

By Dr. Wolfgang Peters, Managing Director of The Gas Value Chain Company GmbH, Germany (former CEO of RWE Supply & Trading CZ, Czech Republic)

If you look for a person capable of steering parties with contrarian views in the context of drastic changes towards an amicable compromise and that without losing sight of firmly achieving the overall goal supposed to get accomplished, you look at Gertjan. He is a master of the Dutch polder model - and that way beyond The Netherlands. I will get back with some examples in a moment.

I am proud that my relation with Gertjan has, over a period of more than 20 years, developed into a lifelong friendship. The picture below shows Gertjan in Prague in March this year where he spoke at my RWE farewell party. And I guess the picture demonstrates without further explanation the cordial friendship that we have.



Prague 10 March 2016: Gertjan Lankhorst after his speech on occasion of the farewell party of Wolfgang Peters as CEO of RWE Supply & Trading CZ

Let me share with you a particular trait of the personal bond between Gertjan and myself, which has to do with the way in which I learned the Dutch language when I came to The Netherlands in the mid 90ies. At an early-days trading symposium, I got as speakers' gift from Martha Roggenkamp a book by Marten Toonder: "De Windhandel". I liked it and read more, and soon you would hear me use Bommel expressions in my

fledgling Dutch such as: *"Het is heel betreuenswaardig!"* Gertjan loved it and, to this day, when we meet, either he or myself will invariably throw into the greetings and exchanges: *"Als je begrijpt wat ik bedoel."*

In the mid 90ies, the start of the Dutch liberalization, Gertjan served in the Ministry and I worked for Mobil Europe Gas in The Hague. In response to the plans to create a single European gas market, Mobil aspired to establish a 'fairway' straddling Norway, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium and the UK, in order to manage its assets (particularly load factor) on a pan-European basis. For The Netherlands, these ambitions contained, for that time, scandalous elements: break the Gasunie export monopoly and, to add insult to injury, supply large industrial customers directly. There were neither rules nor regulations in place, everything had to be negotiated, and that, despite the wish of the Dutch Government to liberalize the market, against lots of opposition from various sides. We negotiated a comprehensive deal with Gasunie and many of the elements of this deal later found their way into the first set of rules aiming at removing market entry barriers: the Dutch CDS. Whilst success has many fathers, it was obvious that it was Gertjan who, in true Dutch polder model fashion, encouraged the compromises and, importantly, engineered the multiple stakeholder acceptance whilst at the same time keeping the Government mission to foster competition firmly in his sights.

We continued our fruitful and always constructive cooperation also after Gertjan became CEO of Gasterra. I had meanwhile joined RWE, first as director of RWE Energie Nederland and then of RWE Gas Midstream, the latter being one of Gasterra's largest customers.

From 2008 to 2016, I had the privilege to serve with Gertjan on the board of Brussels-based Eurogas. In the early years there was much discord between members, e.g. on TPA. And I still recall vividly how Gertjan induced the Dutch polder model into this heterogeneous European energy club: *"Let us try to focus on the things that we agree on and not stifle our effectiveness by fighting over things where we disagree."* In hindsight, with natural gas now, in the face of COP21, fighting for recognition and survival, one could even characterize Gertjan as being an early apostle of gas advocacy.

Gertjan is now moving on to take new responsibilities, so to speak moving into the future.



Zeg nu zelf: How better could I comment on such than by once more quoting 'een heer van stand': "*Het is toch wel bijzonder om zo regelrecht naar de toekomst te wandelen. In het dagelijks leven komt men daar zo zelden toe, als u begrijpt wat ik bedoel.*"

All the best Gertjan!

Wolfgang