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2019 IN REVIEW

The Southern Cone experienced a year of two contrasting halves in 2019 [1], with developments in the gas sector in the first half becoming overshadowed by political upheaval in the region in H2.

South-east Asia is often mentioned at industry events as the next 'hotspot' for LNG demand [2], however, while a handful of planned regas projects saw progress in 2019, increased reliance on coal has continued to hamper LNG's potential in the region.

Important advances in exploration and development were made in the East Mediterranean during 2019, with Egypt, Cyprus and Israel accomplishing several goals [3], all of which are setting the region on a course towards becoming a regional energy hub.

Investors and financiers continued to turn the screw on fossil fuels in 2019, putting a range of emissions and decarbonisation conditions on investment and effectively ending gas' grace period as a "clean" fossil transition fuel [4] in Europe.

International

Saudi Arabia-based Arab Petroleum Investments has forecast a USD 70 billion decline in committed and planned gas investment [5] throughout the MENA region over the next five years – with the upstream sector hardest hit.

Europe

Switzerland – Swiss pipe-laying firm Allseas has suspended its Nord Stream 2 construction activities [6], following the US president's approval of sanctions on the 55 Bcm/year Russia to Germany pipeline, which could lead to lengthy delays.

Ukraine – Naftogaz praised the timing of US sanctions against Gazprom's Nord Stream 2 pipeline [7] in reinforcing its position in negotiations over a new gas transit deal with the Russian firm, with the pair signing a preliminary five-year deal.

Mediterranean

Cyprus / Israel / Turkey – US President Donald Trump has signed the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act [8] of 2019, which is expected to boost US cooperation in the energy and security sectors of Cyprus, Israel and Greece.

Middle East

Israel – First commercial flows from Israel's largest gas field [9] will not be achieved in time for Christmas after the country's Environmental Protection Ministry ordered a halt to a planned test to flush nitrogen from the Leviathan platform's pipes.



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