

THE GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGE OF THE EUROPEAN «ENERGY SECURITY POLICY»

У даній статті розглядається міжнародна політика Європейського Союзу як провідного та впливового «гравця» на всесвітній політичній арені, що наразі підлягає величезному впливу та значному тиску з боку інших держав через перш за все «енергетичну залежність» ЄС від імпортованого природного газу та нафти. У зв'язку з цим центральним питанням та дилемою даного наукового дослідження є таке: як Європейському Союзу задовольнити власні економічні потреби, але при цьому не перетворитися на політичну маріонетку та не втратити свого вагомого впливу в транснаціональних відносинах.

Ключові слова: міжнародна політика Європейського Союзу, «енергетична безпека», транснаціональні відносини, «політика добросусідства», політичні маніпулювання, економічна співпраця Росія / Україна-ЄС, експорт-імпорт корисних копалин.

В данной статье рассматривается международная политика Европейского Союза как ведущего и влиятельного «игрока» на всемирной политической арене, который сейчас подлежит влиянию и значительному давлению со стороны других государств в связи с «энергетической зависимостью» ЕС от импортированного природного газа и нефти. В связи с этим центральным вопросом и дилеммой данного научного исследования является следующее: как Европейскому Союзу удовлетворить собственные экономические потребности, но при этом не превратиться в политическую марионетку и не потерять своего весомого влияния в транснациональных отношениях?

Ключевые слова: международная политика Европейского Союза, «энергетическая безопасность», транснациональные отношения, экономическое сотрудничество Россия / Украина-ЕС, экспорт-импорт полезных ископаемых.

This article examines the international politics of the European Union as the leading and influential «player» on the world political are, which is currently being a subject to an enormous influence and considerable pressure from other states through the «energy dependence» of the EU on imported oil and natural gas. In this regard, the central issue and the dilemma of the research is the following question: how the European Union is to meet its own economic needs whilst not turning into a political puppet and not losing its great influence in transnational relations?

Key words: international policy of the European Union, «energy security», transnational relations, economic cooperation Russia / Ukraine-EU on the exports and imports of precious minerals.

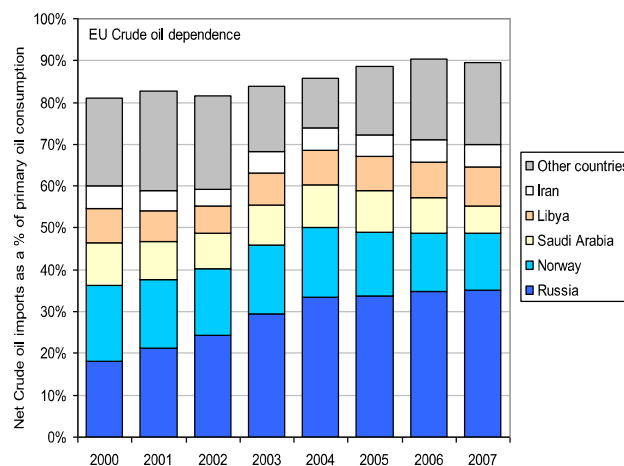
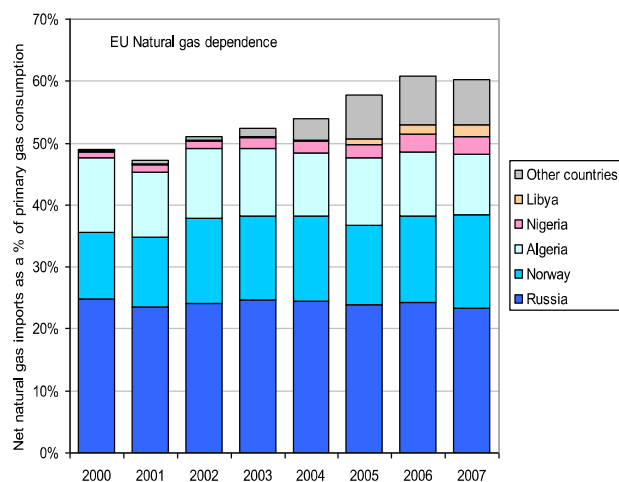
The beginning of the 21st century has been characterized in the history of the European Union as an escalation of the economic and in particular-energetic interests to a geopolitical imperative with member states defending their own existing, and yet dwindling energy supplies while actively searching for alternative sources. According to Energy Commissioner in Europe Andris Piebalgs: «Today electricity grids and natural gas pipelines lace the maps of multiple regions, linking countries, even whole continents in very complicated and unprecedented ways». [4, c. 3] Behind any doubts during the last few years energy policy has become one of the most crucially important «daily issues» of an internal as well as external policies and regulations of the European Community. Nevertheless, the question of energy security

