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EURASIA PROGRAM

# PUTIN THE GREEN?

The Unintended Consequences of  
Russia's Energy War on Europe



MITCHELL ORENSTEIN

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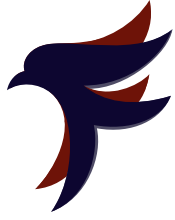
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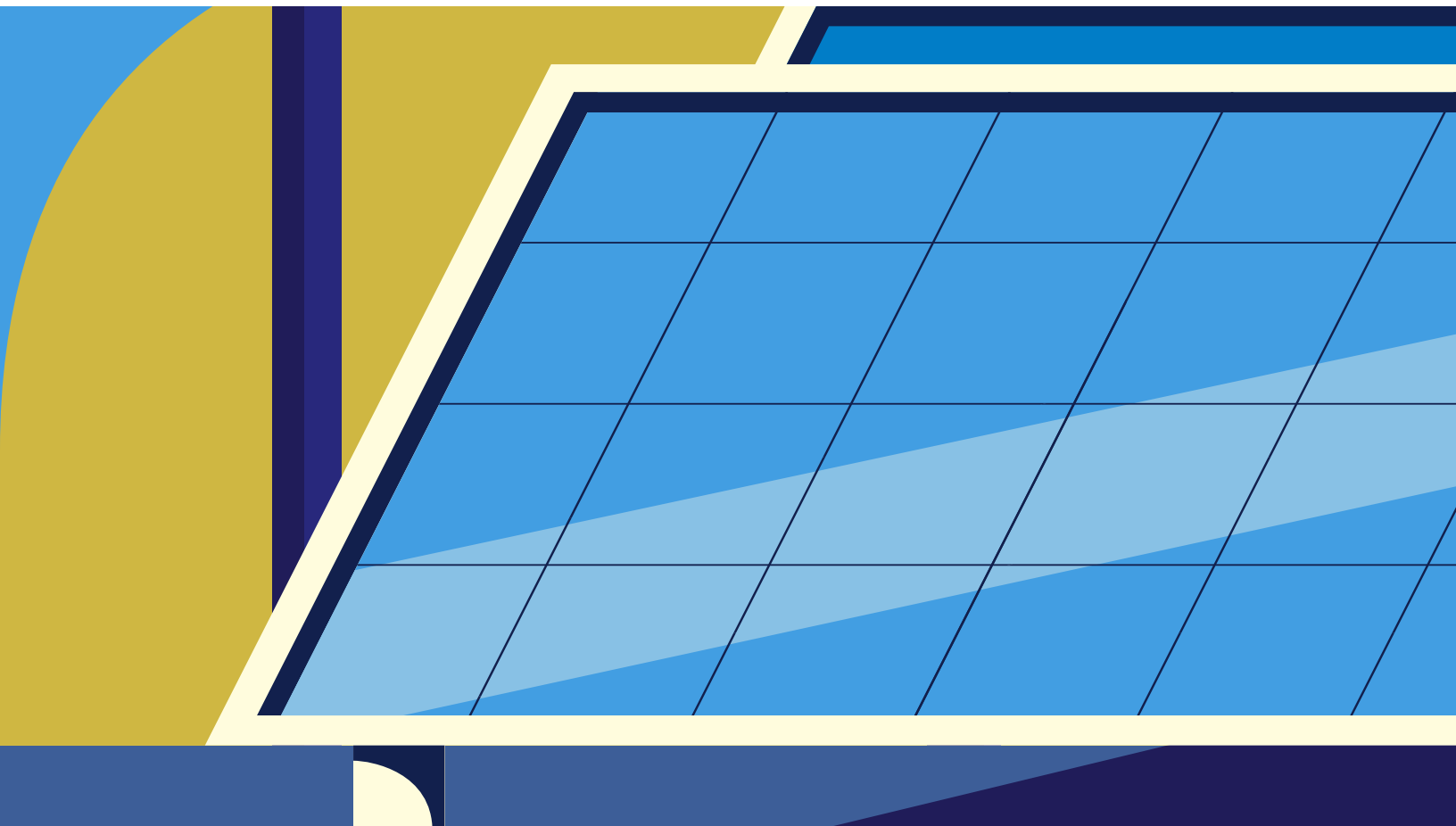
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## KEY FINDINGS

