

## **Diversification of EU Energy Supplies and Routes**

Fresh in the minds of many in the European Union was the unexpected shut off of gas by Russian-owned energy producer Gazprom last year. The shut off occurred amid the continuing crisis between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, which affected all gas supplies coming in to the Ukraine and had negative effects on EU member-states. Following this and some previous concerns regarding energy supplies, the EU has pledged to increase and diversify its routes of energy supplies. To achieve improved diversification, the EU has been following a three-pronged plan:

1. **Opening the Southern Gas Corridor.** The Southern Gas Corridor is a gas pipeline that is expected to be completed by 2020 and will bring gas to eastern Europe via the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Caspian Region. The Corridor could potentially significantly decrease dependence on Russian-based gas, though much progress still needs to be made. Questions regarding funding, as well as relations with both Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, are still significant roadblocks.
2. **Developing the Mediterranean hub.** The EU is looking to create a hub in southern Europe along the Mediterranean Sea to improve and increase import abilities and is looking towards both Northern Africa, specifically Algeria, and Eastern Mediterranean countries, to assist in this development. While there are fewer fiscal concerns--as infrastructure already exists in terms of ports--the ongoing instability in northern Africa continues to be a pressing concern.
3. **The establishment of liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals.** LNG continues to have a growing supply, and with it, growing demand. Currently much of the infrastructure is located in Western Europe, which means that new terminals need to be built in central and eastern Europe to improve capacity and access.

Establishing new energy suppliers and supply routes are both costly and politically challenging processes. Finding new supplies is also difficult as natural gas and oil supplies are only available in specific parts of the world. In addition, establishing new supply routes requires significant cooperation between member-states and non-member-states alike, as well as a large financial contribution to establish pipelines or other methods of transportation of the energy supplies.

The question of clean energy is also a valid one and would provide additional support to diversify energy supplies. The EU has called upon its member-states to have 20% of all energy produced from renewable sources by 2020. Perhaps a combination of renewable energy resources with diversified fossil fuel energy sources will decrease the EU's dependence on Russian-produced energy and may even reduce carbon emissions and costs in the long run.

Questions for your consideration:

1. How much of my country's energy consumption is gas and/or oil?
2. How much of my country's energy consumption is from foreign territory, especially from eastern Europe or Russia?
3. What has your country done to diversify its energy supply (e.g. clean energy, etc)?

4. Is your country willing and/or able to contribute to the development of new pipelines and transportation routes for energy supplies?
5. Could international organizations, like the UN and its specialized agencies, play a role in diversifying energy supplies?
6. Does your country have a proposal at hand for consideration?

Suggested Research:

<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/energy/eu-plans-major-offensive-diversify-gas-supplies-315019>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27862849>

<https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/imports-and-secure-supplies/gas-and-oil-supply-routes>

<https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/renewable-energy>

### **European Union Debt Crisis and Economic Cooperation**

Towards the end of 2009, a debt crisis swept across the entire European continent. Stemming from the weakening of the global market as a whole and a similar economic depression in the United States and the Global Economic Crisis which started in 2008, many European Union countries were unable to make payments on their loans. These nations included Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy, Ireland, and Cyprus. Many of these countries were indebted to European banks, so the economic hardship in these countries quickly spread throughout the entirety of the Eurozone. Another problem that exacerbated the economic crisis was tax fraud and evasion. Tax fraud and evasion affect all citizens within the EU. The loss of revenue and the scamming of tax collection agencies by criminal groups decrease the resources available to social services, healthcare organizations, and infrastructure projects. The EU estimates that up to €1 trillion are being lost from member-states' coffers on an annual basis due to evasion and fraud. Obviously, this problem needs a solution, and soon. At the beginning of the crisis certain steps were taken:

1. On 9 May 2010, the 27 EU member states agreed to create the European Financial Stability Facility, a legal instrument aiming at preserving financial stability in Europe by providing financial assistance to Eurozone states in difficulty. 440 billion euros were made available through this fund in order to stabilize struggling countries, and an additional 250 billion euros was made available through the International Monetary Fund
2. Bailout programs allowed many countries to not default on their loans which would have caused their separate crises to shutdown the economy of the EU as a whole. However, unemployment rates in affected countries soared with unemployment rising to as high as 27% in Greece and Spain.

The lingering effects caused by this economic crisis continue to plague the European Union even today. While the economies of some countries like Germany remain strong, the majority of the European Union is dealing with fragile economies and slow job growth.

Questions for your consideration:

1. How was my country impacted by the 2009 debt crisis?
2. Is my country still struggling from an economic depression?
3. What measures has my country taken to strengthen its economy and to enhance financial stability?
4. How can the European Union as a whole work to increase financial stability and cooperation among member-states?
5. Does your country have second thoughts about the viability of the EU as an institution? Do you think your country will do better if it were on its own and not part of the EU?

Suggested Research:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/greece/11705720/European-debt-crisis-Its-not-just-Greece-thats-drowning-in-debt.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/17/europe-tax-commissioners-evasion-fraud-companies>

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-european-debt-crisis-in-one-post/2011/08/05/gIQAg69QwI\\_blog.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-european-debt-crisis-in-one-post/2011/08/05/gIQAg69QwI_blog.html)

### **EU Counterterrorism:**

The European Union has set its sight on strengthening its counter-terrorism strategy. European governments are currently focused on preventing European citizens from joining jihadist militants in Syria and Iraq for fear that they might return and carry out attacks in Europe itself. NATO plays a crucial role in military practices and strategies aimed at disrupting or dissolving Islamist extremist organizations and other fundamentalist groups such as al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The growing unrest and instability in the Middle East over the last few years as a result of constant power-struggles and the Arab Spring has caused a steady increase in extremist organizations that operate within those war-torn countries like Iraq and Syria. The increasing threats that these organizations pose to the western world have led to a tightening of security protocols and stringent counter-terrorism policies. The Charlie Hebdo shooting and Paris and California attacks are few recent examples. Those incidents also illustrate the vulnerabilities of the targeted countries to terrorist attacks and the lack of sufficient coordination and cooperation among their security agencies. This calls for a new look on counter-terrorism strategies. Transparency is also important, and counter-terrorism policies should be made public at all times. Ultimately, to overcome some of the tougher roadblocks surrounding counter-terrorism, serious thought needs to be given to citizenship and rights afforded to people of all backgrounds, including Arabs and Muslims living in those countries. Education is also key, as this is very important when it comes to deterring younger people from embracing deadly ideologies and is a step in the right direction to reduce the threat of internal attacks.

### **Questions to consider:**

1. What is your country's policy on counterterrorism?
2. How has your country been affected by terrorism?
3. What measures can the EU take as a whole to prevent and confront terrorism?
4. Is your country currently a target of terrorist attacks?

5. Do you have a large Islamic or Arab constituency? Is this community well-assimilated into your society?