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Gas Strategies Group

10 Saint Bride Street
London UK
EC4A 4AD

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T: +44(0) 20 7332 9900
W: www.gasstrategies.com
Twitter @GasStrategies

Editorials

+44(0) 20 7332 9957
editor@gasstrategies.com

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The argument that LNG is the 'bunker fuel of the future' may have been dialled down in recent years, but the sector continues to see steady growth, mainly in northern Europe, east and south-east Asia and North America. Key in this growth has been the delivery of LNG bunkering vessels, which allow flexible ship-to-ship fuelling, with about 40 units now in operation worldwide.

Landmark deals, such as the 10-year agreement between Shell and Israeli mega-containership owner ZIM, have kept the spotlight on LNG bunkering. Its growth, the sector's fans insist, will defy persistently high LNG prices, as green alternatives, such as methanol and ammonia, are not yet available at a large scale. But sceptics question LNG's environmental benefits as a marine fuel, while pointing out that volumes used in bunkering could instead bolster Europe's security of gas supply.

**Consulting**

+44 (0) 20 7332 9900
consult@gasstrategies.com

**Alphatania Training**

+44 (0) 20 7332 9910
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+44 (0) 20 7332 9976
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