- **Both before and during its re-invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia cut energy supplies to Europe in an effort to force the continent to abandon Ukraine.**
- **Instead, Vladimir Putin accelerated Europe's transition to green energy, decimating a key market for Russian exporters.**
- **Over the long term, Europe is well-positioned will win the energy war with Russia.**

## INTRODUCTION

After Russia's February 24, 2022, re-invasion of Ukraine, all eyes turned to the brutal spectacle of Europe's largest war since 1945. Yet, Russia's ill-fated attempt to assert its sphere of influence in Europe has not been confined to a single battlefield. The Ukraine war continues to be embedded in a broader hybrid war Russia has waged on the West through energy blackmail, disinformation, covert tactics, and direct military confrontation.<sup>1</sup> One of the key battlefields: Russia's energy war on Europe.

While the situation remains dynamic, at the start of 2023, it appears that Russia has lost its energy war on Europe. Within a year, Europe has substantially reduced its

dependency on Russian fossil fuels, while prices, which quadrupled at the outset of the war, fell back to pre-war levels. Not only has Russia's energy war on Europe been unsuccessful, but it may have the unintended consequence of accelerating Europe's energy transition over the long term. Attempting to win recognition as Putin the Great by uniting the Slavic lands of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin may be hailed instead as Putin the Green, the man who convinced Europe to give up dependence on fossil fuels.

## RUSSIA'S STRATEGY

Russia's strategy to use energy blackmail to influence European politics, remove Ukraine as a critical transit state for Russian energy exports, and force Ukraine back into Russia's sphere of influence was a long time in planning. Russia cut off gas exports to Ukraine in 2006 and 2009 in price and debt disputes. The 2009 cutoff spooked European Union (EU) states, when Bulgaria, an EU member, was forced to enact rationing. Subsequently, Russia began work on several pipelines designed to bring its products to the West while avoiding Ukraine. These included the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines in 2012 and 2021, and South Stream, which morphed into Turkish Stream when the European Union blocked its original intended route under the Black Sea to Bulgaria.<sup>2</sup> The Turkish Stream pipeline was completed in 2020. Central and East European states warned that the construction of these pipelines would enable Russia to conquer Ukraine and drive a wedge between Western and Eastern Europe by allowing Russia to continue supplying West European customers while dominating East European states.<sup>3</sup>

The present conflict demonstrated that Central and East European warnings were startlingly accurate. In the run-up to the war, in the summer of 2021, Russia limited gas supplies to Europe, claiming technical problems. Russia cut supplies routed through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline from 170 million cubic meters per day in May 2021 to 33 million in July, and stopped them entirely in August.<sup>4</sup> In hindsight, it seems clear that Russia planned to limit European countries' ability to store gas for the winter, making them more vulnerable to energy blackmail. In doing so, Russia hoped to pose a stark trade-off for Europe: support Ukraine and freeze or tolerate Russia's invasion and remain warm. However, this

strategy failed, causing one Russian analyst to speculate that Russia might have had more success had it not signaled its use of energy blackmail so early, but rather by surprise attack, "just before the onset of cold weather."<sup>5</sup>

**Russia had hoped, and probably still hopes, that extremist parties would capitalize on discontent to break Europe's boycott of Russian fossil fuels, ending a green energy transition that would decimate Russia.**

By cutting supplies and elevating prices, Russia sought to mobilize mass protests in European capitals, similar to the 2018 "yellow vest" movement in France. In November 2018, up to 280,000 yellow vest protesters took to the streets when French President Emmanuel Macron initiated a new carbon tax, demanding cheaper gas and protesting out-of-touch elites.<sup>6</sup> The yellow vests' slogan: "Macron is concerned with the end of the world; we are concerned with the end of the month."<sup>7</sup> Initiated by rural Frenchmen, the movement gained support from the urban middle and working classes and energized extremist parties on the right and left.

Russia may have calculated that this winter's crisis would be far deeper. Rather than a carbon tax in one country, all of Europe faced sharply higher prices and



People holding banners attend a pro-Ukrainian protest, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues, in Berlin, Germany, April 6, 2022. REUTERS/Christian Mang



STOP  
GENOCIDE  
in my home  
COUNTRY  
HAIKI

EMBARGO  
ON RUSSIAN  
OIL & GAS

STOP  
BUSINESS  
WITH BLOODY  
RUSSIA

STOP  
BLOODY  
BUSINESS

Russi  
→ Ter



**BRUSELSKÉ  
PASTI ŠKODÍ  
NAŠÍ VLASTI**

Demonstrators take part in an anti-government protest rally in reaction to the energy crisis and soaring prices in Prague, Czech Republic, September 28, 2022. REUTERS/David W Cerny

lower supplies of energy thanks to Russia's invasion, European sanctions that ban Russian fossil fuel imports, and Russian countermeasures. While opinion polls show that most Europeans support Ukraine, Russia had hoped, and probably still hopes, that extremist parties would capitalize on discontent to break Europe's boycott of Russian fossil fuels, ending a green energy transition that would decimate Russia's largest market.

