



UNIVERSITY "UNION-NIKOLA TESLA", BELGRADE
Faculty of Law, Security and Management "Constantine the Great", Nis

SECURITY CHALLENGES OF MODERN SOCIETY

Dilemmas and implications

Editor
Dejan Dašić

UNIVERSITY „UNION-NIKOLA TESLA“, BELGRADE
Faculty of Law, Security and Management "Constantine the Great", Nis

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Faculty of Security and Protection



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CHALLENGES OF ENERGY RISK DIVERSIFICATION AND GAS CRISIS IN EU

Milan Veselinovic¹, Marija Paunovic²

Key Words:
gas crisis,
import
dependence
on gas,
construction
of the gas
pipeline,
energy
supply

Abstract: *The relationship between the distribution of fossil fuels in recent decades has greatly influenced the geopolitical situation in the world. We are witnessing numerous revolutions, sanctions, and wars in crisis areas of countries rich in oil and gas reserves, which resulted in the radical devastation of some countries' economies and enormous emigration from war-torn areas. On the other hand, the struggle for supremacy in the energy market between the West and the East is intensifying, especially because many countries importing fossil fuels have turned to the diversification of procurement risks, primarily gas, and then oil. Many countries Turkey, Iran, Ukraine, Venezuela, Germany, and Bulgaria have faced various pressures and challenges imposed by the West. In the case of Iraq, Libya and Syria, wars were inevitable. A review of the past period and the growth of political tensions in Ukraine in recent years, and especially the months, indicate that a new war on European soil is imminent. This time, the interests of the great powers from the West and the East are more obvious, and there are more reasons for the conflict, in the sense of diplomacy or war.*

Introduction

As is well known, all economic activities require energy consumption. Today, in addition to the scientific and technological process, the share of oil and gas consumption as fossil fuels has the largest share in almost all countries. Of course, in addition to oil and gas, nuclear energy, coal, and renewable energy sources are also used. Several economies base their economic dynamics mainly on nuclear energy, but this number is significantly small. However, most economies around the world base their economic

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activity on fossil fuels, primarily oil and gas. Therefore, it is quite logical that both oil and gas represent the "bloodstream" of every economy, especially the economies of the European Union, (hereinafter abbreviated the EU).

What is typical for EU countries is that almost all of its members are import-dependent on gas, some to a lesser and some to a greater extent. In this paper, the authors present their views on the risk of import dependence and the challenges of diversification of gas import risks that EU member states face during the war crisis in Ukraine. In this regard, and for a multifaceted projection of a very complex problem, the paper contains several titles, interrelated, and historically related to the current topic and events in Ukraine. After an introductory review of the literature, the chronology and structure of gas import dependence of EU leading countries are presented. With this approach at the very beginning, the authors want to point out the necessity of gas imports, the implications of gas import, as well as the importance and severity of the problems faced by the EU energy sector. The authors try to present how complex and difficult it is to solve the problems of import dependence and challenges in diversifying the risks of gas import by presenting a series of arguments regarding the EU's economic and military-political dependence on the United States (hereinafter abbreviated the US), but also from Russia. The current cross-section of the EU's unenviable position on the geopolitical scene represents a concrete outcome of the long-term strategic processes that are constantly taking place in the political, economic, and military spheres between the US, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other. Whether the EU is on its knees in terms of gas imports, and whether the unity within the EU is geopolitically sustainable, is discussed in the final part, where the authors present their views through discussion and provide optional outcomes.

The necessity of importing fossil fuels into the EU – literature review

The recession in 2008, which has spread from the US to other economies in the world, maybe worse than the Great Recession of the 1930s. According to many experts, "in 2008, the US economy entered a recession because it recorded a real decline in economic activity in two consecutive periods", (Siljkovic, 2010). Many countries are making some strategic decisions to emerge from the crisis and reduce its consequences. When it comes to energy sources on which economic activity is based, the beginning of the 21st century was marked by a sharp jump in the average price of oil on the



international market, (Tverberg, 2012). In addition, the price of oil is accompanied by the price of gas. As attention has been paid to the policy of using alternative energy sources in the last three decades since the onset of the economic and energy crisis in 2008, savings and alternative energy sources have become increasingly important, (Mirkovic et al., 2018)

At the EU level, primary energy production in the EU was 17.7% lower in 2020 than in 2010. The general downward development of primary energy production in the EU can be attributed, at least in part, to efforts to decarbonize the energy system and improve energy efficiency. In 2020, the pandemic especially affected primary energy production (OPEC, Annual Report).

