



Gas Crisis Raised in UK Parliament

Posted by [Euan Mearns](#) on March 16, 2009 - 9:00am in [The Oil Drum: Europe](#)

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[There follows a comment made by [Undertow](#) in Friday's Drumbeat that I felt deserved some broader exposure and debate. We are not certain that all the figures presented here are correct - so if anyone disagrees please let us know in the comments.]

This week's [European Gas Storage](#) figures are out. I decided to put the figures in the form used by the EIA. Keep in mind that European Union storage is about half that of the US.

Working gas in storage was 534 Bcf as of Monday, March 9, 2009, according to estimates. This represents a net decline of 61 Bcf from the previous week. **Stocks were 280 Bcf lower than last year** at this time.

Switching back to metric. Stocks are now approximately 8 bcm below last year (last week was 7.2 bcm lower than the same week last year - get the picture here...). European storage is now down to about 30% as compared to about 46% this time last year. Storage continues to decline at a rate of around 100 mcm/day faster than last year and has done so ever since the Russian production collapse.

Storage in France is now below 20%.

The low level of storage in the UK was raised in parliament last week. Shadow energy and climate change secretary Greg Clark said:

[Hansard: 5th March Parliamentary Debate Gas Storage](#)

For the second time in only four winters, we almost ran out of gas, and almost did not have sufficient gas to meet demand. According to a written answer that the Minister gave me only this morning, **only the depressed state of the economy, due to the recession, saved us from running out**. Even the official regulator thinks that we do not have enough storage. In the Energy and Climate Change Committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove (Miss Kirkbride) asked the regulator whether he thought that enough storage was being planned, and he said: **"I am not happy to talk about this...we were hoping that storage would have doubled in the past five years— "and we have barely moved."**

The government responded by accusing the Conservatives of "rumour mongering". Nasty talk. Maybe Gordon Brown will start locking opposition politicians up if they don't agree to keep quiet.



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