

Gas—both natural and renewable— clearly has a place in Europe's future energy economy. The part of it in the EU's energy mix will depend on political frameworks put in place, from the efficiency of an improved emission trading system and from the gas industry demonstrating the benefits of gas use in decarbonized energy system. It is difficult to speculate about the part of gas in the EU's energy mix by 2050. We could try to extrapolate the results of the aforementioned study by IRENA: "Renewable energy prospects in the European Union." At the level of 27 percent in the EU's energy mix by 2030, fossil fuels will have a share of 62 percent. The part of natural gas from this share is roughly 40 percent and that would mean 25 percent for natural gas in the energy mix. Renewable gas could grow in the period to 2030 to 8-12 percent from the current 4 percent level of natural gas consumption. With the growth of the renewable component of the energy mix, fossil fuels will decline, but the part of natural gas in the fossil fuels is increasing. All this could bring an increased share of gas in the EU's energy mix.

Andris Piebalgs

Politician and diplomat, he is a councilor of the President of Latvia and he was European Commissioner for Energy (Barroso I) and for Development (Barroso II). He was also a minister of Finance and Public Education of Latvia, in addition Chairman of the commission for the budget and finances of Parliament. Finally, he was a Latvian ambassador at the EU.

How Does OPEC Affect the World?

Because of the role the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) plays in oil production levels and the influence it has over pricing, OPEC affects industries of all sorts throughout the world. OPEC has a strong role in the economy of the world, and because money is deeply entwined with power, OPEC also has influence in the arenas of politics and public policy.

Oil Production Levels

According to OPEC, one of its primary goals is to stabilize prices in international oil markets and eliminate harmful fluctuations. One of the tools at OPEC's disposal to assist in achieving that goal is to control of oil production levels within OPEC nations. To prevent wild fluctuations in oil prices, in theory, OPEC responds to increased and deceased world oil demand by adjusting production levels up or down. OPEC does this in order to avoid the rapid rise and fall of prices that can occur as changes in supply and demand affect the oil market.

Fuel Prices

While OPEC does not directly set fuel prices – nor has it directly set the price of crude oil since the middle of the

1980s – the organization still does influence fuel prices. That is because OPEC nations do work together to control oil production levels. If supply outstrips demand for oil, then the price of oil swings low. However, if demand outstrips supply, then the price will move upward, because people are willing to pay more to ensure that they have the oil they need.

Agriculture
Modern agriculture depends on oil to produce the food necessary to meet the nutritional needs of an ever-growing world population. Petroleum-based products used in agriculture range from the fuel necessary to run tractors and other farm equipment to the pesticides, fertilizers and other products for enhancing crop growth and production. Therefore, OPEC does affect global food production, indirectly influencing the costs associated with agriculture.

Cost of Goods
If it costs more to produce food, then that cost is going to be passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices. However, that is not the only way the price of oil affects the price of goods. Most goods must be moved from one place to another, and many goods are transported by means that rely on petroleum-based fuels. Higher oil prices lead to gas and diesel price increases – costs that will also be passed to the consumer when they purchase such goods. Because OPEC controls oil production levels, thus influencing the price of oil, OPEC also has an indirect effect on the pricing of goods throughout the world.

A new economy for the Mena region

By Rabah Arezki And Hafez Ghanem/Washington, DC
Countries in the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) possess

all of the ingredients they need to leapfrog into the digital future. They have large, well-educated youth populations that have already adopted new digital and mobile technologies on a wide scale. That combination has immense potential to drive future growth and job creation. But will it?

Public spending, the region's historical engine of development, has reached its limit. Because the public sector can no longer absorb the swelling ranks of university graduates, the Mena region now has one of the world's highest rates of youth unemployment.

The digital economy holds the promise of a new way forward, but it is still in its infancy, and young people face obstacles in putting technology to productive use. Although the Internet and hand-held devices are ubiquitous throughout the region, they are currently used for accessing social media, rather than for launching new enterprises.

But there are green shoots emerging. For example, the ride-hailing app Careem has grown from a start-up to a billion-dollar company, creating thousands of jobs in more than 90 cities in the Mena region and in Pakistan and Turkey. And new digital platforms are already connecting job seekers and employers, providing vocational training, and hosting start-up incubators. The challenge now is to create the conditions for these green shoots to grow and multiply.

The first, essential step is for Mena countries to become "learning societies," a phrase coined by the Nobel laureate economist Joseph E Stiglitz to describe countries in which shared knowledge leads to increased innovation. This, in turn, fosters development; and in the case of Mena, it could lead to the creation of a vibrant digital service economy.