**Sponsoring protests to undermine European governments is part of Russia's hybrid war toolbox, often used in conjunction with other methods, such as cyberattacks.**

Indeed, already in September 2022, some 70,000 protesters gathered in Prague's Wenceslas square to protest higher energy prices.<sup>8</sup> Organized by Eurosceptic parties of the far-right and far-left, protesters called for Czechia to exit the European Union and NATO and resume importing fossil fuels from Russia. Some of these parties had long-standing ties to Russia.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, whom some have described as a “trojan horse” for Russia within the European Union, vetoed additional EU sanctions against Russia, slow-walked the ratification of Finland's and Sweden's entry into NATO, and advocated against further restrictions of Russian fossil fuel trade in Europe.<sup>10</sup> Germany's Alternative for Deutschland party increased its support from 10 to 15 percent of voters between June and November 2022, while support for the governing

Social Democratic Party dipped. Germany's pro-Russia Left party joined Alternative for Deutschland in protests against arming Ukraine this fall.<sup>11</sup>

While it is impossible to say whether Russia had a direct hand in organizing discontent in Europe, it has organized protests in Europe in the past (e.g., the “Lisa case” protests in Germany during the immigration crisis of 2015–2016).<sup>12</sup> Sponsoring protests to undermine European governments is part of Russia's hybrid war toolbox, often used in conjunction with other methods, such as cyberattacks, as in the case of Estonia in 2007.<sup>13</sup> Breaking even one major European government, or causing it to fall, could force the European Union to abandon its sanctions regime against Russia.

Yet European leaders proved to be determined to bolster Europe as a global security actor and face down Russia. Announcing a new energy security financing drive in October 2022, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said that eschewing Russian fossil fuels and transitioning to renewables was the right thing to do, “not only for the climate, but also ... to gain independence and to have security of energy supply.”<sup>14</sup> She stated that “the European Union is determined to continue making [Vladimir Putin] pay for his war of aggression.” The European Union also was well prepared to survive Russia's energy blackmail, due to more than a decade of planning and preparation.



## EUROPE'S PREPARATION

The European Union had prepared in earnest for supply disruptions from Russia since 2009, when a Russian cutoff of gas flows to Ukraine had forced Bulgaria, an EU member state, to cut off industrial consumers of gas. European business leaders, fearing a potential loss of gas supplies to the entire European Union, began to prepare to confront Russian energy blackmail, in what became a series of EU energy plans, strategies, and unions.<sup>15</sup>

**Prior to 2022, the European Union sought to balance its efforts to reduce vulnerability to energy blackmail or supply disruptions with increased reliance on cheap Russian gas.**

Starting with the 2009 Third Energy Package and progressing towards the 2015 Energy Union, the essential elements included connecting EU energy grids and pipeline networks to prevent individual countries from being cut off by any one supplier, creating regional markets to cushion countries from price pressure from suppliers, and cultivating alternative supplies. Most of these measures did not attract public attention, because of their highly technical nature. While some argued that Europe's implementation of these policies did not go far enough, with some member states more

focused on maintaining a flow of cheap Russian gas than on energy security, these policies proved crucial in the current crisis.<sup>16</sup>

Linking the energy grids of different EU countries played an important role in 2022. In October, von der Leyen opened one of the last EU gas pipeline interconnectors between Greece and Bulgaria, hailing it as a "game changer."<sup>17</sup> It enabled Bulgaria to continue to be supplied with gas from Azerbaijan through the Trans-Adriatic pipeline, in which the European Union had previously invested. This interconnector prevented Bulgaria from losing its entire gas supply when it refused to pay for Russian gas in rubles. Other countries, notably Poland, Lithuania, and belatedly Germany, constructed liquified natural gas terminals that enabled Europe to import a large quantity of liquified natural gas from the United States and elsewhere.