has already grown up into a matter of a wider transatlantic cooperation. Growing energy demand within the EU's 27 member states is mirrored in regions throughout the world-growth in China and India has added considerably to global demand, as has rising population growth and economic modernization in Latin America, Africa, and even the energy-rich Middle East. In the face of this strain on limited supplies, Europeans must compete for existing and new energy sources. Projections for European energy consumption indicate that one of the most important economical and security challenges facing the European Union over the next 20 years [2]. Because according to the opinion of Daniel Yergin: «Energy security is an umbrella term that connects closely the issues of economical prosperity and political power» [4, c. 12].

There can be absolutely no doubts about the «dangerous dependence» of the European Union on imported energetic resources-gas and oil, any more. As well as the undeniable fact of a huge direct influence of this challenge on external policies and regulations of the EU as an international political player and its further transatlantic cooperation regarding the issue. Thus, according to European Affair's Analyst Paul Belkin «Europe's renewed interest in energy security has been influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, steadily rising energy prices, declining European energy production and a fragmented internal

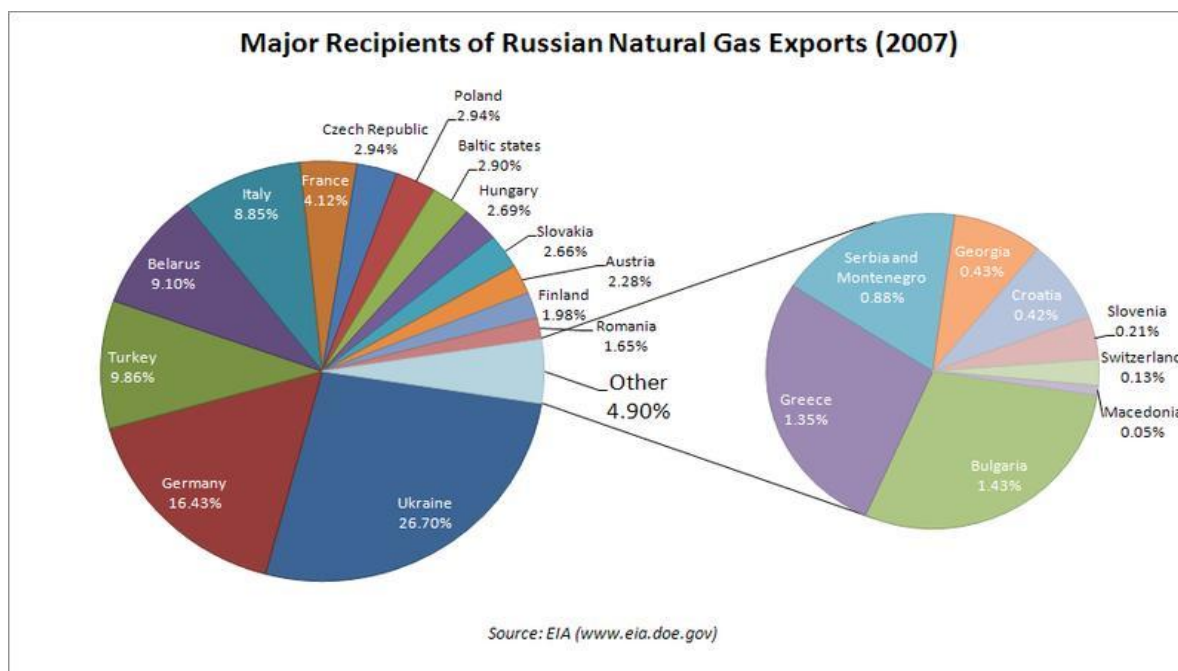
energy market have contributed to anxieties over Europe's ability to meet future energy demand. The strain on global demand exerted by the emerging economies of countries such as China and India, persistent instability in energy producing regions, the threat of terrorist strikes against energy infrastructure, and Russia's willingness to use its growing power and influence in the energetic sector for numerous political manipulations, are all raising great concerns in Europe over one single question-how to appropriately address all external influences of this process, and yet still ensure own future energy demands and requirements?» [5, c. 1].

