

# Is Putin's war driving up commodity prices?



By Daniel Gros/ Florence

- **Understanding why prices are high is essential to devise the right policy response**

Sky-high commodity prices have the world reeling. Inflation has reached 7% in both the United States and in Europe – a level unseen for decades – with European consumers facing losses of purchasing power equivalent to those caused by the oil shocks of the 1970s. The economic recovery from the pandemic is now at risk of stalling, and the spectre of stagflation looms over developed countries from the European Union to Japan.

One might assume that Russian President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine is the primary cause of spiking energy and commodity prices. Russia is, after all, the world's largest exporter of oil and petroleum products, and, together with Ukraine, it accounts for a third of global wheat and barley exports. But there are two compelling reasons to doubt this

explanation.

First, the war has not led to large-scale interruptions in the supply of oil, gas, or other important commodities (at least not yet). Of course, the mere expectation in markets that a shortage is imminent can be enough to drive up prices. But such an expectation so far seems to have little basis.

Yes, wheat deliveries from Ukraine have been halted, and this year's harvest is in doubt, because Ukrainian farmers cannot work their fields. But Ukraine produces only about 3% of the world's wheat. Russia, meanwhile, produces 11%, and both production and exports remain uninterrupted. Moreover, while Russia has threatened to cut off gas supplies to "hostile countries" unless they pay in roubles – an ultimatum Europe has so far rejected – there is little indication that Russian oil or other commodities will be withdrawn from the market. For most commodities, the war should not affect supply.

A second reason to doubt that the war is responsible for today's high commodity prices is that most of the price increase happened before the invasion. The International Monetary Fund's commodity-price index remains below its 2008 peak, standing close to levels seen in 2012-13. And spot prices for gas are in line with their "pre-war" level from the end of last year, when few expected a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

While oil prices have risen since the start of the war, the increase has been a modest 20%. Although natural-gas prices have been attracting more attention, because they directly affect household heating bills, oil prices are much more important for Europe, because the value of its oil imports is traditionally about five times higher.

If the Ukraine war is not to blame for high energy and commodity prices, what is? One contributing factor might be what economists call the "hog cycle." The term stems from a phenomenon observed in the Danish hog industry: farmers would rear more animals when prices were high, thereby producing a glut, which reduced prices the following year, causing farmers to rear fewer animals, which then sold for higher prices.

Likewise, when commodity prices are high, there is a larger incentive to invest in exploration and mining. But when they are relatively low – as they have been in recent years – the profitability of such investment declines, leading to reduced production and higher prices in later years. And, indeed, the International Energy Agency has provided powerful evidence that years of under-investment in exploration have reduced production capacity.

The fall in demand in 2020, caused by the Covid-19 recession, masked this development. But when Europe, Asia, and the US began to recover strongly, there was not enough spare capacity to meet rising demand. This put upward pressure on prices throughout 2021.

Another factor contributing to high energy and commodity prices might have been the rise of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing, which has increasingly led investors to refuse to finance fossil-fuel exploration and development. They hope that denying the fossil-fuel industry capital will discourage production and spur progress toward a green economy based on carbon neutrality.

This phenomenon has been concentrated in the West. While upstream investment by the major Western oil and gas firms fell by nearly half between 2015 and 2020, such investment remained stable among Middle Eastern producers and rose in China. All of these producers have the same price incentives, but Western firms are the ones that are subject to ESG guidelines.

Understanding why prices are high is essential to devise the right policy response. If the war was responsible for high prices, it would be politically difficult to refuse price caps and generous compensation to help consumers and enterprises cope. Moreover, one could hope that prices would fall when the war ends.

But if high commodity prices are the result of a hog cycle and ESG pressures, they are sending an appropriate signal to markets; in fact, ESG rules are supposed to lead to higher prices. In this case, the economy needs to adjust to a new

level of scarcity – and consumers should not be compensated for their lost purchasing power.

Of course, these explanations are not mutually exclusive; all three factors – the hog cycle, ESG standards, and the war – are probably contributing to higher commodity prices. But price trends before the invasion suggest that the war is a minor factor.

This is not the most politically convenient explanation: if the war is the culprit, it absolves consumers and government of the responsibility to adjust, with the former receiving compensation and the latter running higher fiscal deficits. But it is the more economically sound explanation, and thus the one that should dictate a responsible policy response, despite the pain that adjustment might bring. – Project Syndicate

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## **US and EU reach LNG supply deal to cut dependence on Russia**



Bloomberg / Brussels

The US and the European Union will push to boost supplies of liquefied natural gas to European countries by the end of 2022 in a bid to displace Russian gas, a political framework that now leaves companies to sort out the details.

Under the agreement, Europe will get at least 15bn cubic metres of additional LNG supplies by the end of the year, though it's not clear where it will come from. Member states will also work to ensure demand for 50bn cubic metres of American fuel until at least 2030. The aim is to work with international partners to help the continent wean itself off Russian gas, which accounts for about 40% of Europe's needs.

"We're coming together to reduce Europe's dependence on Russian energy," US President Joe Biden said at a joint press conference with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who added that 15bn cubic metres this year "is a big step in that direction."

Europe is trying to diversify its energy sources in a bid to starve Russia of the revenues it needs to fund the war in Ukraine. But that's a mammoth task. Russia ships about 150bn cubic metres of gas to Europe via pipelines every year, and another 14bn to 18bn cubic metres of LNG. That means any

disruptions to flows of pipeline gas from Russia would hard to cope with.