To get there, education systems will need to change. For the region's young people, the curriculum is more often a source of frustration than advancement. The concept of a "skills premium" – the difference in wages between skilled and unskilled workers – dictates that higher educational

attainment should lead to higher compensation and more secure employment. Yet in the Mena region, the opposite has happened: university graduates are far more likely to be unemployed than are workers with only a basic education.

Two factors work against the region's young people. First, schools are still geared toward channelling graduates into large public sectors, which means they place less emphasis on fields such as mathematics and science. Second, bloated public sectors are crowding out the private sector, which would otherwise be a larger provider of high-skill, high-wage jobs.

Because the future economy will need technologically capable workers, curricula should be reoriented toward STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) subjects and away from the social studies that were long prized by public-sector employers.
Moreover, education systems should focus on encouraging greater openness to innovation and risk-taking – a significant departure from the attitudes reproduced under a system of public-sector patronage. Specifically, moving toward an innovative "learning society" will require students to hone their critical-thinking and managerial skills within collaborative work arrangements.

In addition to skills, the digital economy will also need technical infrastructure. Connectivity is a prerequisite for the delivery of new mobile and digital services in e-commerce, vocational training, healthcare, and finance, all of which could substantially increase overall welfare. Countries in the region thus need to focus on expanding broadband Internet access.

Education and Internet infrastructure geared toward productive use would provide the foundation of a new economy. But ensuring sustained growth in the region will require improving its financial systems as well. A digital economy depends on payment systems that are not just easy to use and widely

available, but also trustworthy. Developing effective peer-to-peer payments that require no financial intermediary like a bank will be crucial for ensuring that digital platforms for ride sharing, on-demand tasks, and other services can thrive.
Outside of the Gulf Co-operation Council countries, which have relatively advanced payment systems, the quality of financial services in the Mena region currently lags behind most of the rest of the world. Barring improvements to the financial system, and to the banking sector in particular, the potential of the region's vast human capital will not be realised.

Lastly, governments will need to develop an approach to regulation that encourages, rather than stifles, innovation. To be sure, ensuring confidence, especially in financial systems, is essential; but regulation must be balanced with policies to boost competition, so that start-ups can easily enter the market and test new ideas. There needs to be more space for more companies like Careem to emerge. Policymakers should look to Kenya's model of light but effective regulation, which has fostered the rapid growth of the peer-to-peer payment system M-Pesa.
Seizing the opportunities that the digital economy offers the Mena region will require a big push. Policymakers will need to work on multiple fronts, while making the best use of all available tools. The sooner they start, the greater the chance that today's young people can overcome economic exclusion and gain more opportunities to realise their – and their region's – full potential. – Project Syndicate

* Rabah Arezki is chief economist for the Middle East and North Africa Region at the World Bank. Hafez Ghanem is vice-president of the World Bank for the Middle East and North Africa.

Qatar: prima chiesa maronita del Golfo benedetta dal patriarca Raï

Nella sua visita pastorale a Doha, il porporato è stato ricevuto dall'emiro e dai vertici istituzionali locali. La nuova chiesa di San Charbel sarà pronta entro 18 mesi, dice padre Charbel Mhanna, rappresentante del patriarca maronita in Qatar

Giada Aquilino – Città del Vaticano

È dedicato a San Charbel il primo luogo di culto per la comunità maronita in Qatar e in tutto il Golfo Arabico: la futura chiesa sorgerà a Doha su un terreno offerto dalle autorità dell'emirato e la prima pietra è stata posta venerdì scorso dal patriarca maronita, il cardinale Bechara Raï. Nella sua visita pastorale di quattro giorni a Doha, appena conclusa, il porporato è stato ricevuto dall'emiro del Qatar, Tamim ben Hamad al-Thani, e dai vertici istituzionali locali.

Visita storica del patriarca Raï

Quella del porporato "è stata una visita storica", commenta padre Charbel Mhanna, rappresentante del patriarca maronita in Qatar e presidente del Comitato per la costruzione della chiesa di San Charbel, raggiunto telefonicamente a Doha, dove i libanesi residenti sono quasi 30 mila. La decisione di donare un "terreno di 10 mila metri quadri" su cui sorgerà l'edificio è un "gesto di apertura da parte dello Stato" – com'era successo anche per la chiesa cattolica di Nostra Signora del Rosario, già operativa da una decina d'anni – e anche "un segno di rispetto verso le Chiese orientali", osserva il sacerdote.