But what is the basic structure of primary energy production in the EU? Primary energy production in the EU in 2020 was distributed to several different energy sources, of which the most important are renewable energy sources, with more than one-third (40.8%), followed by nuclear energy with 30.5%, 14.6% of coal and lignite, natural gas with 7.2%, and oil with 3.3%, (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, hereinafter OPEC, Annual Report). It is obvious that fossil fuels with a share of over 25% in the production of primary energy in the EU cannot be easily and quickly excluded, and their import in the future is implied, (OPEC, Annual Report). Gradually, crude oil is abandoned and replaced by other energy sources. The use of nuclear energy and energy from renewable sources requires a highly skilled workforce and profession, enormous investments, and a lot of time. Although renewable energy sources are conducive to environmental pollution and the greenhouse effect causing drastic changes in weather around the world, their benefits can only partially solve the problem of import dependence on fossil fuels, so far. Finally, the participation of natural gas in primary energy production is in line with EU energy policy, and it was initiated by accepting the Kyoto Protocol commitments, all to reach the target level of decarbonization, environmental protection, and gaining time through transition and renewables energy, (Veselinovic, 2015). Additionally, natural gas contributes to heating and transportation in the EU economy, and the amount of domestic gas production can't meet the increasing demand level in the EU. The amounts of the largest EU natural gas importers and analysis are represented below, (table 1).

The positions of the largest gas producers and consumers within the EU are the most important for the sustainability of the EU energy policy, in

the first place the companies in the German economy. Regarding this it involves enabling a path for a long-term supply involves a distributors determination and selection, all this based on a well-defined marketing strategy and decision-making units in the EU, (Dvornik, 2018). According to Veselinovic “One of the main functions within a company is the marketing area, and it is of the utmost importance and relevance of having an already established and well-functioning department of marketing within the company, which would implement proper, just-in-time, and a step ahead of competitive marketing strategies”, (Veselinovic, 2020). As the carrier of the EU economy and the positions of other members, decision-making units impact long-term energy sustainability and marketing strategies among the EU.

Import dependence on natural gas of the leading countries of the EU

Decades ago, the import of natural gas into the EU was over $\frac{3}{4}$. Some countries have been chronic, for many years, dependent on imports of this energy source. The extent to which EU members are generally dependent on gas import can be seen below, in table 1 and graph 1. Table 1, shows the four decades of gas imports from the largest importers within the EU, in mil. standard m^3 . We can see that during the period 1980 - 2020, the imported quantities of all large importers increased, primarily in Spain, Italy, Austria, and the Netherlands. The German economy, as bound by the entire EU economy, and vice-versa, also recorded an increase in imports of over 65% for the observed period. Oscillations in gas imports were observed for the taken period only in the United Kingdom (hereinafter UK) and Belgium, but the outcome is similar as in other countries.

Table 1. Largest natural gas EU importers and largest world exporters, for 1980 – 2020, (m standard m^3)

| Country/Year | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Germany | 51.650 | 57.450 | 76.200 | 88.884 | 155.493 |
| Italy | 14.370 | 30.930 | 57.630 | 75.348 | 66.227 |
| Netherlands | 3.200 | 2.270 | 12.600 | 16.970 | 53.255 |
| France | 20.900 | 29.310 | 42.320 | 46.199 | 46.140 |
| UK | 10.800 | 7.330 | 2.200 | 53.850 | 43.933 |
| Belgium | 11.920 | 9.630 | 15.950 | 31.330 | 42.696 |
| Spain | 1.870 | 4.440 | 16.730 | 36.270 | 32.838 |
| Austria | 3.010 | 5.220 | 6.120 | 7.530 | 13.250 |