"It's a start, but relatively small compared to the overall supplies from Russia," said Jonathan Stern, a research fellow at the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies. "All contributions will be welcome but the task is huge."

The issue is critical as Russia is the EU's biggest gas supplier. The EU also relies on the country for the biggest share of its coal and oil imports, and has struggled to shift its energy policy away from Moscow. The details of how the plan works is now in the hands of energy companies, with American LNG shippers and German buyers set to meet next week in Berlin to hash out possible deals.

The US has already been providing more LNG to Europe, with shipments doubling to record 4.4bn cubic metres in January and a similar level in February. Supplying another 15bn cubic metres could be feasible as long as Europe continue to pay a premium to cargoes compared to Asian buyers. A significant boost to global LNG supplies will only come from 2025, when new projects are scheduled to come online.

It's also unclear whether the supplies would be coming from additional production or from cargoes being redirected from other regions. A senior US administration official who briefed reporters on the plan Friday couldn't say how much of the additional 15bn cubic metres would be provided by US suppliers versus suppliers in Asia or elsewhere.

Currently, European buyers are competing with Asian countries for the world's limited supply of LNG cargoes.

Germany also unveiled its own plan to dramatically reduce Russian fossil fuel imports and make the country almost completely independent of Russian gas by the middle of 2024. Critics say the plan is impossible to achieve as Germany is Europe's biggest buyer of Russian gas.

The US-EU aspirational pact is light on detail. The senior US administration official said permitted US projects can meet the 50bn cubic metres of demand, and added that Europe's pledge to try to meet that demand might nudge planned US

facilities toward a final investment decision.

The US worked with partners in Asia this winter to secure supply but is now working to build up stocks for next winter. The effort will require a lot of diplomacy, another official told reporters.

The European Union wants to replace this year nearly two-thirds of its total gas imports from Russia after the war waged by President Vladimir Putin forced an unprecedented re-think of the bloc's energy strategy. The new energy strategy, outlined by the European commission earlier this month, aims to replace 101.5bn cubic metres of Russian gas in 2022 by tapping alternative supply sources, building up renewables and boosting energy security. It also seeks to ensure 50bn cubic metres in LNG from new suppliers.

Europe's ability to import more LNG is constrained by the current regassification capacity, number of terminals and interconnectors, according to an EU official, who asked not to be identified commenting on private talks.

Still, the continent is in a much better place than earlier this year, with mild weather and more LNG imports helping bring inventories level back within the 5-year range, after falling to the lowest in more than a decade. European gas prices have fallen more than 60% since reaching a record earlier this month.

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**Qatar will stand in solidarity with Europe, won't divert gas contracts to other**



# customers: Minister of State for Energy Affairs



Doha: Minister of State for Energy Affairs HE Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi stressed that Qatar will stand “in solidarity with Europe” and will not divert gas contracts to other customers, even if it means losing on possible financial gains.

The Minister told CNN that even though Qatar’s LNG contracts with Europe and the UK were divertible ones, Qatar’s commitment to Europe means “we’re not going to divert contracts and will keep them in Europe, even if there is financial gain for us to divert away, we would not do that,” before adding “that’s in solidarity with what’s going on in Europe.”

On the possibility for Europe to replace Russian gas, Al Kaabi said that replacing Russian gas is “not practically possible.” He highlighted that Russia supplies 30 to 40 percent of Europe’s gas needs, something the continent cannot replace.

The Minister of State rejected imposing sanctions on Russia’s



energy sector, adding that Qatar was not choosing sides in the Ukrainian crisis. He added that it was to keep the energy sector out of politics, due to the negative ramifications doing so would have on development. He added that doing so could affect prices the way it did and cause a lot of volatility.

He noted that the Ukrainian crisis had a negative impact on energy transition, highlighting that the use of coal has reached its highest levels ever, as all parties involved are prioritizing their energy security ahead of any long-term gains they are trying to reach. HE the Minister maintained however that the energy sector could do that in a responsible manner.

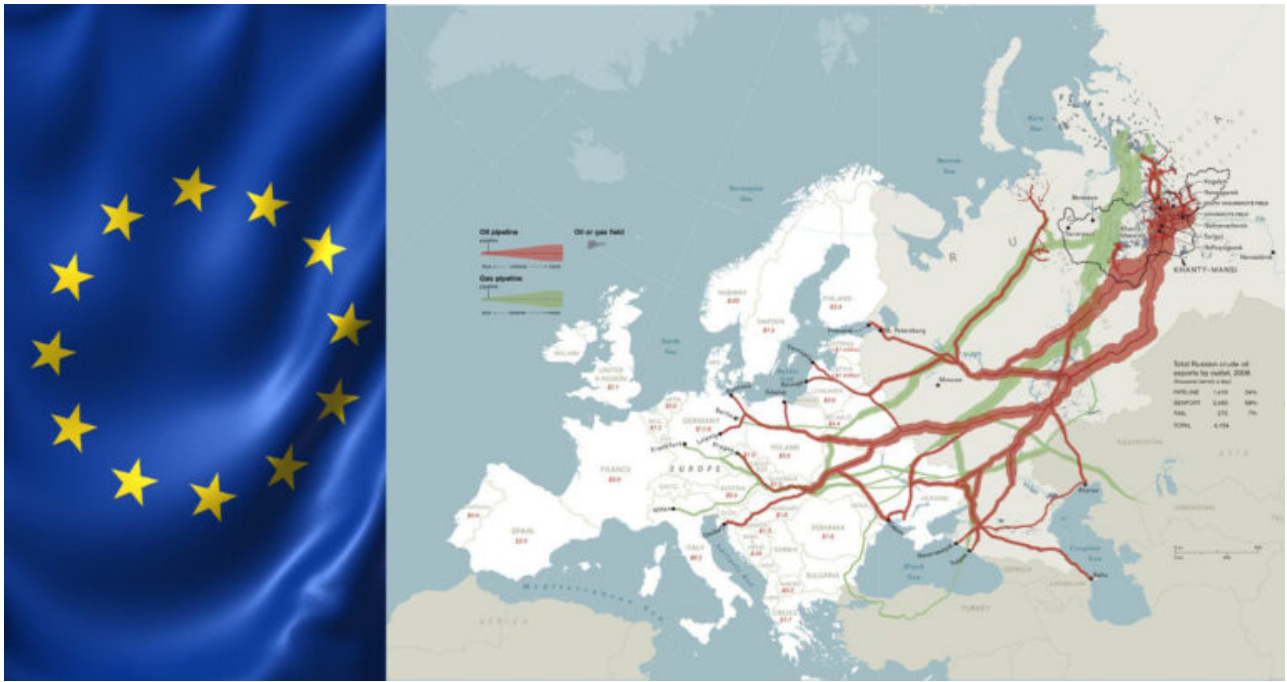
Commenting on the role the US could play in the future of energy production, he said that the US is certainly one of the biggest suppliers, given the abundance of LNG the country has.