Momento di apertura

Il Qatar vive un momento particolare, con nuove vie per il commercio e indici di crescita positivi secondo il Fondo monetario internazionale, nonostante le tensioni con Arabia Saudita, Egitto, Bahrain ed Emirati Arabi Uniti che nei mesi scorsi avevano accusato Doha di sostenere gruppi terroristi. "Il Qatar oggi sta andando avanti verso un'apertura e uno sviluppo notevoli, nonostante i Paesi dell'area si siano dichiarati contro" Doha: non si può parlare di "guerra", sottolinea il religioso non volendo entrare in questioni politiche, ma di una comune "posizione contro il Qatar".

Entri 18 mesi pronto l’edificio di culto

Come auspicato dal patriarca Bechara Raï, “speriamo che San Charbel dia pace e tranquillità a tutti i Paesi arabi e in particolare al Qatar”, conclude il sacerdote maronita, annunciando che “entro 18 mesi saranno pronti l’edificio della chiesa e l’oratorio, mentre a seguire saranno costruiti i saloni, gli uffici, la cappella, la scuola e la residenza per i sacerdoti”.

بارودي: اتفاق تفاوضي حول البلوك 9 أو التحكيم نصر أكبر للبنان


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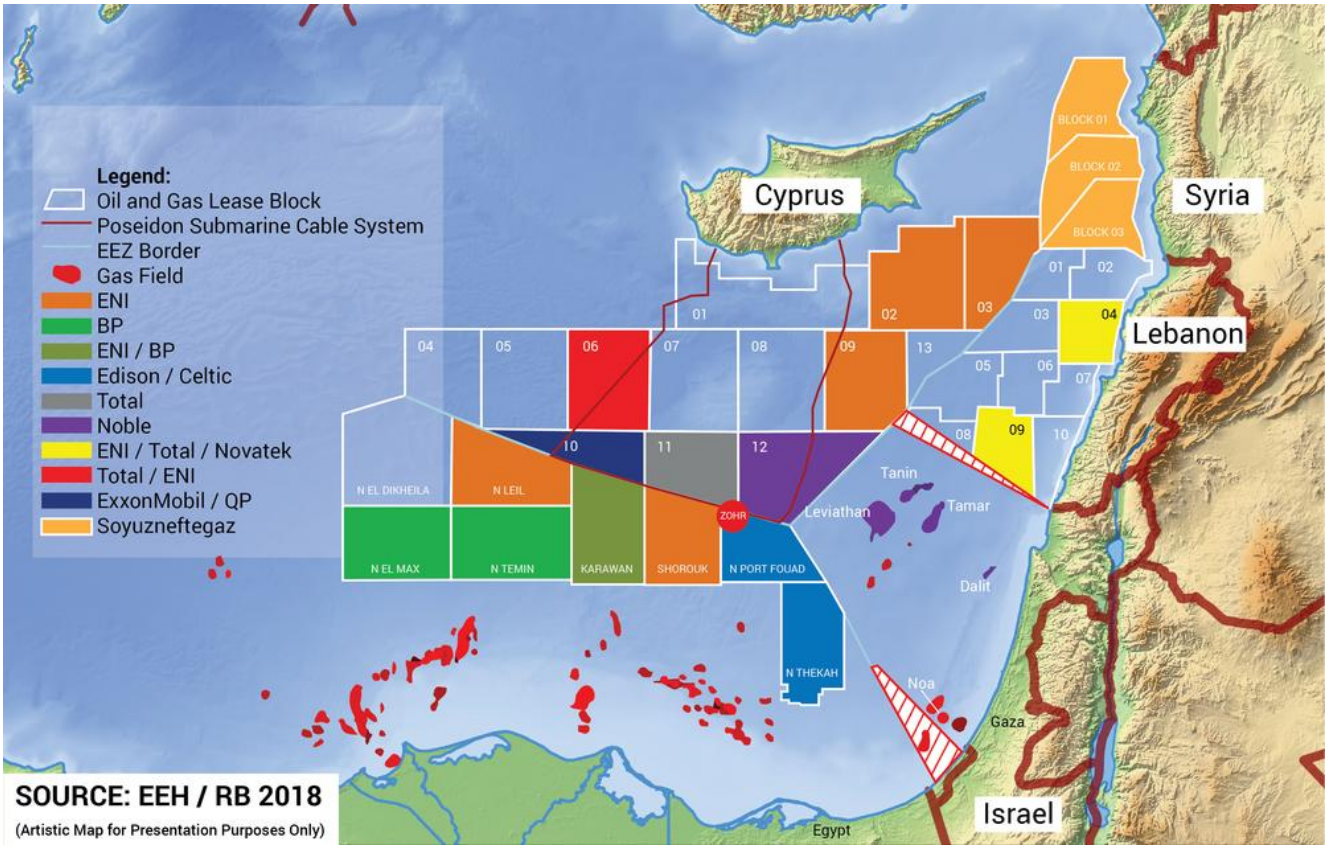