Prior to 2022, the European Union sought to balance its efforts to reduce vulnerability to energy blackmail or supply disruptions with increased reliance on cheap Russian gas. As with many EU policies, this approach reflected a split between countries like Poland, which prioritized reducing energy dependence on Russia, and those like Germany, which believed that it could contain Russia's geopolitical ambitions while replacing its coal-fired and nuclear power plants with relatively cleanly burning gas to fuel its homes and factories. Russia's re-invasion of Ukraine in 2022 quickly convinced EU leaders to reconsider basing its energy policy on cheap Russian gas. Decisive new measures were needed.





FSRU Independence in the port of Klaipėda. (AB Klaipėdos Nafta/Wikimedia Commons)



## EUROPE'S REPOWEREU STRATEGY

In March 2022, EU leaders surprised many with their swift decision to ban most Russian fossil fuels from EU markets, replacing them with renewable energy sources. The urgency of this decision was driven by the European Union's desire to stop funding the Russian government and its war in Ukraine. The European Union's new RePowerEU strategy called for replacing Russian fossil fuel imports with alternative and renewable sources over the medium term, while cutting energy consumption right now.<sup>18</sup> The speed with which this policy was decided reflected the intense planning that had taken place over more than a decade. "We can do it, and we can do it fast," EU Green Deal chief Frans Timmermans said at the time.<sup>19</sup> "All we need is the courage and grit to get us there."

### Energy Savings

Since Russia previously supplied approximately one-third of Europe's oil and gas, the European Union recognized that it would be impossible for it to replace these energy resources all at once. Therefore, RePowerEU leaned heavily on energy savings. The European Commission called for a 15 percent reduction in energy usage in all EU member states.<sup>20</sup> Because cutting energy consumption poses serious problems for energy-intensive industries such as glass-making, chemicals, and steel, these industries have seen the most serious declines in production.<sup>21</sup>

Germany turned down the heat in public buildings to 19 degrees Celsius (66.2 degrees Fahrenheit). Austria recommended reductions in shower time and speed limits on roads. Spain ordered shop exteriors and public monuments to cease night time lighting. Paris' Eiffel Tower dimmed its lights before midnight. Brussels and Paris reduced city speed limits to 30 kilometers/hour.

Germany slashed rail fares by 90 percent in summer 2022 to encourage people to ditch their cars.<sup>22</sup> RePowerEU also called for incentives to double the installation of electric heat pumps in place of furnaces for home and commercial heating.

Within weeks of the invasion, the Dutch government introduced a 4 billion euros (\$4.4 billion) program to renovate 2.5 million homes by 2030 for energy efficiency.<sup>23</sup> In July 2022, Germany's Climate and Transformation Fund announced 56.3 billion euros for retrofitting buildings.<sup>24</sup> Romania supercharged its short-term renewables targets, Estonia agreed to decarbonize all its electricity by 2030, and Greece brought in its first offshore wind policy.<sup>25</sup>

### Capping Prices

In order to head off a "yellow vest" style revolt, European governments also sought to insulate households and companies from surging fossil fuel prices, as natural gas prices more than quadrupled at their peak in August 2022.<sup>26</sup> Every European national government has sought to alleviate these energy spikes in their own way. Germany's 200 billion euro "defense shield" includes a price cap on gas and electricity, subsidized gas bills for the month of December, and a windfall tax on energy companies.<sup>27</sup> France compelled state-owned energy company Électricité de France to cap price rises at 4 percent and spent 45 billion euros to cap on gas and electricity price increases at 15 percent. Finally, the British have capped energy bills at 3,000 British pounds (\$3,695) per year and are expected to create a windfall tax to generate 5 billion pounds next year. The United States with its G7 allies hatched a plan to cap prices of Russian crude oil at \$60/barrel starting in December 2022. Since most of the world's shipping





Solar panel installation in progress. (Adobe Stock)

firms are based in G7 countries, Russia is likely to comply rather than face a further loss in market share.<sup>28</sup> Russia has indicated that it will reroute its oil exports rather than sell at a capped price, but the cap has already diminished the value of its key resource on international markets.