On the prospects of Europe buying fuel jointly from large suppliers, the Minister said that he is yet to see a decision regarding that, noting that this never happened in the past. His Excellency added that many parties in Europe were speaking with Qatar and other large LNG producers because they want to diversify their supply.

On whether Qatar could turn its back on its Asian partners, the Minister of State for Energy Affairs said that QatarEnergy was the biggest company in terms of signing long-term contracts with partners in Asia, with many of those agreements signed over the past three years.

He also told CNN that there is a desire to diversify the buyers of Qatari gas, revealing that the plan is to have half of the customers of the Qatari gas be located to the East of the Suez Canal, with the other half to its West. Currently, 80-85% of Qatar gas buyers are in Asia, with 15-20% of customers located to the West of the Suez Canal.

# الحرب بين روسيا وأوكرانيا وسعي أوروبا الخاطئ إلى أمنها في مجال الطاقة



بقلم: رودى بارودى

لقد كشف تردد أوروبا في استهداف قطاع الطاقة الروسية لمعاقبة موسكو على غزوها لأوكرانيا مدى هشاشة إمدادات الطاقة للقارة، حيث تتطلب أفضل الحلول، فهماً أعمق لكيفية وصول الوضع الأوروبي إلى ما هو عليه اليوم.

التفسير البسيط هو أن ألمانيا والعديد من الدول الأوروبية الأخرى أصبحت تعتمد بشكل مفرط على واردات الغاز الطبيعي الروسي. لكن هذا ليس صحيحاً تماماً، لأن العديد من العوامل الأخرى تزيد من ضعف أوروبا، وبينما يلعب سوء التوقيت دوراً في بعضها، فإن البعض الآخر ينبع من إخفاقات كبيرة على مستوى صناعة القرار الاستراتيجي.

قررت حكومات اوروبية عدة إغلاق محطات الطاقة النووية والفحم في

السنوات الأخيرة، الأمر الذي لم يؤد سوى إلى زيادة حاجة أوروبا للطاقة - وبالتالي الاعتماد على - الغاز الروسي. هذا لا يعني أنه لم تكن هناك أسباب مقنعة لهذه القرارات، وأن تزامن فترة ما بعد الاعتماد على الطاقة النووية مع الأزمة الروسية الأوكرانية يعد سوء طالع إلى حد ما، ومع ذلك لا يمكن إنكار حقيقة أن التخلي عن هذا الكم الهائل من مولدات الطاقة النووية قد ترك لأوروبا عددًا قليلًا من البدائل العملية والقابلة للتطبيق. لكن المشكلة الحقيقية لم تكن بالإغلاق التدريجي لوحدات التوليد النووية؛ بل الفشل المتمثل في عدم الاستعداد بشكل مناسب للعواقب من خلال تجهيز مصادر طاقة بديلة جديدة كافية، وخاصة مصادر الطاقة المتجددة.

في ألمانيا أيضًا، وإلى جانب سياسة التخلي عن الطاقة النووية نسبيًا، تم تأجيل إنشاء محطات جديدتين لاستقبال شحنات الغاز الطبيعي المسال المنقولة بحراً لأكثر من عقد. وهذا يعني أنه، حتى لو تمكنت أوروبا من تأمين ما يكفي من الغاز الطبيعي المسال لاستبدال الغاز الذي يُضخ إليها من روسيا عبر الأنابيب، فإنها تفتقر إلى القدرة الكافية على إعادة تحويل الغاز المسال إلى غاز جاهز للاستهلاك يمكن الاستفادة منه بالكامل.

وفي منحى مماثل، فإن خط أنابيب نابوكو المقترح - الذي كان سينقل الغاز الأذربيجاني والمصري والعراقي و / أو التركماني من تركيا إلى النمسا - تعرض أيضًا لعراقيل متكررة وإلغاء نهائي في عام 2013، مما زاد من أهمية اعتماد أوروبا على الغاز الروسي وخطوط الأنابيب الروسية.