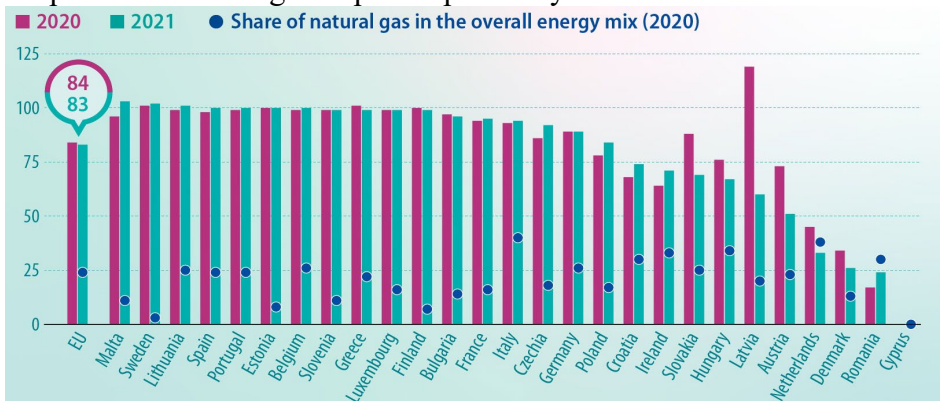


| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Total world import | 198.950 | 308.920 | 639.860 | 990.009 | 1.244.401 |
| Russia | 48.489 | 97.545 | 186.620 | 209.760 | 199.928 |
| United States | 1.270 | 2.440 | 6.820 | 32.187 | 149.538 |
| Qatar | 0 | 0 | 14.040 | 107.437 | 143.700 |
| Norway | 25.750 | 25.180 | 48.910 | 100.544 | 112.951 |
| Australia | 0 | 5.210 | 10.200 | 24.698 | 102.562 |
| Total world export | 203.800 | 317.220 | 630.743 | 1.002.557 | 1.243.784 |

Source: OPEC - Annual Report of World Gas Importers and Exporters, available at https://asb.opec.org/data/ASB_Data.php, accessed on 24.4.2022

In recent decades, the share of natural gas imports in the EU has been over 80%. Graph 1. shows the percentage of natural gas imports to the EU, as well as the percentage of natural gas imports of all EU members individually (2021). This clearly shows how dependent the EU, as well as its members, are on gas imports. Currently, the EU imports 83% of natural gas, while the proportion of imports of this energy source in the EU members varies concerning the overall percentage of gas imports into the EU.

Graph 1. EU natural gas import dependency in 2020/2021 Source:



EUROSTAT, available <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4187653/13722723/Natural+gas+import+dependency+2021.jpg/fb005f80-3902-5cac-f74a-2b5a59118e37?t=1650362833932>

Despite to relatively low percentage of contribution (7,2%) in primary energy production, natural gas is a very demanded energy good in many EU members. Highly import-dependent EU countries are Malta (100%), Sweden (100%), Latvia (100%), Spain (100%), Portugal (100%), Estonia (100%), Belgium (100%), Slovenia (100%), Greece (100%), Luxembourg

(100%), Finland (100%), Bulgaria (98%), France (97%), Italy (97%), Czech Republic (96%), Germany (94%), Poland (86%), Croatia (74%), Ireland (71%), Slovakia (71%), Hungary (69%) and Lithuania (68%). The EU countries that are half or partially dependent on natural gas imports are Austria (51%), the Netherlands (35%), Denmark (25%), and Romania (20%), while Cyprus (1%) ranks last in this series.

Graph 1. also shows the share of natural gas in the total energy consumption of each EU member state for 2020 and 2021, which further indicates the importance and role that this energy source has in each EU member individually. In this regard, we single out Italy (43%), Hungary (41%), the Netherlands (40%), Germany (27%), Austria (27%), and France (20%).

This means that natural gas is of special importance for the above-mentioned countries because it occupies a significant place in the total energy consumption, i.e. one-third of the total energy consumed. Taking into account that this share at the EU level (24%) is about one quarter, the above-mentioned values of the mentioned countries are mostly above the EU average. In France, this value is slightly below the EU average thanks to a large number of nuclear power plants (54), which greatly contribute to the total energy consumption of this country. However, natural gas with its participation is not negligible.