On a supranational level, the European Union was initially divided over a plan to cap gas prices for energy generation, with Germany arguing against such market intervention and Italy, Spain, France, and Belgium in favor. After an eleven-hour summit in October 2022, EU countries were able to convince Germany to terminate their opposition to the gas cap.<sup>29</sup> Chancellor Olaf Scholz conceded to the German Bundestag that the gas cap just “makes sense.”<sup>30</sup> On February 15, the European Union started activating a price cap of 180 euros per megawatt-hour.<sup>31</sup> This supranational price cap is beneficial for all parties because the 180 euros per megawatt-hour cap is

solely carried out when prices are 35 euros higher than the global liquefied natural gas reference price for three consecutive days. Gazprom’s Alexei Miller announced that Russia would fully stop all exports to Europe if a price cap went into effect. But a supply shutoff would affect Russia more than the European Union, as Russia’s pipelines to Europe cannot simply be redirected to other customers and its liquefied natural gas production is limited.

### **Diversifying Energy Supplies**

While previous EU strategies sought to diversify its energy supplies, RePowerEU accelerated this process, with the completion of the Greece-Bulgaria connector noted above and the construction of additional floating liquefied natural gas terminals, such as the one Germany built at Wilhelmshaven in just 200 days.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile in 2022, Polish Prime Minister

Mateusz Morawiecki saluted the new Baltic Pipe pipeline transporting Norwegian gas to Poland via Denmark stating, “The era of Russian domination in the field of gas is coming to an end, the era that was marked by blackmail, threats and extortion.”<sup>33</sup>

**In 2020, the European Union produced 22 percent of its energy usage through renewables.**

**RePowerEU aims to more than double that figure to 45 percent by 2030, mostly wind and solar.**

In addition, France, Spain and Portugal agreed to build an undersea pipeline to carry hydrogen and natural gas between Barcelona and Marseille.<sup>34</sup> Multiple EU countries have been in talks with Qatar to forge energy deals, and Western countries are considering reducing pressure on Venezuela in exchange for oil from the country with the largest reserves.<sup>35</sup> As Europe rushed to fill reserve tanks this summer and autumn, US liquified natural gas exports soared, exceeding Europe’s capacity to offload the gas. Prices collapsed in late October as liquified natural gas tankers lined up in European waters. At the time of this writing, natural gas prices in Europe have returned to pre-war levels, showing that the European Union succeeded in finding alternative sources.

## Accelerating the Green Transition

Over the longer term, Putin’s war forced EU leaders to accelerate the green energy transition. In 2020, the European Union produced 22 percent of its energy usage through renewables.<sup>36</sup> RePowerEU aims to more than double that figure to 45 percent by 2030, mostly wind and solar. By contrast, 12 percent of US energy was renewable in 2021.<sup>37</sup> RePowerEU calls for doubling solar capacity by 2025 and installing 600 gigawatts by 2030. France passed a law requiring all large parking lots (over eighty spaces) to install a solar panel roof within three to five years, which could generate 11 gigawatts per year, equal to ten nuclear plants. Overall, RePowerEU will require an additional 210 billion euros in public and private investment in renewables between now and 2027.

To achieve this acceleration, RePowerEU recommends requiring new public, commercial, and residential buildings to install solar panels and to declare an “overriding” public interest in new renewable projects, circumventing existing approval processes. Europe will also invest big in hydrogen, deployed when electrification is impossible, in energy-intensive industrial processes or transport. The EU Common Agricultural Program will increase domestic biomethane production to 35 billion cubic meters by 2030.

## Obstacles to Acceleration

Europe may struggle to reach its ambitious goals. WindEurope, the wind industry advocacy group, pointed out that the European Union will need to build thirty gigawatts of wind farms per year to meet its 2030 renewables targets, but built only eleven gigawatts in 2021 and is projected to build only eighteen gigawatts a year in future. The biggest problem, it argued, was red tape slowing down project approval.<sup>38</sup>



Gas pipelines were welded together and then pulled through the Little Belt, between Jutland and Funen in Denmark. Photo: Energinet/Maria Tuxen Hedegaard





Winter smog in Wroclaw, Poland. (Adobe Stock)





Europe's attempts to accelerate its green revolution has faced other obstacles as well. The MidCat pipeline, which was supposed to link up Spain's liquified natural gas terminals to France and Germany, was blocked in 2019 by France, which saw it as uneconomical.<sup>39</sup> Spain revived the project in 2022, with support from Germany. But France has resisted spending on new gas infrastructure and questioned whether it wouldn't be cheaper to ship gas to new liquified natural gas terminals in Germany. Moreover, France postponed a planned summit meeting with Germany in October over Germany's 200 billion euro energy price subsidy package, which France perceived as leaving other European countries out in the cold.<sup>40</sup>