المركزية- اعتبر الخبير النفطي الدولي رودي بارودي أن "التوصل إلى اتفاق تفاوضي جيد من خلال وساطة أو تحكيم طرف ثالث، قد يعني نصراً أكبر بكثير للبنان في النزاع الحاصل مع إسرائيل حول النفط والغاز في البحر".

وأكد بارودي الذي شارك في مؤتمرات دولية عدة آخرها في قبرص، أن هناك "عوامل أخرى تبشّر بالخير بالنسبة إلى الآفاق القانونية اللبنانية القصيرة والطويلة الأمد، بما في ذلك حقيقة أن الجزء من البلوك 9 الذي يهتم به تحالف "توتال" و"آني" و"نوفاتيك"، يكمن بوضوح في المياه اللبنانية، ما يترك مجالاً واسعاً لحل وسط وقصير الأجل، على الأقل يسمح بالاستكشاف في المناطق غير الخاضعة للنزاع مع ترك أسئلة أكثر صعوبة في وقت لاحق".

ولفت إلى أن "نوعية المعلومات التي قدّمها لبنان إلى الأمم المتحدة والأطراف الأخرى المهتمة، تعطي أهمية كبيرة لموقفها وبأكثر من طريقة".

وأضاف: الجانب اللبناني استخدم الرسوم البيانية للهندسة البحرية البريطانية الأصلية كنقطة انطلاق للحدود الجنوبية لمنطقتها الاقتصادية الخالصة، ما يضفي صدقيةً أكبر على معارضتها.

وأوضح أن "لبنان وقّع وصادق على الاتفاقية الدولية الأساسية في شأن

ترسيم الحدود البحرية عام 82، إلا أن إسرائيل لم تفعل، وبناءً على ذلك لا توجد آلية ملزمة يمكن بموجبها لأيٍ من لبنان وإسرائيل أن تحيل مسألة الحدود البحرية إليها لحلّها، من دون موافقة صريحة من الجانب الآخر".

وتابع: بما أن إسرائيل وقعت اتفاقية منطقة اقتصادية حصرية مع قبرص، فلدى لبنان خيارات على هذا المستوى.

وتحدث بارودي عن "الجهود الديبلوماسية المعقدة بسبب العديد من العوامل التي تعوق طرق حل النزاع، خصوصا أن لا علاقات ديبلوماسية بين لبنان وإسرائيل".

وشرح بارودي تحفظات لبنان حول ما يتعلق بتعيين محكمة العدل الدولية أو أي طرف ثالث لحل النزاع الحدودي البحري، مشيراً إلى شقين:

– أولا: المخاوف من أن تسعى إسرائيل إلى تشريع أي اتفاق لإحالة النزاع البحري إلى محكمة العدل الدولية أو أي محكمة أخرى بعد موافقة لبنان على إخضاع كل القضايا الحدودية لحل هذه الهيئة.