Concerning this, what problem is? Out of 100% of imported gas, 25% falls on gas imported from Russia. At first glance, 25% of imports from Russia at the general level may not indicate the seriousness of the problem, but if we look at the levels of participation in EU countries, as well as the fact that imports of natural gas are largely related to international diplomacy and various geopolitical interests, it will be seen how complex this problem is. Table 2. gives an overview of percentages of gas imports from Russia by the most affected EU economies in 2020, and proportions did not change for many years.

Natural gas arrives in the EU via several routes, the most important of which is through the distribution network of gas pipelines through Ukraine and Belarus, where natural gas is distributed from Russia throughout the EU.

In addition to this option of gas supply, the EU can be supplied with alternative gas pipelines from other countries, through seaports, also



major gas exporters, primarily the US and Norway, but also Australia, Algeria, etc (see table 1). EU does so, by importing certain amounts of gas from Norway (21 %) and the USA (6%), and Algeria (12%). However, the long-term arrangements of these gas exporters with other countries are more complicated and risky. In addition, quantitatively limited transport by sea, as well as higher gas prices, do not provide an optimistic answer to the question of whether the supply of gas to the growing needs of the EU on these routes is reliable, sufficient, and economically viable.

Table 2. Gas importers of EU members from Russia in 2020

| EU member | Gas import from Russia, in % | EU member | Gas import from Russia, in % |
|------------|------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Finland | 100% | Austria | 60% |
| Estonia | 100% | Poland | 50% |
| Latvia | 100% | Germany | 45% |
| Bulgaria | 100% | Romania | 30% |
| Slovakia | 100% | Italy | 28% |
| Czech Rep. | 80% | Holland | 24% |
| Greece | 75% | Belgium | 24% |
| Lithuania | 70% | France | 24% |
| Hungary | 65% | Denmark | < 75% * |

* Imported from Germany

Source: Source: OPEC - Annual Report of World Gas Importers and Exporters, available at https://asb.opec.org/data/ASB_Data.php, accessed on 24.4.2022

Since the establishment of the European Economic Community, as a forerunner of the EU, all members have had a positive trend of economic growth, and the need for gas and oil has increased. According to the IEA (IEA - International Energy Association Built), domestic product growth of 10% in energy-dependent countries over 60%, results in a 5% increase in energy dependence, if energy efficiency does not change (OPEC, annual report). The EU's import dependence on natural gas is mainly determined by the import dependence of individual members, to which we pay special attention. It is reflected through the link between the unequal import dependence of EU member states, the unequal contribution of EU members to the EU's economic and political potentials, and the fact that energy-exporting countries use their superior position to pursue their interests that puts the EU in a complex geopolitical situation. In this regard, it is clear the EU's geopolitical position depends on itself, but also Russia and the US. Many EU members, some of very important for the EU, are import-dependent on

Russia, while many EU members depend on the US economically and military-politically, and in some cases on the US and Russia as well.

Implications of diversification of gas imports into the EU

Different geopolitical factors impact different decisions on choosing suppliers. Therefore, the policy of diversification of energy supply risk doesn't only imply the purchase of fossil fuel from imports by several suppliers, but also the direct and coordinated substitution of energy sources, that would be imported, to other energy sources that are produced, such as nuclear energy, (Umbach, 2010). As in all other branches "In a realistic environment of supplier selection and evaluation, a decision-maker must take into account different uncertain factors", (Paunovic et al., 2017).

Many EU members have sought to diversify oil and gas imports in previous decades, but the most common choice of procurement has been Russia, due to its huge reserves of these energy sources, reliable infrastructure, and convincingly lower, and therefore competitive, prices. In such circumstances, EU members had not many choices in procuring essential energy sources. However, gas positions are not only strengthened by Russia. Other producer countries are doing the same, from the Persian Gulf to the rest of the world, in Africa, North and South America, and Australia. In today's circumstances, the international market, in addition to Russia, is dominated by the US and Norway, as well as OPEC member countries. In the meantime, the strengthening of Russia and other countries (China, Brazil, India, Turkey) recently, as well as their taking on active roles in the world economy, politics, military moves, diplomacy, and the politicization of energy relations, became inevitable. The entire course of these changes took place at a time when the EU was facing the consequences of the economic, financial, and political crisis, which resulted in the UK leaving the EU. New circumstances put EU policy in a situation where it has to react to new geopolitical circumstances. The dominance of Western transnational companies has been replaced by partnerships and dominance of national companies of energy countries, (Djukić, 2014).