وبالرغم من ضياع هذه الفرص وغيرها على أوروبا والتي كانت ستؤمن لها المرونة في الاستفادة من مصادر طاقة متعددة من خلال تنويع مصادرها ووسائلها وطرق إمدادها، فإنه لا يزال أمام أوروبا الوقت لتحسين وضعها بشكل كبير، لا سيما على المدى المتوسط والطويل. أحد الخيارات الواعدة هو ربط فرنسا وإسبانيا بالجزائر والمغرب بوسائط نقل الغاز بأنابيب تحت البحر مع إمكانية كبيرة لإعادة تكرير الغاز المسال إلى غاز قابل للاستهلاك، حيث يمكن بعد ذلك توزيع الإمداد بالغاز إلى دول أوروبية أخرى. إلا أن مسائل سياسية وعراقيل مختلفة قد أدت إلى إبطاء هذا الاقتراح أيضًا، لذلك لا يسعنا إلا أن نأمل أن تساعد الأزمة الأوكرانية في تسليط الضوء مجددًا في مدريد وباريس على هذا المقترح.

هناك خطوات أخرى يمكن أن تتخذها أوروبا أيضًا، بعضها مباشر وتتطلب تسهيل التعاون عبر الحدود وتجاوز تطبيق بنود الاتفاقيات التي يمكن أن تستغرق وقتًا طويلًا لتحقيق. يتمثل أحدها في تعزيز قدرة القارة على تحمل حالات انقطاع واردات الغاز من خلال زيادة قدرتها التخزينية، سواء للغاز التقليدي في كهوف الملح تحت الأرض أو للغاز المسال في مستودعات الغاز الطبيعي الجديدة أو الموسعة.

وهناك خطوة ثانية تتمثل في تأجيل الألمان والبلجيكيين وغيرهم إغلاق المحطات النووية المقرر إيقاف تشغيلها. والثالثة هو أن يقوم الهولنديون بتوسيع موانئهم الحالية لاستقبال الغاز الطبيعي المسال، أما الخطوة الرابعة فقد بدأت في الأيام القليلة الماضية حيث استهل الألمان العمل في مرافق الاستيراد الخاصة بهم. وقد تكون الخطوة الخامسة هي العمل فورًا على ربط حقل غاز شرق البحر الأبيض المتوسط عبر خط أنابيب إلى تركيا ومن بعدها إلى أوروبا.

يمكن أيضًا تحسين الوضع من خارج القارة. فقد ضاعفت الولايات المتحدة، على سبيل المثال، صادراتها من الغاز الطبيعي المسال إلى أوروبا، وينبغي أن تكون قطر - التي أوفت بكل التزام من التزامات التسليم على الرغم من الحصار غير القانوني لمدة عامين ونصف العام الذي فرضه عليها بعض جيرانها - قادرة على زيادة شحناتها أيضًا، الأمر الذي من شأنه أن يعيد الثقة بأسواق التوريد. أما إسبانيا فإلى جانب تلقيها الغاز عبر الأنابيب فهي أيضًا تتزود بالكهرباء المولدة من مزارع الطاقة الشمسية في شمال إفريقيا، بالإضافة إلى نطاق شبكات تعاون المشتركة الهائل على امتداد المنطقة الأورو متوسطية.

أخيرًا وبالتأكيد ليس آخرًا، يمكن لأوروبا أن تخدم مصالحها على أفضل وجه - بكل ما للكلمة من معنى - من خلال الموافقة على دعمها المالي لمشاريع النفط والغاز المستقبلية للسنوات القليلة المقبلة، وأن تصبح أكثر جدية بشأن مصادر الطاقة المتجددة. تمتلك دول الأورو متوسطي وحدها إمكانات كافية من طاقة الرياح البحرية لتحل محل الصناعة النووية العالمية بأكملها، بالإضافة إلى تقنيات أخرى، بما في ذلك الطاقة الشمسية والأمواج والمد والجزر والطاقة الحرارية الأرضية تحت سطح البحر.

كل هذا يجب أن يوفر الاستقلالية عن الغاز الروسي وأن يعبد الطريق  
نحو السلام وليس الحرب.

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# Ο πόλεμος και η προβληματική αναζήτηση της Ευρώπης για ενεργειακή ασφάλεια



## ΗΜΕΡΗΣΙΑ

OPINIONS – 25.03.22 17:42

Roudi Baroudi

Τι πρέπει να γίνει για να υπάρχει απεξάρτηση από το ρωσικό αέριο και να κινούνται τα αγαθά για την ειρήνη, όχι για τον πόλεμο

Οι επιφυλάξεις της Ευρώπης να βάλει στο στόχαστρο τη ρωσική ενεργειακή βιομηχανία για να τιμωρήσει τη Μόσχα για την εισβολή της στην Ουκρανία έχει αποκαλύψει ότι **οι ενεργειακές προμήθειες της ηπείρου δεν είναι επαρκείς**, με τις καλύτερες λύσεις να απαιτούν βαθύτερη κατανόηση του πώς η ευρωπαϊκή κατάσταση έφτασε στο σημείο που είναι σήμερα.

**Η απλή εξήγηση είναι** ότι η Γερμανία και πολλές άλλες ευρωπαϊκές χώρες έχουν γίνει υπερβολικά εξαρτημένες από τις εισαγωγές ρωσικού φυσικού αερίου. Αλλά αυτό είναι μόνο εν μέρει αλήθεια, καθώς πολλοί άλλοι παράγοντες τονίζουν την αδυναμία της Ευρώπης, άλλοι το αποδίδουν σε ατυχή συγκυρία, άλλοι το ερμηνεύουν ως **αποτυχία στο επίπεδο λήψης στρατηγικών αποφάσεων**.