## Resurgent Coal and Nuclear

One irony of Europe's drive to disconnect from Russian fossil fuels is that its green revolution, in the short term, may require more coal and nuclear energy. German Economic Minister Robert Habeck, a staunch opponent of nuclear energy, announced an official delay to Germany's exit from nuclear energy until spring 2024.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile Poland has further deregulated its domestic coal industry in response to the European Union's ban on Russian coal. Poland now permits the use of lignite in home heating, a more polluting brand of coal previously banned.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the short-term impact of Europe's turn away from Russian fossil fuels could cause more pollution, not less. That effect is likely to last until the end of the decade. But no country has significantly reversed plans to phase out coal over the longer term, and Germany even pledged to speed it up.<sup>43</sup>

Similarly, the Dutch government has been forced to consider what to do with the Groningen gas field, slated to close in 2024 due to seismic activity associated with gas production.<sup>44</sup> An extension of the phase out is possible, but highly controversial, underlining the problems Europe has in

backfilling its energy needs with traditional sources, while its green revolution takes root. Recently, the Netherlands announced that it would stop the search for new onshore oil and gas fields. The government is resolute in the closure of the Groningen gas field, which reported fifty-eight gas-related earthquakes in 2022.<sup>45</sup>

Despite these concerns, some data paints a more complex picture. According to a new report, wind and solar generated 22 percent of EU electricity in 2022, overtaking fossil gas, which produces 20 percent of electricity on the continent, for the first time.<sup>46</sup> Analysts expect the fall in coal and gas power to continue in 2023.

**One irony of Europe's drive to disconnect from Russian fossil fuels is that its green revolution, in the short term, may require more coal and nuclear energy.**

The European Union has also defined wood as a renewable resource and Poland's ruling party chief recommended that people should "burn almost everything [for energy], of course aside from tires and similarly harmful things."<sup>47</sup> In October, firewood cost 600 euros a ton in France.<sup>48</sup> In the interim, European countries are encouraging citizens to use all alternatives, in an effort to cut off Russia today, while ramping up renewables over the medium term.

## SHORT-TERM PAIN, LONG-TERM GAIN?

While European Union leaders have rolled out an impressive range of measures to survive the winter, will it be enough? At this point, the European Union appears to have thwarted Putin's strategy to freeze Europe this winter. Europe has all the gas it needs and prices have dropped to pre-war levels. Analysts no longer expect high gas prices to produce a recession in Europe, as previously feared, causing Scholz to remark, "I'm absolutely convinced that this will not happen that we are going into a recession."<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, Russia is suffering from reduced sales and has yet to find a way to pipe gas originally destined for Europe to customers in Asia.<sup>50</sup>

Yet, Russia has a number of cards to play. Russia is destroying power plants in Ukraine, stopping gas flows through its pipelines to Europe, snooping on Norwegian gas infrastructure, and—according to some—sabotaging the Nord Stream pipelines (though others believe the United States did so in pursuit of greater liquified natural gas markets, while Russia has variously pointed the finger at the United States, Poland, Ukraine, and United Kingdom).<sup>51</sup> This historically warm winter could turn colder. For now, it seems that Russia lost the crucial first stage of Europe's gas wars, but it would be unwise to count it out.

Over time, there is good reason to believe that Europe will win and Russia will lose Europe's energy wars. The European Union is in the midst of a long-term shift in its energy profile that will limit its reliance on Russia or other unstable fossil-fuel exporting countries in future. Francesco La Camera, director general of the International Renewable Energy Agency states that, "In the medium and long term, the Ukrainian

crisis will accelerate the transition to clean and notably renewable energy."<sup>52</sup> Not exactly the outcome Russia had hoped for.