It is important to point out that there are big differences between the members in the field of contribution to EU policy. For example, the GDP contribution of each EU member is not the same. Furthermore, the



participation of each member in the functioning of the EU Parliament, as an influence in taking the EU's position in international diplomacy, is not equal, either. Energy imports can be complicated and are an unavoidable part of international diplomacy. Namely, the logistics and supply chain of gas and oil has been developed so that it passes through countries that are marked as friendly countries to gas and oil exporters/importers, and thus represent partners in international diplomacy. Also, countries that are import-dependent on gas and oil, often can't find themselves in a position to defend their economic, military, and political interests. There are many examples where energy-exporting countries with their gas position condition importing countries with "voluntary" barter deals, promoting its industry, especially dedicated ones.

The United States and Russia's impact on the EU's strategic problem in diversifying the risk of gas imports

Although the geopolitical situation regarding the relations between the US and the EU, the EU and Russia, as well as between Russia and the US, is very complex and dates back for many decades. In the 20th century, especially before, during, and after World War II, relations among Western countries became stronger. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the US decided to go to war and defeat Germany together with allied countries. At the same time, proposals to establish supranational institutions in finance, trade, and politic at the global level were on the table even before the start of World War II. Two proposals dominated, pro-European and pro-American. World War II stopped everything. After the war, supranational institutions were established on the territory of the US, and Europe, but also on other continents. A number of these supranational institutions, as time will show, will be very influential on the governments of many countries. Through dialogues and the adoption of the format and content of the statutes of supranational institutions, the basics of decision-making protocols were defined. All are based on the capital role of the founding countries, and not on the population that each country would represent, thus contributing to democratic decision-making. The first proposal was in favor of countries for which capital is not a problem, i.e. the US, but also countries that are in the shadow of US politics and economy. The second proposal was in favor of the countries of Europe, later the countries of the European Economic Community i.e. EU. If we take into account that all foreign

exchange and gold reserves, as well as other valuable assets during the war were transferred to the UK and then to the US, it can hardly be said that European countries had choices and influence in negotiations on the statute and functioning of future international and supranational institutions. After the war, the United Nations (hereinafter UN), the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (hereinafter GATT) were founded. GATT was temporary until the negotiating countries agreed on a consensus. GATT, as the forerunner of the World Trade Organization, lasted from 1947 until the end of 1994. Namely, although of a temporary character, one bloc of countries led by the US did not want to give up on the negotiations on the statute and the manner of making decisions for the future World Trade Organization. In the end, the persistence of the US paid off, and in 1995 the World Trade Organization was founded.

Within all supranational institutions, the US has had a huge and decisive influence on functioning and decision-making, primarily based on invested capital, which gave them a crucial right to vote through the statute. Also, many member countries of these institutions, but also partners and allies of the West, followed both their own and US interests. By contributing to the functioning of all international institutions mentioned above, except the UN (due to the UNSC, Russia, and China being permanent members), they took the benefit on Western countries, especially the US and UK.

Later, other international and regional financial institutions were formed, such as the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Central Bank, the Paris and London Clubs, the Inter-American Development Bank, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the African Development Bank, etc. All these financial institutions, both global and regional, are organized on similar principles, and decisions on membership, lending, sponsorship, and providing any support in the economic, monetary, political, and even military-security fields can hardly be made without consent. US representatives are present in the governing and/or monitoring bodies of these institutions. The EU leading countries have also seen their interest in this, and through cooperation with the US, directly or bypassing, they are participating in, so to speak, protocol activities, led by the US representatives. In this way, the US has, over time, built a very complex and efficient mechanism that works in a



direction that only the US and its friendly countries are suited to. It should be noted that the US has close and partnership cooperation with OPEC member countries, which are very influential in the oil industry, for example, Qatar. Through cooperation with Qatar and other OPEC members, the US is in a position to influence the decisions made within the OPEC association, which directly and often decisively affect the changes in oil prices on the international market. As time has shown, in this way, the US and its allies have provided an effective system through which the US has managed to install countless additional institutional instruments in each country of interest. All this influences various decisions, and thus often influences sovereignty and independence - decision-making by weaker countries.