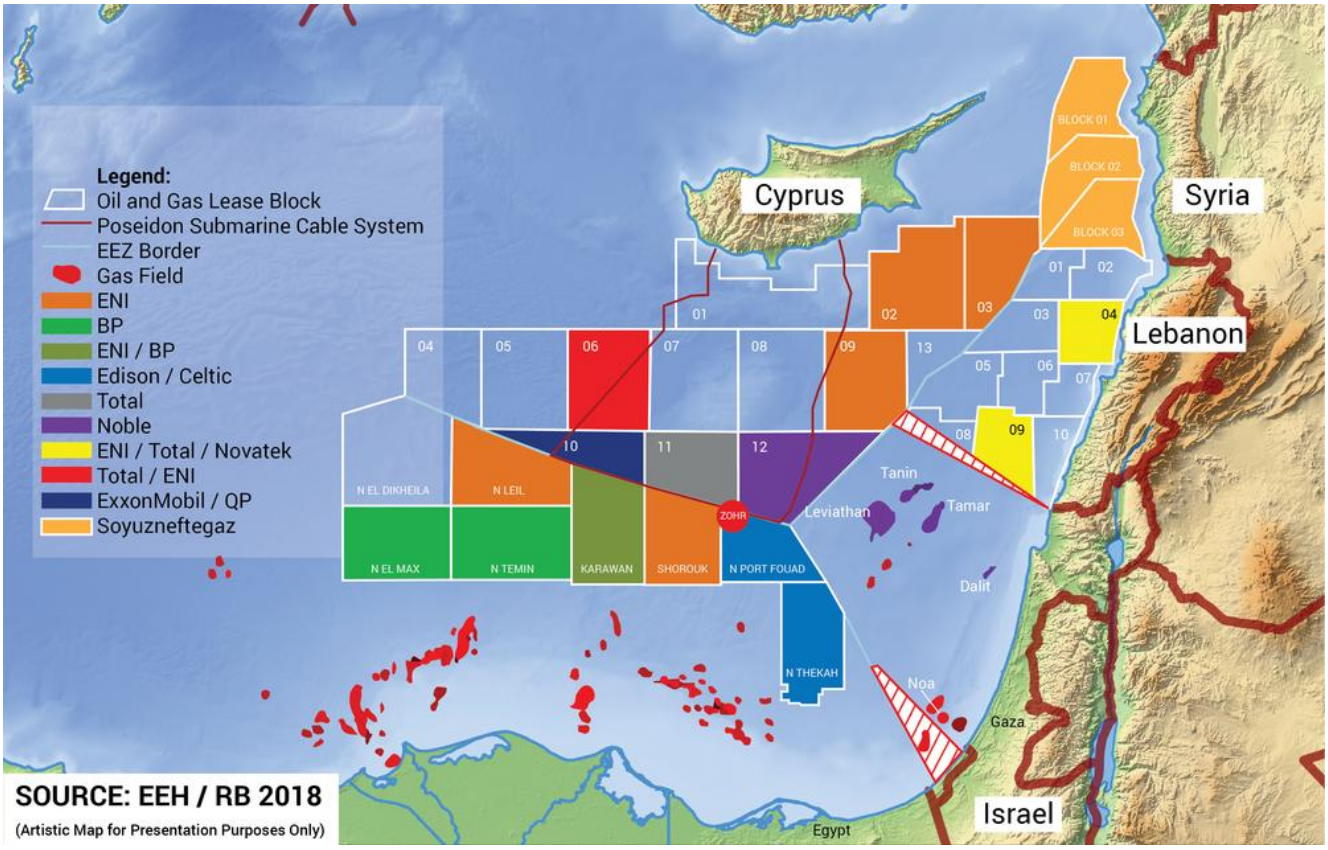
– ثانياً: القلق من أن أي اتفاق مباشر مع إسرائيل على طلب مشاركة طرف ثالث على النزاع، يمكن اعتباره اعترافاً بحكم الواقع وبحكم القانون لإسرائيل.

وأضاف "هناك عناصر معيّنة تجعل النزاع اللبناني – الإسرائيلي مزيداً من بعض النواحي، لكن الظروف العامة في هذه الحالة ليست عادية"، شارحاً أن "كل ولاية ساحلية في العالم لديها منطقة بحرية واحدة على الأقل تتداخل مع منطقة أخرى، ولا يزال العديد من هذه النزاعات من دون حل".

وأشار إلى أن "العديد من المعاهدات البحرية الثنائية التي تم التوصل إليها، تعارضها البلدان المجاورة ذات المناطق المتداخلة، كما هو الحال في معارضة لبنان للاتفاق الإسرائيلي- القبرصي".

النزاع البحري – النفطي بين لبنان وإسرائيل مستمر… فهل يتم اللجوء إلى محكمة العدل الدولية؟