**Over the longer term, there is good reason to believe that Europe will win and Russia will lose Europe's energy wars.**

### Impact of a Russian Defeat

In the longer term, the energy battlefield is tilted decisively against Russia. After several more years of preparation, EU countries can sever their reliance on Russian fossil fuels, dealing Russia a substantial blow. One of the ironies of Putin's war is that Russia has always been more reliant on European markets than Europe was reliant on Russia. Until recently, Russia sold over half of its crude oil exports and 83 percent of its gas to Europe, including not only EU states, but also Turkey, Ukraine, and Belarus.<sup>53</sup> Revenues from foreign oil and gas sales made up over 40 percent of Russia's federal budget.<sup>54</sup> As of May 22, the European Union was paying Russia \$850 million a day for its energy, more than \$300 billion a year. Russia has been deeply dependent on its European markets. And world markets have already replaced Russian oil and gas production, with a surge of oil production from the United States, Venezuela, Canada, and Brazil causing prices to drop, even as Western nations put a price cap on Russian oil.<sup>55</sup>





Vladimir Mihailovich, a solar plant manager, walks inside a crater after a shelling hit the station that was producing 2.5 megawatts of power, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in the town of Merefa on the outskirts of Kharkiv, Ukraine May 28, 2022. Picture taken with a drone. REUTERS/Ivan Alvarado





Russian President Vladimir Putin takes part in a ceremony launching production at the Kovykta gas field, which will feed into the Power of Siberia pipeline carrying Russian gas to China, via a video link with head of Gazprom Alexei Miller in Moscow, Russia, December 21, 2022. Sputnik/Mikhail Kuravlev/Kremlin via REUTERS

The near-total loss of EU export markets has already had a devastating effect on the Russian economy. The International Monetary Fund now expects Russian gross domestic product to decline “2.3% year on year in the best-case scenario and by 5.6% in the worst-case scenario.”<sup>56</sup> By December 2022, Russia saw its oil export revenue fall to its lowest level since February, while its inflation has remained above 11.9 percent for the nearly entire year of 2022.<sup>57</sup>

RePowerEU showed that Europe did have the capacity to wean itself off Russian gas. It will take more than a decade for Russia to build enough pipelines to redirect its trade to China. While China and India have been purchasing Russian oil, Russia faces stiff competition in these markets. China and India import 40 and 60 percent respectively of their oil from the Middle East. While Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi defended himself saying that his country will buy oil

where “it is cheapest,” the EU price cap on Russian oil has reduced the prices Russia can charge for its main commodity not only in Europe, but globally.<sup>58</sup>

Moreover, Russia’s catastrophic loss of bargaining power will make it easier for the European Union to impose even heavier sanctions against the Putin regime, as seen with Europe’s ninth package of sanctions on December 16.<sup>59</sup> This would be detrimental to a Russian economy that is already finding itself under siege.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, countries that are remaining “neutral,” such as China and India, have expressed subtle discontent over the war during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Uzbekistan.<sup>61</sup> As Jeffrey Sonnenfeld concludes, “Never again will Putin be in a position to cause such chaos and disturbance in the global economy.”<sup>62</sup>



## PUTIN THE GREEN

As a result, Vladimir Putin, who styles himself a modern Peter the Great, may go down in history instead as Putin the Green, a hero of the green energy transition. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been full of unintended consequences. In an attempt to unite Ukrainians with Russia, he made Ukrainians hate Russia, stop speaking Russian, and align with the West. Fighting a war to oppose NATO expansion, he persuaded formerly neutral Finland and Sweden to apply to join NATO. Attempting to demonstrate Europe's reliance on Russian gas, he has managed to accelerate Europe's green energy transition, where previous international agreements failed. On October 12, *Politico* awarded Putin first place in their "Green 28" list of environmental influencers, noting that, "Vladimir Putin has done more than almost any other single human being to speed up the end of the fossil fuel era."

**Russia may have hoped that freezing Europe and fomenting street protests in its capitals would persuade Europe to stop arming Ukraine and force a negotiated settlement. That gambit has failed.**

its capitals would persuade Europe to stop arming Ukraine and force a negotiated settlement. That gambit has failed. Thwarted in its attempt to take Kyiv in three days, thwarted in its attempt to blackmail Europe into forcing Ukraine to the bargaining table, Russia now must prepare for a longer-term conflict. Meanwhile, reduced government revenues from European fossil fuel markets will limit Russia's ability to finance the war. But it will not stop Russia. Putin confirmed in a December 2022 press conference that the war is a "long-term process." The European Union has not proven able to defeat Russia decisively on the battlefield and has remained tied in knots over sending tanks and fighter jets to Ukraine for almost a year after the start of the conflict. But the European Union is an "economic superpower," and it has managed to leverage over a decade of bureaucratic planning to deal Russia a serious defeat in Europe's energy wars. 🦅

What impact will Russia's defeat in Europe's gas wars have on the land war in Ukraine? It does not strengthen Russia's position, for sure. Russia may have hoped that freezing Europe and fomenting street protests in

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