On the military-security level, immediately after World War II, military alliances, the NATO (NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1949) and the Warsaw Pact (1955) were formed. With the collapse of the USSR, the Warsaw Pact disintegrated (1991), and many former members of the Warsaw Pact joined the NATO, which over time influenced the growth of tensions between Western and Eastern countries, primarily Russia. In the meantime, the US has built military bases throughout Europe, and under the NATO doctrine and allegedly defense policy, primarily installed nuclear missiles in Germany, Italy, and Belgium, but also started the construction of the so-called defense missile shield across the Baltic countries. It sounds ironic, but the NATO statute states that this alliance is defensive. Russia has complained countless times after the accession of the Baltic countries to the NATO pact, especially after the beginning of the construction of the missile shield, and then it was Ukraine's turn to join NATO. The situation boiled over, and Russia reacted. To preserve the security distance, as well as its strategic position on the gas and oil market, it is making a strategic move and attacking Ukraine.

Decision-making in the field of energy should be a sovereign right of any country. Many countries, especially those rich in oil and gas reserves, and militarily weaker or without strong allies have faced a series of obstructions, stops, and sanctions by international financial institutions. If these measures did not yield results, the Western countries used radical measures by launching NATO mechanisms, to realize their interests in the field of economy and energy. Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Libya have faced these challenges in the past.

The previous review can only elementary explain the relations between East and West, but that does not diminish the obviousness of the current situation on the geopolitical scene. To this, we remain the fact that 80% of natural gas from Russia to the EU was distributed through installed capacities in Ukraine and Belarus, from 1973 until 2022. In recent years, new Nord Stream 1 gas pipelines were built by Russian and EU companies, followed by Nord Stream 2, but also Turkish Stream 1 and Turkish Stream 2, which will supply EU countries, Turkey, and the Balkans, independently of Ukraine, (Djukic, 2014). With its new gas infrastructure, Russia sought to bypass Ukraine, a candidate for NATO membership. Thus strengthening its position as a sovereign gas distributor for the EU, and indirectly its security position.

Today's circumstances in Ukraine and Europe indicate that these relations are very disturbed and reached their peak, such as have not been seen since World War II. The current events in Ukraine represent only the consequences of the relationship between the great powers and the economies, which are fighting for their interests, each in its way, violating international law and the conventions of war. For example, one of the official arguments why Russia carried out aggression against Ukraine is because Ukraine didn't indicate that it wanted to fulfill the obligations from the agreement signed in Minsk, after the war in 2014. It is generally known that the US in public, also secretly encouraged and helped the authorities in Ukraine, otherwise pro-Western, not to implement the Minsk agreement. In this way, the US consciously influenced Ukraine to be attacked by Russia. It is interesting that the US authorities, earlier during the elections, publicly supported the pro-Western government in Ukraine, which won the elections.

Western countries, led by the US, UK, and the EU, need access to fossil energy, to maintain regional and global dominance in the economic and security field. After all, whoever has access to and control over the production and distribution of oil and gas has a great influence on the outcome of negotiations on any topic. Hence, Western countries have long had an enviable negotiating position on the geopolitical scene, which they have been building for decades through the aforementioned alliances and supranational institutions, while their access to and control of essential energy sources in the world is partial and debatable. On the other hand, lying on its entire surface in gas and oil fields, Russia has long felt threatened by these circumstances, especially because the principles of international law have not been respected for several decades (Kovac and



Popovic, 2013). The struggle for supremacy in the energy market between the US and Russia as gas exporters, primarily for buyers of the EU market, is more than obvious. The US dislike EU countries or their allies depending on Russian gas, (Siddi, 2017). While gas was delivered through infrastructure in Ukraine, it was acceptable for the US. As the Nord Stream 1 and 2 projects came to an end, pressures on Ukraine and Germany intensified synchronously. Pressure on Germany from the US intensified. The Trump administration has put tremendous pressure on the German government, but also on the governments of other EU member states, to allocate significant savings and assets for NATO membership. Before that, during the Barack Obama administration, an affair broke out with the wiretapping of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, at a time when Germany was deciding to approve the construction of an additional gas pipeline Nord Stream 2. The moment when the Nord Stream 1 and 2 projects were brought to an end, pressure on Germany intensified. Germany relented, and may not have had a choice at the time, and there was a deliberate delay in the field of bureaucracy on the German side. As a consequence of this, the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline did not necessarily receive a license and consent from the Germany commission.