Πρώτον, **πολλές κυβερνήσεις αποφάσισαν να κλείσουν τους πυρηνικούς σταθμούς** και τους σταθμούς ηλεκτροπαραγωγής με άνθρακα τα τελευταία χρόνια, γεγονός που απλώς αύξησε την ανάγκη της Ευρώπης και συνεπώς την εξάρτησή της από το ρωσικό αέριο. Αυτό δεν σημαίνει ότι δεν υπήρχαν επιτακτικοί λόγοι για αυτές τις αποφάσεις, και η σύμπτωση αυτής της μεταπυρηνικής περιόδου με την κρίση Ρωσίας-Ουκρανίας είναι τουλάχιστον εν μέρει κακή τύχη.

Ωστόσο δεν μπορεί να αμφισβητηθεί το γεγονός ότι η αδράνεια ή η ανικανότητα σε μεγάλες παραγωγές **έχει αφήσει την Ευρώπη με λίγες πρακτικές και βιώσιμες εναλλακτικές λύσεις**.

Το πραγματικό πρόβλημα, ωστόσο, δεν ήταν οι πυρηνικές διακοπές λειτουργίας των ίδιων των τοπικών μονάδων παραγωγής, αλλά μάλλον μια **αποτυχία επαρκούς προετοιμασίας για τις συνέπειες** προσθέτοντας άλλες εναλλακτικές όπως τις ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας.

Επίσης στη Γερμανία, και εν μέρει παράλληλα με τις διαδικασίες



αποπυρηνικοποίησης, δύο νέοι τερματικοί σταθμοί για την παραλαβή υγροποιημένου φυσικού αερίου (LNG) έχουν καθυστερήσει για περισσότερο από μια δεκαετία.

Αυτό σημαίνει ότι **ακόμη κι αν η Ευρώπη μπορούσε να εξασφαλίσει αρκετό LNG** για να αντικαταστήσει το φυσικό αέριο που λαμβάνει από τη Ρωσία, **δεν έχει επαρκή ικανότητα επαναεριοποίησης** για να το χρησιμοποιήσει πλήρως.

Ομοίως, ο προτεινόμενος **αγωγός Nabucco** -ο οποίος θα μετέφερε αέριο από το Αζερμπαϊτζάν, την Αίγυπτο, το Ιράκ ή και το Τουρκμενιστάν από την Τουρκία στην Αυστρία- σημείωσε επίσης επανειλημμένες καθυστερήσεις και τελικά ακυρώθηκε το 2013, επιβάλλοντας περαιτέρω τη σημασία του ρωσικού φυσικού αερίου και των ρωσικών αγωγών.

Παρά το γεγονός ότι η Ευρώπη έχασε αυτές και άλλες ευκαιρίες να γίνει πιο ευέλικτη και πιο ανθεκτική διαφοροποιώντας τις πηγές, τα μέσα και τις οδούς εφοδιασμού της, **έχει ακόμη χρόνο να βελτιώσει ουσιαστικά τη θέση της**, ιδίως μεσοπρόθεσμα και μακροπρόθεσμα.

Μια πολλά υποσχόμενη επιλογή είναι μια **διασύνδεση φυσικού αερίου** που θα επεκτείνει ριζικά τη χωρητικότητα του αγωγού **μεταξύ της Ισπανίας**, με υποθαλάσσιους αγωγούς προς την Αλγερία και το Μαρόκο και μια σημαντική αχρησιμοποίητη ικανότητα επαναεριοποίησης, **και της Γαλλίας**, από όπου οι εν λόγω προμήθειες θα μπορούσαν στη συνέχεια να διανεμηθούν σε άλλα σημεία της Ευρώπης.

Πολιτικές και άλλες ανησυχίες έχουν επιβραδύνει και αυτή την πρόταση, επομένως μπορούμε μόνο να ελπίζουμε ότι το επεισόδιο της Ουκρανίας θα βοηθήσει να ανανεωθεί η εστίαση στη Μαδρίτη και το Παρίσι.

Υπάρχουν και άλλα βήματα που θα μπορούσε να κάνει η Ευρώπη, μερικά από αυτά αρκετά απλά και απαιτούν λιγότερα από τη διακρατική συμφωνία και συνεργασία που **μπορεί να πάρουν τόσο πολύ χρόνο για να επιτευχθούν και να ενεργοποιηθούν**.

Το ένα είναι να ενισχύσουμε την ικανότητα της ηπείρου να αντέχει τις διακοπές παράδοσης αυξάνοντας την ικανότητα αποθήκευσης, είτε για συμβατικό αέριο σε υπόγεια σπήλαια αλατιού είτε για την υγροποιημένη έκδοση σε νέες ή διευρυμένες αποθήκες LNG. Ένα άλλο είναι **να καθυστερήσουν οι Γερμανοί, οι Βέλγοι και άλλοι το κλείσιμο των πυρηνικών σταθμών** που επί του παρόντος προγραμματίζονται για παροπλισμό.

