

EUKI Academy Web Seminar Report: Russian invasion of Ukraine: implications for energy transition in CEE 22nd March 2022

Many countries throughout Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) rely heavily on gas, oil, and coal from Russia. The Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine and the therefore increased gas prices has moved the idea of energy independence into the center of political discussions throughout the region. Therefore, the [EUKI Academy](#) invited Radu Dudau from Romania ([Energy Policy Group](#)) Dr. Aleksandra Gawllkowska-Fyk from Poland ([Forum Energii](#)) and Ruslan Stefanov from Bulgaria ([Center for the Study of Democracy](#)) to discuss the consequences which this war will have on the clean energy transition in CEE.

National Perspectives

Poland

- Imports almost half of their total energy consumption, whereas Russia is the main supplier. Poland imports 75% of coal, 65% of oil and 65% of gas from Russia.
- Discussions around energy security have always been at the forefront, currently dominated by discussions around the energy provision for next winter.

Romania

- Significant gas producer itself; only relies for 20% of its gas consumption on Russia. 25-30% of its oil comes from Russia, however there are more international alternatives for this energy source.
- Nevertheless, the current political debate still revolves around energy security. The government is opening new lignite mines this summer instead of reducing coal usage.

Bulgaria

- Heavily dependent: 85-90% of its gas, all its nuclear energy and a large amount of the country's oil consumption come from Russia.
- Consequently, Bulgarian government is the most reluctant to take a harder stance against Russia. In terms of the military but also concerning energy politics.

Perspectives on Europe

- Discussants agreed that joint EU-solutions shall be found.
- All experts agree that although we should be making "no regret"-decisions to increase electrification and the dominance of renewable energies in the mid- and long-run, the short-term increase in usage of coal and nuclear energy, especially in CEE, is highly likely. This is although "no regret"-options such as heat pumps and energy efficiency would be readily available.
- Strategies, which are supported and offered by the EU on clean energy transition, exist. However, the full potential of the measures, available funding and policy strategies have not been fulfilled at the national level. Hence, eradicating this gap needs to be a priority.
- A further consensus was that the equation of renewables with energy independence needs to be encouraged. The shift of the discourse surrounding renewables and the dismantling of the disinformation around them needs to be strongly supported by the EU.

What now?

- To change the narrative and support the shift of the discourse, actions need to be taken now. Civil Society Organizations and EUKI projects throughout CEE can join forces to make sure that the political discourse focuses on phasing out fossil fuels and simultaneously encourages renewables.
- The reduction of overall energy consumption EU-wide needs to be stressed, especially in the transportation and industry sector.
- Solutions, meaning renewable energies cheaper than fossil fuels which encourage energy independence, are already present. Governments need to be assisted in changing their course from returning to coal and nuclear energy to making “no regret”-decisions.
- Moreover, the focus should be shifted towards communal strength and de-centralized small-scale community projects.
- However, discrepancies between European countries and their own situation need to be considered. There is no universal solution which will work for all.