النهار



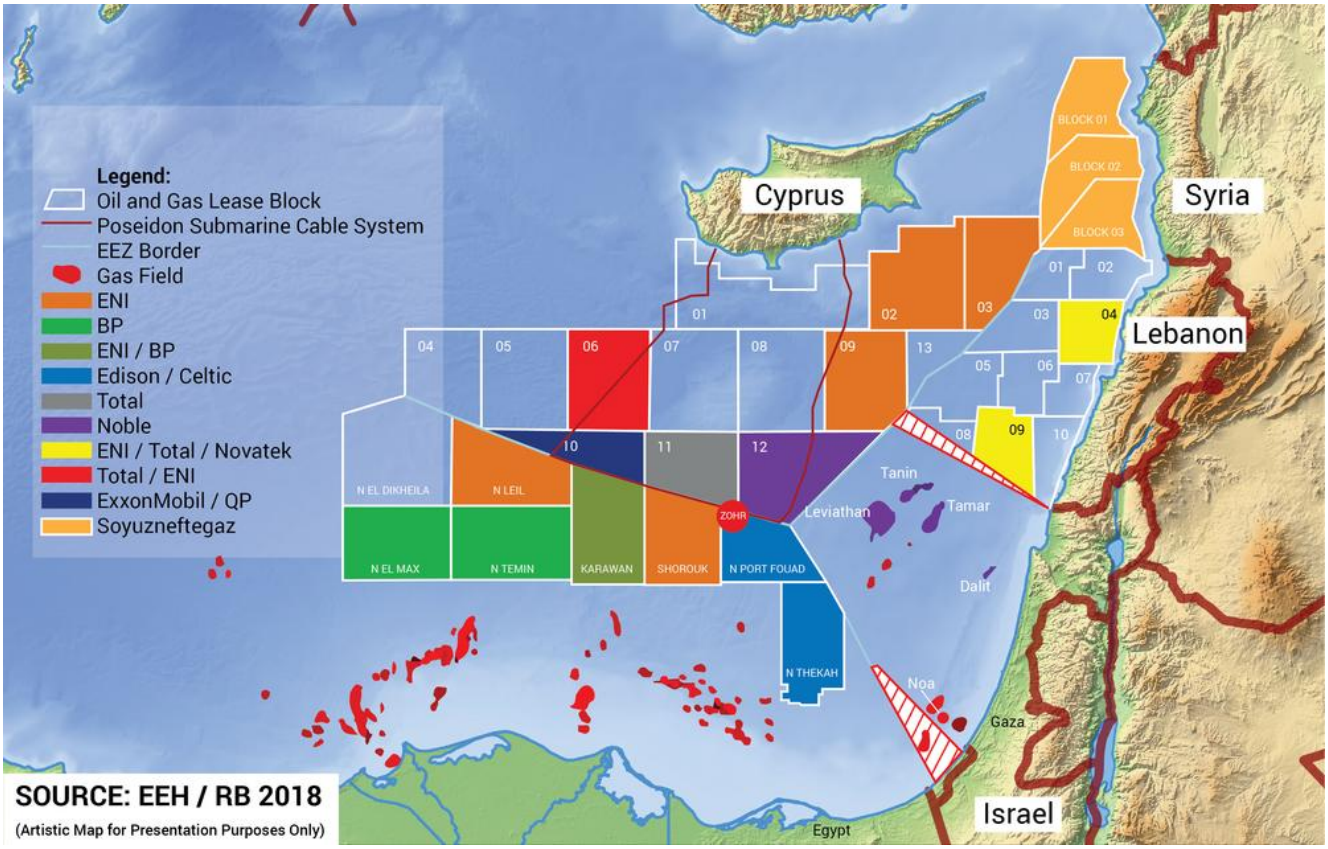
تعقّدت الجهود الديبلوماسية على صعيد الازمة النفطية اللبنانية – الاسرائيلية نتيجة عوامل عدة تعيق السبل المعتادة لتسوية أي نزاع، خصوصاً من جهة لبنان الذي عليه درس خطواته جيّداً إذا أراد حماية حقوقة وتجنّب التصعيد.

يؤدي غياب العلاقات الديبلوماسية إلى تفاقم النزاعات حول الموارد البحرية، والخلاف ليس حول درجة امتداد الحدود الجنوبية للمنطقة الاقتصادية الخالصة للبنان على طول الساحل فقط، بل حول مكان هذه الحدود الساحلية تماماً، في الوقت الذي صادق فيه لبنان على الاتفاق الدولي الأوّلي حول ترسيم الحدود البحرية واتفاق الأمم المتحدة لقانون البحار 1982، فإن إسرائيل لم توقّع. لذلك، لا توجد آلية ملزِمة، يمكن لأيّ من الطرفين حلّ النزاع البحري تحت سقفها، من دون موافقة الطرف الآخر. ولكن وبحسب الرئيس التنفيذي لشركة Energy and Environment Holding والخبير في شؤون النفط والغاز رودي بارودي، بما أن إسرائيل وقّعت اتفاق المنطقة الاقتصادية الخالصة مع قبرص، فللبنان خيارات عديدة على هذا الصعيد. بالتالي يمكنه الاحتجاج ضدّ قبرص على أساس أن هذا الاتفاق بينها وبين إسرائيل يحكم مسبقاً ترسيم حدود لبنان. ولكن يبدو هذا الخيار مستبعداً بسبب زعزعة العلاقات بين البلدين، من هنا، يمكن لبنان أن يدعو قبرص للانضمام إليه في سعيه للتسوية وفق المادة 284 من اتفاق