Ένα τρίτο είναι **να επεκτείνουν οι Ολλανδοί τα υπάρχοντα λιμάνια λήψης LNG** και ένα τέταρτο ξεκίνησε τις τελευταίες ημέρες, καθώς οι Γερμανοί άρχισαν να εργάζονται για τις δικές τους εγκαταστάσεις παραλαβής. Ένα πέμπτο είναι να εργαστεί άμεσα **στο κοίτασμα φυσικού αερίου East Med Leviathan** για σύνδεση μέσω αγωγού με την Τουρκία και μετά με την Ευρώπη.

Η κατάσταση μπορεί επίσης να βελτιωθεί από χώρες εκτός Ευρώπης. Οι **Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες**, για παράδειγμα, έχουν διπλασιάσει τις εξαγωγές LNG στην Ευρώπη, και το **Κατάρ** -το οποίο τήρησε κάθε μία από τις δεσμεύσεις του για παράδοση παρά τον παράνομο αποκλεισμό δυόμισι ετών που του επέβαλαν ορισμένοι από τους γείτονές του- θα πρέπει να είναι σε θέση να αυξήσει και τις αποστολές του, κάτι που θα αποκαθιστούσε την εμπιστοσύνη στις αγορές εφοδιασμού.

Εκτός από το φυσικό αέριο που διοχετεύεται με αγωγούς, η Ισπανία λαμβάνει επίσης ηλεκτρική ενέργεια που παράγεται από **ηλιακά πάρκα στη Βόρεια Αφρική** και τα περιθώρια για παρόμοια κοινά δίκτυα στην ευρωμεσογειακή περιοχή είναι τεράστια.

Τελευταίο, αλλά σίγουρα εξίσου σημαντικό, η Ευρώπη μπορεί να εξυπηρετήσει καλύτερα τα δικά της συμφέροντα -με όλη τη σημασία της λέξης- **εγκρίνοντας τη χρηματοδοτική της υποστήριξη σε μελλοντικά έργα πετρελαίου και φυσικού αερίου** για τα επόμενα χρόνια και λαμβάνοντας ακόμη πιο σοβαρά τις ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας.

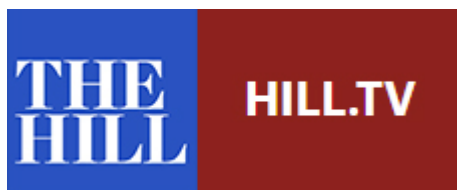
Οι ευρωμεσογειακές χώρες από μόνες τους έχουν αρκετό **υπεράκτιο**

**δυναμικό αιολικής ενέργειας** για να αντικαταστήσουν ολόκληρη την παγκόσμια πυρηνική βιομηχανία, και άλλες τεχνολογίες καλούν επίσης, όπως ηλιακή, κυματική, παλιρροιακή και υποθαλάσσια γεωθερμία.

Όλα αυτά για να υπάρχει απεξάρτηση από το ρωσικό αέριο και να κινούνται τα αγαθά για την ειρήνη, όχι για τον πόλεμο.

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## **The Russia-Ukraine war and Europe's flawed quest for energy security**



BY ROUDI BAROUDI, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 03/25/22 02:30 PM EDT

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND NOT THE VIEW OF THE HILL

Europe's hesitance over targeting Russia's energy industry to punish Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine has exposed the precariousness of the continent's energy supplies, with best solutions demanding a deeper understanding as to how the European situation got to where it is today.

The simple explanation is that Germany and several other European countries have become over-reliant on imports of Russian natural gas. But this is only partly true; numerous other factors accentuate Europe's vulnerability, and while some amount to unfortunate timing, others stem from significant failings at the strategic decision-making level.

For one thing, several governments have decided to close their nuclear and coal power plants in recent years, which has only increased Europe's need for – and therefore dependence on – Russian gas. This is not to say that there were no compelling reasons for these decisions, and the coincidence of this post-nuclear period with the Russia-Ukraine crisis is at least partly bad luck, yet there is no denying the fact that the idling of so much output capacity has left Europe with few practical and viable alternatives. The real problem, though, was not the nuclear shutdowns phasing out local generating units themselves; rather, it was a failure to adequately prepare for the consequences by adding enough new capacity, especially renewables.

Also in Germany, and partly alongside the denuclearization process, two new terminals for receiving seaborne shipments of liquefied natural gas (LNG) have been delayed for more than a decade. This means that even if Europe were able to secure enough LNG to replace the piped gas it gets from Russia, it lacks sufficient regasification capacity to make full use of it.

Similarly, the proposed Nabucco pipeline – which would have carried Azerbaijani, Egyptian, Iraqi, and/or Turkmen gas from Turkey to Austria – was also subjected to repeated delays and eventual cancellation in 2013, further entrenching the importance of Russian gas and Russian pipelines.

Despite having missed these and other opportunities to make itself more flexible and more resilient by diversifying its sources, means, and routes of supply, Europe still has time to substantially improve its position, especially in the medium and long terms.

One promising option is a gas interconnector which would radically expand the pipeline capacity between Spain, with both undersea pipelines to Algeria and Morocco and a considerable unused regasification capacity, and France, from where the supplies in question could then be distributed to other points in Europe. Political and other concerns have slowed this proposal as well, so we can only hope that the crisis in Ukraine will help renew the focus in Madrid and Paris.

There are other steps Europe could take as well, some of them quite straightforward and requiring less of the cross-border agreement and cooperation that can take so long to reach and activate. One is to bolster the continent's ability to withstand delivery interruptions by increasing its storage capacity, whether for conventional gas in underground salt caverns or for the liquefied version in new or expanded LNG depots. Another is for the Germans, Belgians, and others to delay the closure of nuclear plants currently slated for decommissioning. A third is for the Dutch to expand their existing LNG receiving ports, and a fourth has got under way in the last few days as the Germans have started work on their own receiving facilities. A fifth is to work immediately on the East Med Leviathan gas field to connect via pipeline to Turkey and onward to Europe.