EU net imports of natural gas, oil, solid fuels and the sum of these, by country of origin, as a % of fuel-specific gross inland energy consumption



Due to expert classifications of most economical analysts EU will (due to eventual decline of its own-North Sea resources) feel the significant importance of the energy imports already in the nearest future. And this is even not taking into account the fact that on the current

stand EU is already consuming a huge amount of energy imports coming primarily from Russia and the Middle East, where approximately 70% of global oil and gas supplies originate.



The above mentioned cooperation is fully justified and proficient for Europe as one of the parties from the economical point of view, but when it comes the aspect of external policy and international status of the European Union as a huge and influential «political player», we rush into a «hot discussion». For instance, Middle East is a long-term successful and important economical partner of Europe, but on the other hand the region is overwhelmed with wars, terrorism, religious dictatorships and politically unstable regimes. Therefore economical cooperation with those states has a hidden potential to signalize a failure from the side of the EU to ensure and support democracy, rule of law and various socio-political rights and freedoms [3]. As to the Russian Federation: EU as a whole, but mostly its «eastern» member states such as Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and all three Baltic countries are already in a deep energetic dependence from Russian gas supplies. Its problematic aspect and huge challenge for the energetic stability of the European Community was clearly demonstrated during so called «Russia-Ukrainian gas crisis» in January 2009, when the above mentioned member states had been left without crucially important energy resource in a cold winter a few days in a row. This accident destroyed the image of Kremlin as a reliable long-term economical partner, particularly-trustworthy future supplier of gas and oil in the eyes of the European governments over the night. From now on further energy cooperation with Russian Federation is considered by the heads of the European Community as not only a direct threat to its own energetic security, but also numerous crucially important issues of geo/political stability. Russia's territorial closeness to «EU's eastern border», its increasingly growing power in the energetic sector and as a result of it-numerous attempts of political manipulations on other «valuable political players», as well as impudent external-policy based behaviour (sharp disputes with Kiev, military invasion into the sovereign territory of Georgia, proclamation of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia etc.) became a reasonable and strong impulse for the heads of European Community to actively search for the remarkable solution of the current dilemma of energetic instability and dramatic dependence of the EU on Russian supplies by the means of establishing new economical tights with other states [1].

Finding the right partner for further economical cooperation in the issues of energy supplies is at the current stand a crucially important task for the European Union, which might be able to lower the challenges and reduce the risks in this sphere in the near future. On the current stand the most suitable potential partners in this issue are: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Even though negotiations regarding future partnership in economical matters have already begun there's one major problem which stands on the way of its successful implementation. And thus the fact that Kremlin controls the overwhelming majority of all existing up to date oil and gas transportation routes from Caucasus and Central Asia. So solution to this problem would be quite simple and complicated at the same time. From one hand-there's always a possibility to establishing brand new transportation routes, which will have an ability to carry energy supplies from the regions named above to Western Europe absolutely safely by the means of bypassing Russian territory and ignoring its influence in this important matter, but on the other hand-the erection costs of such projects are gigantic, as well as the whole process very time-consuming [3].

Summarizing all of the above stated it is crucially important to underline that the line between «energetic security» as an emerging economical interest from one side and external policy of the EU on the other is dangerously narrow. In this article we argued that very often economic (energetic in this particular discussion) needs of the European Union come into direct and unprecedented conflict with its duties and responsibilities as leading «player» on the international political arena. Thus, some important externally-based decisions and policies of the EU are often put into the pressure of numerous political manipulations and external influences, based on the «dangerous energy dependence» of the European Community on imported gas and oil supplies. In our opinion, this situation is absolutely insufficient as it weakens the role of the EU as a powerful «international player» and negatively influences its further transatlantic cooperation. In order to reduce all possible risks to the minimum a successful solution of the respective economic-political dilemma should be proposed and enforced as soon as possible.

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