الأمم المتحدة لقانون البحار، بهدف حلّ النزاع اللبناني-الإسرائيلي الناتج من اتفاق ترسيم الحدود الاقتصادية الخالصة الإسرائيلية – القبرصية. وبحسب بارودي، قد ترفض قبرص هذه المقاربة، لكن معرفة الموقف القبرصي يستحقّ البحث بها، وفي حال لم تعترض، فقد يبرهن هذا النوع من المقاربات التزام لبنان تجاه واجبه الذي يملي عليه حلّ النزاعات تحت ميثاق الأمم المتحدة.

من غير المرجّح أن يحيل لبنان أو إسرائيل نزاعهما حول الحدود البحرية على محكمة العدل الدولية تخوّفاً من أن تتحوّل هذه الخطوة إلى سابقة قانونية أو سياسية أو ديبلوماسية. وإذا كان النزاع اللبناني – الإسرائيلي سيحال على المحكمة الدولية لقانون البحار، او محكمة العدل الدولية أو أي هيئة قانونية أخرى ، فيجب على هذه الهيئة أن تبني قرارها على مجموعة قوانين تتضمّن حُكماً ما يُعرف بالقانون الدولي العرفي، الذي لم يوافق على مجمله لبنان وإسرائيل. فلطالما اتّبعت إسرائيل سياسة الابتعاد من الاتفاقات المتعدّدة الطرف التي تفترض قبولها بأي قانون والذي قد يعرّض احتلالها وسياساتها الإستيطانية للخطر. أما بيروت، فلا تمانع في إبرام الاتفاقات متعددة الطرف التي تلزمها تطبيق معايير محدّدة، طالما لا تملي عليها الاعتراف بإسرائيل أو تُخضع حدود لبنان للتحقيق من محكمة العدل الدولية، التي تُصدر أحكاماً نهائية لا يمكن الطعن بها. ويؤكد بارودي ضرورة ضبط النفس والحوار غير المباشر، وإضافةً إلى جهود الأمم المتحدة والولايات المتحدة، إن تدخّل شركة "توتال" Total الفرنسية و"إيني" ENI الإيطالية و"نوفاتيك" Novatek الروسية، في المنطقة يعني أنّ كلاً من هذه الدول، إلى جانب الإتحاد الأوروبي ككلّ، له مصلحة مكتسبة في استخدام مكاتبه للوساطة والوصول إلى تفاهم قد يضع البلوك رقم 9، الذي يُعتبر حتى الآن من أكثر المناطق الواعدة، قيد التنقيب، على أقلّ تقدير. وبهدف الاستمرار في إظهار حسن موقفه على الصعيد الدولي، يمكن لبنان أن يستعين بقرار مجلس الأمن 1701، حيث تعطي الفقرة 10 من القرار، الحق في الطلب من الأمين العام للأمم المتحدة اقتراح ترسيم الحدود اللبنانية – الإسرائيلية. وبالفعل، طالبت بيروت بتدخّل الأمين العام، ما قد يخدم قضيّتها وحتى ولو لم تُثمر هذه الجهود، فإنها ستساهم في التأثير إيجابياً على التوترات وتسليط الضوء على دور لبنان في السعي نحو حلّ النزاع سلمياً.

رودي باروديِ: اتفاق تفاوضي جيد من خلال وساطة أوٍ تحكيم طرف ثالث قد يعني نصراً اكبر بكثير للبنان



شدد الخبير النفطي الدولي رودي بارودي على أن التوصل الى اتفاق تفاوضي جيد من خلال
وساطة أو تحكيم طرف ثالث ، قد يعني نصراً اكبر بكثير للبنان بدل إسرائيل في النزاع الحاصل حول النفط والغاز في البحر.

واكد بارودي الذي شارك في مؤتمرات دولية عدة آخرها في قبرص ، أن هناك عوامل أخرى تبشر بالخير بالنسبة إلى الآفاق القانونية
اللبنانية القصيرة والطويلة المدى، بما في ذلك حقيقة أن الجزء من البلوك 9 الذي تهتم به توتال وآني ونوفاتيك ، يكمن بوضوح في المياه اللبنانية ، وهذا يترك مجالاً واسعاً لحل وسط وقصير الاجل، على الأقل يسمح بالاستكشاف في المناطق غير الخاضعة للنزاع مع ترك أسئلة اكثر صعوبة في وقت لاحق.