The situation can also be ameliorated from the outside. The United States, for example, has doubled its LNG exports to Europe, and Qatar – which met every single one of its delivery commitments despite the illegal two-and-half-year blockade imposed on it by some of its neighbors – should be able to increase its shipments, too, something that would restore confidence in supply markets. In addition to pipelined gas, Spain also receives electricity generated by solar farms in North Africa, and the scope for similar shared grids across the Euro-Mediterranean region is enormous.

Last, but certainly not least, Europe can best serve its own interests – in every sense of the word – by approving its financial support on future oil and gas projects for the next few years and getting even more serious about renewables. The Euro-Med countries alone have enough offshore wind power potential to replace the entire global nuclear industry, and other technologies beckon as well – including solar, wave, tidal, and undersea geothermal.

All this to become independent of Russian gas and to move for peace, not war.

Roudi Baroudi is a senior fellow at the Transatlantic Leadership Network and the author of “Maritime Disputes in the Mediterranean: The Way Forward” a book distributed by the Brookings Institution Press. With more than 40 years of experience in fields including oil and gas, electricity, infrastructure and public policy, he currently serves as CEO of Energy and Environment Holding, an independent consultancy based in Doha, Qatar.

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# **‘Liveable future’ on Earth at risk, UN climate report warns**



A landmark UN report warned on Monday that time had nearly run out to ensure a “liveable future” for all, detailing a horrifying “atlas of human suffering” and warning that far worse was to come.

Species extinction, ecosystem collapse, insect-borne disease, deadly heatwaves and megastorms, water shortages, reduced crop yields – all are measurably worse due to rising temperatures, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said.

In the last year alone, the world has seen a cascade of unprecedented floods, heatwaves and wildfires across four continents.

Such events will accelerate in coming decades even if the fossil fuel pollution driving climate change is rapidly brought to heel, the 195-nation IPCC warned.

As nations struggle to bend the curve of carbon dioxide

emissions downward, they must also prepare for a climate onslaught that in some cases can no longer be avoided, the report made clear.

For UN chief Antonio Guterres, it stands as a “damning indictment” of failed leadership that he described as nothing short of “criminal”.

“The world’s biggest polluters are guilty of arson of our only home,” he said.

Even Russia’s invasion of Ukraine cannot distract from the truths laid bare in the 3,600-page report and its summary for policymakers, said US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

“The international community must urgently continue to pursue ambitious climate action, even as we face other pressing global challenges,” he said in a written statement.

Svitlana Krakovska, who headed Ukraine’s delegation, spoke passionately at the conference’s final virtual plenary about the link between conflict and global warming.

## **‘Root’ of war and warming**

“Human-induced climate change and the war on Ukraine have the same roots – fossil fuels – and our dependence on them,” she said.

Among the report’s key takeaways was the intertwined fates of human and natural systems.

It stressed that climate change cannot be tamed unless degraded forests and oceans that stock carbon are restored and protected; and the ecosystems on which life forms depend for clean water, air and soil will not survive intact in a world of runaway warming.

The report made clear that a viable future rests on a knife’s

edge.

Some dire impacts are already irreversible, such as the likely demise of nearly all shallow water corals.

Other points-of-no-return lie just beyond the Paris Agreement's aspirational target of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels, the report warned.

The 2015 treaty enjoins nations to hold the increase in temperatures to "well below" 2°C, but recent science has left no doubt that a 1.5°C threshold is far safer.

Even in optimistic scenarios of rapid reductions in carbon pollution, projections of climate impacts are sobering.

Up to 14 per cent of land species face a "very high" risk of extinction with only 1.5°C of warming, the IPCC said, bolstering calls for conservation of 30 to 50pc of the world's land and ocean territory.

The threat grows with every fraction of a degree.

## **Adaptation**

By 2050 there will be more than a billion people in coastal areas highly vulnerable to storm surges amplified by rising seas by 2050. Per usual, the poorest will often be the hardest hit.

An additional 410 million people will be exposed to water scarcity from severe drought at 2°C of warming, and up to 80m will be at risk of hunger by mid-century.

By 2100, around \$10 trillion of assets will be in flood-prone coastal areas in a moderate greenhouse gas emissions scenario, according to the report.

The IPCC assessment – the sixth since 1990 – highlights the

need to cope with unavoidable climate impacts on almost every page.

Overall, the IPCC warns, global warming is outpacing our preparations for a climate-addled world.

“For people in Africa living on the front line of climate change, it is adapt or die,” said Peter Verkooijen, CEO of the Rotterdam-based Global Centre on Adaptation.

The report also spotlights irreversible and potentially catastrophic changes in the climate system known as tipping points, triggered at different thresholds of global heating.

These include the melting of ice sheets atop Greenland and the West Antarctic that could lift oceans 13 metres; the morphing of the Amazon basin from tropical forest to savannah; and the disruption of ocean currents that distribute heat across the globe.

“The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human wellbeing and planetary health,” the report concluded.

Further delays in cutting carbon pollution and preparing for impacts already in the pipeline “will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all”.