It is also important to note that Germany has historically had strong ties with Russia, but it has been severely affected since the Second World War, especially since the fall of the Berlin Wall. This does not mean that the strategic-partnership relations between Germany and Russia cannot be renewed. These relationships have experienced both ups and downs. There is no doubt that the strong economies of the West, above all the US and UK, are worried about the possible renewal of partnership ties between Germany and Russia. For that reason, it is not illogical why the US and UK are very cautious towards Germany.

The crisis and the war in Ukraine put the relations of the Western countries, the US, and the EU to the test. At the very beginning, this unity seemed strong. Although strong, when the decision to ban the import of gas and other energy sources from Russia came on the agenda in a series of sanctions imposed on Russia, Germany was among the first countries to protest, and Hungary immediately supported it. These two countries have signed a long-term contract with Russia for gas delivery. Courage, but also awareness of the importance of energy diversification for survival, but also economic growth, some countries have not lost.

On the other hand, Russia, aware of its potential, positions, and built infrastructure, does not hesitate to use gas as a political weapon to achieve

its goals. Russia's gas infrastructure, in addition to gas pipelines across Europe, has been expanding in Eastern Eurasia, Turkey, China, and other Asian countries for years, so geopoliticians in Russia have thought of diversifying distribution channels if one or more countries decide to give up the supply of Russian gas. Russia permeates security goals but also strives to enable itself to have a long-term impact on EU economies, which are import-dependent on gas, primarily Germany. This is proved by the disrespect of the principle of reciprocity on the part of Russia. The principle implies mutual investments between companies from the EU and other countries. Namely, if economic entities of non-EU countries want to invest and operate in the EU common market, it is necessary that the countries they come from also integrate the principle of reciprocity into their legislation, and enable EU companies to run their business based on reciprocating. In practice, this principle has only been partially realized. When it comes to Nord Stream 1, with a capacity of 55 billion cubic meters (m³) per year, and put into operation in 2012, the principle of reciprocity was partially respected by participants. This project was created based on mutual cooperation between Russia and the EU. Gazprom, Witterstal, E.ON, Gasuin, and GDF companies formed Nord Stream AG, with Gazprom owning 51% of ownership. Over time, Gazprom expanded its capacities by appropriating the German Vingas, i.e. gas storage facilities in Germany and Austria. Across the Baltic Sea, the diversification of gas distribution routes from Russia to Germany has been diversified, and it can be said that relations between Russia and Germany have moved in a positive direction. Respect for the principle of reciprocity, as much as possible, has borne fruit. There was deeper cooperation between Russian Gazprom and German Wintershall and E.ON. Just as Russian Gazprom was allowed to take over a 50% stake in Vingas, so Wintershall was allowed to gain gas and oil fields in Siberia through a stake in partner companies. However, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland, which are strongly influenced by the US, have begun to protest, demanding higher fees for gas transit. Among other things, Lithuania and Poland have already built liquefied natural gas terminals that they plan to import from the US, at the same time reducing gas import dependence on Russia. In some instances, there has been a reduction and even interruption of gas supplies from Russia to Germany and other EU countries. It should be reminded that Germany is re-exporting imported gas from Russia to other EU members (for example, Denmark), and such moves by Russia are reflected in other countries as well. Further, the realization of the Nord Stream 2 project, doubles the capacity of gas distribution from Russia to Germany, France, the