ولفت بارودي الى أن نوعية المعلومات التي قدّمها لبنان إلى الأمم المتحدة والأطراف الأخرى المهتمة تعطي اهمية كبيرة لموقفها وبأكثر من طريقة وأضاف بارودي إن الجانب اللبناني استخدم الرسوم
البيانية للهندسة البحرية البريطانية الأصلية كنقطة انطلاق للحدود الجنوبية لمنطقتها الاقتصادية الخالصة، ما يضفي صدقيّةً اكبر على معارضتها.

واوضح الخبير النفطي أن لبنان وقع وصادق على الاتفاقية الدولية الاساسية في شأن ترسيم الحدود البحرية عام 82 ، إلا أن إسرائيل لم تفعل ذلك ، وبناء على ذلك فإنه لا توجد آلية ملزمة يمكن بموجبها لأيٍ من لبنان وإسرائيل ان تحيل الحدود البحرية إليها من أجل حلّها ، من دون موافقة صريحة من الجانب الآخر.

ولفت بارودي إلى انه بما ان اسرائيل وقعت اتفاقية منطقة اقتصادية حصرية مع قبرص فإن لدى لبنان خيارات على هذا المستوى.
وتحدث بارودي عن الجهود الديبلوماسية المعقدة بسبب العديد من العوامل التي تعيق طرق حل النزاع، خصوصاً أن لا علاقات ديبلوماسية بين لبنان وإسرائيل.

وشرح الخبير النفطي الدولي أن تحفظات لبنان في ما يتعلق بتعيين محكمة العدل الدولية أو اي طرف ثالث لحل النزاع الحدودي البحري ذات شقين:

أولاً: المخاوف من أن تسعى إسرائيل لتشريع اي اتفاق لإحالة النزاع البحري الى محكمة العدل الدولية او اي محكمة اخرى بعد موافقة لبنان على إخضاع كل القضايا الحدودية لحل هذه الهيئة.
ثانيا: القلق من أن اي اتفاق مباشر مع إسرائيل على طلب مشاركة طرف ثالث على النزاع ، يمكن اعتباره اعترافاً بحكم الواقع وبحكم القانون لإسرائيل.

وأضاف بارودي: إن هناك عناصر معينة تجعل النزاع اللبناني الإسرائيلي مزيداً من بعض النواحي ، لكن الظروف العامة في هذه الحالة ليست عادية ، وشرح أن كل ولاية ساحلية على كوكب الارض لديها منطقة بحرية واحدة على الاقل تتداخل مع منطقة أخرى ، ولا يزال العديد من هذه النزاعات من دون حل.

وأشار إلى ان العديد من المعاهدات البحرية الثنائية التي تم التوصل اليها ، تعارضها البلدان المجاورة ذات المناطق المتداخلة، كما هو الحال مع معارضة لبنان للإتفاق الاسرائيلي-القبرصي.

بارودي:التوصل الى اتفاق تفاوضي بشأن البلوك 9 قد يعني

نصرا اكبر بكثير للبنان

شدد الخبير النفطي الدولي رودي بارودي على "أن التوصل الى اتفاق تفاوضي جيد من خلال وساطة أو تحكيم طرف ثالث، قد يعني نصرا اكبر بكثير للبنان بدل إسرائيل في النزاع الحاصل حول النفط والغاز في البحر".

واكد بارودي الذي شارك في مؤتمرات دولية عدة آخرها في قبرص "أن هناك عوامل أخرى تبشر بالخير بالنسبة إلى الآفاق القانونية اللبنانية القصيرة والطويلة المدى، بما في ذلك حقيقة أن الجزء من البلوك 9 الذي تهتم به توتال وآني ونوفاتيك، يكمن بوضوح في المياه اللبنانية، وهذا يترك مجالا واسعا لحل وسط وقصير الاجل، على الأقل يسمح بالاستكشاف في المناطق غير الخاضعة للنزاع مع ترك أسئلة

اكثر صعوبة في وقت لاحق".

ولفت بارودي الى "أن نوعية المعلومات التي قدمها لبنان إلى الأمم المتحدة والأطراف الأخرى المهتمة تعطي اهمية كبيرة لموقفه وبأكثر من طريقة".