

**Brief for decision-makers on the problems of EU dependency on fossil fuels from Russia and solutions to stop the war in Ukraine within EU partnership.
Proposal of Ukrainian civil society representatives**

Russia began a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, scaling up the war which led to the occupation of Crimea and parts of Donbas region back in 2014. At that time, Europe continued to increase its use of fossil fuels from Russia. In 2021 Europe imported 45% of the natural gas from Russia. Russia also accounted for about 25% of oil imports and 45% of coal imports. Such a deep-seated dependence of the European countries on the Russian energy resources converts it into an additional weapon and goes against EU's pledges for real climate action. It allows a terrorist country to blackmail the EU and make demands. In total EU spent €99 billion on Russian energy imports in 2021.

The European Commission proposed a REPower EU plan to reduce EU demand for Russian gas by two-thirds by the end of this year. It looks like the plans are designed in a way to minimise the impact on European consumers in a process that is managed by European states. However, the EU has to consider that Russia feels free to decide whether to halt the delivery of gas and other fossil fuel to the consumer countries. On 26th of April Russian Gazprom announced it will be suspending supplies to Poland and Bulgaria starting from 27th of April.

During two months of the war, where hundreds of children were killed, thousands of people tortured, raped, and murdered, and hundreds of Ukrainian cities and villages destroyed, the EU paid Russia more than €41 billion¹. Oil companies have made around €3 billion in profits in Europe since the Ukraine war began², as a research published on 7th of April proved.

The process of deciding on the embargo on Russian fossil fuels is going too slow for the current political situation. Today, EU has only refused to buy Russian coal, which makes up the smallest share of fossil fuel payments (about 2%). Only Poland and Lithuania have a strict position on this question because they know what it means to be under the Russian occupation. Such inaction from EU leaders means that EU is helping the aggressor to continue the war, killing innocent people and destroying a democratic European nation. Germany, which gets almost half of its gas from Russia, continues to stall sanctions because they will allegedly not stop Russia but only harm EU citizens. Even though EconPol states that stopping Russian energy imports would lead to a

¹ <https://beyond-coal.eu/russian-fossil-fuel-tracker/>

²

https://greenpeace.at/assets/uploads/pdf/presse/Media_briefing_Greenpeace_the_Crisis_Profiteers_analysis.pdf

GDP decline in the range of 0.5% and 3% (cf., the GDP decline in 2020 during the pandemic was 4.5%)³.

Unfortunately, the longer the embargo is discussed and not implemented, the more death and destruction will come from Russia. The country already finds ways to sell its oil in the untitled barrels to keep getting a profit from it. The current sanctions are not enough to tilt the scales for Russia to consider stopping the war.

Another important issue which is being overlooked is the fact that the sanctions do not cover uranium. The nuclear industry worldwide is deeply dependent on imports of Russian uranium, fuel for VVER-type reactors, maintenance, and support of existing nuclear facilities, and plans to build new ones. The Russian nuclear giant Rosatom is involved in nuclear projects in Hungary, Finland, Egypt, India, Iran, China, Turkey, and other countries, and the Russian company TVEL supplies fuel for most European VVER-type reactors.

More than a quarter of the Russian federal budget is used for defense programs and finances the war in Ukraine. At the same time, a third of the federal budget revenue comes from carbon exports. There are no diplomatic methods left to influence the aggressor country. Russia's refusal to comply with the order of the International Court of Justice to cease hostilities is proof of this. The only way to stop the war is to cut its leading financial source, which is spent on missiles to carry out a genocide of Ukrainians and blackmail Europeans.

European politicians have the means to not only weaken Putin's war machine but to actually stop the war in a few weeks by:

- Stopping Russia's energy payments until the war is stopped and troops are withdrawn from Ukraine;
- Shifting Russia's shipments of natural gas from the Stream-1 pipeline to Ukraine's pipeline, accelerating Kyiv's leverage in its conflict with Russia;
- Investing the money that would be spent on fossil fuels into energy efficiency and renewable energy sources now.

Further delay of implementing an embargo on Russian fossil fuels will prolong the war in Ukraine, which already has very high economic costs for Europe. In addition, the short-term economic arguments fail to capture the possible costs of further escalation of the war, which threatens to involve more countries in Europe with potentially catastrophic consequences.

³ <https://www.ifo.de/publikationen/2022/working-paper/what-if-economic-effects-germany-stop-energy-imports-russia>