Netherlands, and other EU countries, up to 110 billion cubic meters per year. Crossing the territorial waters of Russia, Finland, Sweden, Germany, and Denmark, with this project, but also with the new war events, Ukraine has financially and security-wise distanced itself from regional economic and energy flows in the long run. Thus, the maneuvers made by Russia, but also by some EU countries, indicate that Russia can use the gas network as an instrument for exerting influence in favor of defending its interests. Another example goes in favor of this statement. After Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Western countries began to impose a series of sanctions, from banning trade with Russia to blocking the accounts of Russian companies and banks, to banning trade in Russian rubles. In this way, the space for the economic activities of the Russian economy narrowed significantly, and the demand for the Russian currency dropped significantly. To protect its economy from the imposed sanctions, Russia decides that the importing countries have to pay in rubles if they want to order and buy its natural gas. Thus, Russia wants to ensure certain stability of its currency on the international financial market and reduce the risk of depreciation of its growth domestic product, which has begun to suffer the consequences of the imposed sanctions. Thus, the moment when Bulgaria and Poland refused to pay Russia for gas in rubles, Russia immediately stopped delivering gas to these countries. In this challenge regarding the supply of gas in the newly created geopolitical circumstances, Poland stood out with its strong position. With its long-term arrangements with the US regarding the supply of LNG, as well as the installed terminals for the reception and storage of LNG, Poland has managed to reduce the risk of gas imports from Russia. Also, Poland has managed timely to find a solution to overcome the challenge, through the Yamal gas pipeline. Supporting rejections, the EU only intensified the further growth of gas prices on the international market. The price of gas increased by 20% within 24 hours. Therefore, the unity inside the EU energy policy doesn't exist. This increase in price impact other EU gas importers from Russia. That there is no unity within the EU among members on the implementation of a unified policy in the field of energy and international diplomacy, indicates that some EU members (Hungary and Slovakia) do not plan to suspend gas supplies from Russia, paying in Russian rubles, violating adopted sanctions packages introduced to Russia by the EU. It turns out that gas as a political weapon of Russia gives results, at least in the short term.

Possible outcomes

The facts are that Russia uses gas, but oil as a political weapon, primarily through its national companies and infrastructure for energy distribution. As special support to this, Russia has at its disposal a very powerful army that will be used to provide the above-mentioned mechanism. On the other hand, Western countries have a much wider range of instruments through which they can, directly and indirectly, achieve their economic, energy, military, security, and other geopolitical strategic goals. In addition to the NATO and other bilateral and multilateral partnerships, and as previously described, there are global and regional supranational institutions in the different spheres. Western countries support each other, and in return receive support from major powers in the economic, security, and political spheres. Partial or complete abandonment of such cooperation would mean actions in the form of retaliation for the disturbed cooperation, such as the example of Turkey. The South Stream gas pipeline, which was supposed to double the capacity of the already built Blue Stream gas pipeline, was stopped due to US pressure, primarily on Bulgaria, but on Turkey as well. After the failed coup in Turkey, which had the unofficial support of some people from the US, Turkey corrected its geopolitical position about the US, and in the field of energy and security policy partially turned to cooperation with Russia. Instead of South Stream, in cooperation with Russia, the Turkish Stream gas pipeline was built. Also, Turkey bought serious weapons systems from Russia. Immediately afterward, the US stopped the delivery of the most modern planes, based on contracts signed by the US and Turkey, and Turkey had paid. Even, membership in NATO can not secure pure security. Therefore, the US treat unreliable partners just based on their interests.

Given the long-term and complex processes in EU-US relations, but in the relations of developed EU countries with Russia, the question arises whether the EU is sustainable in the long run in terms of unique energy policy? Is the EU on its knees? Is any reliable path? Obviously, in front of the EU are twice? The first is to maintain and strengthen relations with its strategic partners in all spheres of its survival and development strategy. Especially in the sphere of energy policy and diversification of energy imports. However, by partnering with the US and UK, the EU puts itself on the front line ahead of a very determined Russia, which does not hesitate to defend its political, economic, security and energy interests by all means. On that path, the EU faces the challenge of how to maintain



unity between developed, import-dependent, and older EU members, and new ones, which depend to a considerable and even greater extent on the US. The second path provides the EU with a secure supply of gas and other fossil fuels but puts it at a disadvantage when it comes to deteriorating relations with the US, but and newly admitted members who are heavily influenced by the US militarily and financially. We add to this that the relations between the EU on the one hand, and the US and UK, on the other hand, are in the shadow of leaving the EU by the UK, as well as a series of above-mentioned problems and scandals between the EU and the US. Also, the fact remains that the EU countries have a land border with Russia, while the US is at a relatively safer distance. It remains to be seen what the outcomes of strategic relations will be, and what decisions will be made on the geopolitical scene in the near time, especially about resolving the current gas crisis. All this, with the hope that the current tectonic events on the geopolitical level do not represent an introduction to the Third World War.

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