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## بارودي: قرار بايدن لخفض أسعار النفط العالمية... ودول أخرى

# ستلجأ إلى احتياطيها



**المركزية-** لفت الخبير الاقتصادي في شؤون الطاقة رودي بارودي إلى أن "القرار الذي اتخذه الرئيس الأميركي جو بايدن باستخدام جزء من احتياطي النفط الأميركي، "يهدف إلى خفض التضخم والمحافظة على الاسعار العالمية بشكل اقتصادي أكثر استدامة".

وأكد بارودي في مقابلة مع "الجزيرة" - إنكليزي، "استخدام ما يعدل 7% فقط من أصل مجموع الاحتياطي الأميركي الذي يعادل ٧١٤ مليون برميل". وكشف أن "واشنطن اتخذت هذا القرار للحدّ من تحكم دول "أوبك بلس" وروسيا بسعر النفط العالمي".

كذلك أكد أن "الصين، الهند، كوريا الجنوبية وبريطانيا سيبدأون باستخدام احتياطي النفط المتوفر لديهم، وذلك لدعم استقرار سوق النفط"، مشدداً على أن "الرئيس الأميركي لديه أسلحة وطرق اقتصادية أخرى ومنها الطلب من منتجي الغاز الصخري في الولايات المتحدة زيادة الإنتاج، والذي من الممكن أن يؤثر بشكل كبير على الأسعار العالمية".



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# US mediator said to give Israel, Lebanon deadline to reach maritime agreement



A US mediator has reportedly informed Israel and Lebanon that if they cannot agree to a compromise over a disputed maritime region, he will end his involvement in the talks.

US envoy Amos Hochstein, who visited Israel this week, suggested to top Israeli officials that they need to get the deal done before the March 2022 parliamentary election in Lebanon, the Axios news site quoted Israeli officials as saying on Wednesday.

Hochstein was also in Beirut last month as he continues his efforts to restart the stalled talks.



Israel and Lebanon have no diplomatic relations and are technically in a state of war. They each claim about 860 square kilometers (330 square miles) of the Mediterranean Sea as being within their exclusive economic zones.

The Israel-born envoy to the US-mediated talks, a longtime close adviser to President Joe Biden, also told officials that he was not planning to resume the joint talks held at a UN base on the border. Instead, he would meet with each side independently and then offer a bridging proposal.

“Hochstein told us he is not going to present a proposal that both sides like, but the opposite – that both won’t like. But if three to four months from now he sees the parties are not willing to take the deal, he would drop the whole thing and won’t deal with this anymore,” a senior Israeli official told Axios.

Hochstein was looking to get both sides to make serious compromises, officials said, noting that both countries wanted to resolve the dispute despite tensions between them.

Lebanon has sunk deep into an economic and financial crisis that started in late 2019 – a culmination of decades of corruption and mismanagement by the political class. The small Mediterranean country is eager to resolve the border dispute with Israel, paving the way for potential lucrative oil and gas deals.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah last month warned Israel against unilaterally searching for natural gas in the disputed maritime region before any agreement between Lebanon and Israel is reached.

In a wide-ranging speech broadcast from an undisclosed location during a ceremony marking Prophet Muhammad’s birthday, Nasrallah said that while he would leave it up to the Lebanese government to negotiate an end to the dispute, his group would not tolerate Israeli searches in the disputed

region.

Accusing Israel of casting a “greedy” eye over Lebanon’s natural resources, the terror leader said Israel was “mistaken if it thought it could extract these resources from the disputed area before negotiations are completed.”

“The resistance is capable of acting and will do so against any Israeli actions in the disputed zone,” Nasrallah said, accusing Israel of giving a company the go-ahead to begin explorations.

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## Maritime borders deal between Greece, Italy comes into effect



## ANKARA

A deal drawing maritime borders between Greece and Italy came into effect on Monday, said Italian diplomatic sources.

The two countries exchanged the tools of ratification of the deal during an official visit by Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias to Rome, said Italy's Foreign Ministry in a statement.

During the meeting with Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio, cooperation in the fields of energy and economy, and regional developments, particularly concerning Libya and the Eastern Mediterranean, were also addressed, the statement added.

According to Italian official news agency ANSA, Dendias accused Turkey of "violations in the Eastern Mediterranean" and threatening Greece.

Turkey, while seeking to defend its fair share of maritime territory in the Eastern Mediterranean, has decried recent provocative Greek moves such as the militarization of Aegean islands that are demilitarized by a treaty, navigational alerts (Navtex) that violate longstanding pacts, and illegal encroachment on Turkey's continental shelf.

Turkey, which has the longest continental coastline in the Eastern Mediterranean, has rejected the maritime boundary claims of Greece and the Greek Cypriot administration, stressing that these excessive claims violate the sovereign rights of both Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots.□□□□□□

Turkish leaders have repeatedly stressed that Ankara is in favor of resolving all outstanding problems in the region -- including maritime disputes -- through international law, good neighborly relations, dialogue, and negotiations.□□□□□□

Also, the implementation of the EU's National Recovery and Resilience Plan for handling the economic effects of the

pandemic, cooperation against irregular migration, and EU's enlargement to the Western Balkans were discussed between the two ministers.

Dendias, on Tuesday, was received by the Vatican's Secretary of State Pietro Paroli.

In the meeting, bilateral and regional developments, ahead of Pope Francis' scheduled visit to Greece on Dec.4-6, were discussed, said the Greek Foreign Ministry.

Greece, a predominantly Orthodox country, has a minority of over 50,000 Catholics, excluding expatriates and migrants, who are mostly concentrated in islands in the Aegean and Ionian Sea.