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THE EVOLUTION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S IMPACT ON EU ENERGY SECURITY

This article provides a brief overview of the history of the cooperation between the Russian Federation and the European Union after the collapse of the USSR. The authors have examined the main principles of the penetration of Russian influence into the Western regions and the reasons for the development of political and economic dependence in certain areas. The authors have also identified signs of the formation of a monopoly on the European energy market and the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on changing the geopolitical situation in the world.

Keywords: EU, energy resources, Russia, influence, cooperation.

Russia's war against Ukraine is radically changing the geopolitical order in the world. For a long time now, Europe has been seeking to break its dependence on Russian energy resources, which has a significant impact on global economic and political processes. Most civilised countries support the path to change and are actively developing a plan for further action. However, not all are ready to break the long-standing relationship with Russia, which slows down possible progress. The position of each state can significantly influence the development of today's events. This applies not only to cooperation with the aggressor country but also to the state's involvement in criminal acts. War is a global phenomenon that affects not only the situation of the participants but also the entire world. Ukraine's representatives are making great efforts to cooperate effectively with international partners. After all, most Western countries are aware of the need for reconsideration.

Europe has begun an irreversible process of change in the economic and political arenas of the world. The beginning of this process is accompanied by the introduction of numerous sanctions against the Kremlin, refusal to cooperate and the search for alternatives in certain areas of consumption.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Energy plays a very important role in relations between the EU and Russia. Back during the Cold War, this area contributed to the establishment of contacts between the USSR and European countries. How does the EU depend on Russian energy resources in reality and why did this situation become possible in the first place?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The most problematic issue is the use of energy resources transported from Russia. This cooperation has relatively strong historical and economic reasons.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main goal of the study, as the authors see it, is an analysis of the impact of a full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war on the energy security of the European Union.

RESEARCH METHODS

The main methods applied by the authors: the general scientific principles of historicism, objectivity, and systematicity. A comprehensive and systematic approach was used, which allowed for a holistic, comprehensive, and consistent consideration of the problem.

MAIN TEXT

Following the dissolution of the USSR, Russia sought economic support, and the EU, recognising these needs and opportunities, launched its integration policy, beginning with the signing of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in 1994. This agreement presented an opportunity for the EU to extend European standards, particularly in the economic and social spheres. The agreement expanded trade relations and consolidated cooperation. For Russia, it was an opportunity to integrate into the European economy, to secure stable trade relations and to receive assistance for economic modernisation.

The next step was the EU's Common Strategy for Russia (1999). The EU aimed to continue the democratisation and stabilisation of Russia. This was to help spread its influence and ideology in Russia. Russia aimed to increase its credibility in the international arena and strengthen cooperation with Europe on security and energy issues.

An important factor that made it easier for Russia to push into the European space was the Visa Facilitation Agreement (2006). It was concluded to facilitate human communication and develop cooperation in science, culture, etc. The agreement stimulated the improvement of relations among countries, business development, humanitarian ties, and cultural exchange.

One of the key factors in consolidating Russia's influence in Europe was the signing of several energy partnership agreements (2000-2010). This increased the Kremlin's influence and consolidation of Europe's dependence. Russia has strengthened its position and taken the place of the main supplier of energy resources to Western countries.

Russia is not the only significant energy supplier in the world. Other natural gas exporters include the United States, Iran, Canada and Qatar. In terms of oil, Saudi Arabia is the leader, but even in this aspect, Russia has managed to build dependent relations with the EU. Why did Europe choose this particular foreign policy direction?

The answer to this question lies in several aspects. First, the pricing policy. Russian gas was often offered at competitive prices, which was attractive to international partners and economically beneficial. Secondly, in response to fairly profitable conditions, long-term contracts with Gazprom began to be signed, which ensured the stability of supplies. "Russia signed cooperation agreements with each state separately. This practice has been successfully applied in relations with

Germany, France, Hungary, Greece, Bulgaria, and Italy [3, p. 101]”. Another factor is geographical dispersion, which reduces the amount of transportation costs from remote locations. Another important aspect is the gas crises that have played a role as leverage on importing countries. In 2006, Russia cut off gas supplies through Ukraine due to a disagreement over prices. This had a significant impact on Europe, which did not receive the necessary resources, prompting it to develop dependence on other routes (Nord Stream). In 2009, the situation repeated itself.

In 2011, the construction of the Nord Stream gas pipeline system was completed. Gas is transported to Europe via the Baltic Sea. The main reason for the construction of this system was to reduce dependence on transit countries, including Ukraine. The launch of Nord Stream has made significant adjustments to energy supplies in Europe and strengthened the EU's dependence on Russia. It bypasses Eastern European countries, which reduces their role as transit countries. Europe was concerned about the threat to its energy security and dependence on Russia but began to receive resources through this system, which became another lever of influence on Europe.

On 8 January 2020, Russia launched the new Turkish Stream gas pipeline. It will supply natural gas to Turkey, and southern and Southeastern Europe. The pipeline was designed to reduce Russia's dependence on transit through Ukraine. It also allowed Russia to deepen its energy ties with Turkey, the Balkans and Central Europe. The launch of the Turkish Stream was important for European energy security. Russia was able to transport gas to Europe without using transit routes through Ukraine, which reduced its role as a transit country. With the start of the full-scale invasion, the amount of gas supplied through Ukraine to Europe decreased, at which point the Turkish Stream continued to supply. Nevertheless, European countries continue to look for alternatives.

After a long period of cooperation in the field of energy supply, the war against Ukraine became a turning point for these relations. Since 2014, sanctions on cooperation, individuals, and key sectors of the Russian economy have been actively imposed. This did not have a global impact on the foreign policy activities of the head of state, but it did give rise to more active development of new solutions in the European space. In 2022, as a result of the full-scale invasion, sanctions were tightened and Russia was partially isolated “... as of December 2024, the EU Council adopted fifteen packages of economic and individual sanctions in connection with Russia's military aggression against Ukraine [2]”.

On 1 January 2025, after about 60 years, Ukraine completely stopped transporting Russian gas. This event was one of Moscow's biggest defeats. The consequences of such actions were disapproving statements by the representatives of certain countries and threats to obtain resources. For example, the Prime Minister of Slovakia, Robert Fico, considers this decision ineffective and harmful.

Europe has been diversifying its energy sources for some time now. First of all, this is manifested through the increase in imports of liquefied natural gas from countries such as the United States, Qatar, Norway, etc. In 2022, LNG imports as an alternative energy source increased significantly. The EU is actively seeking and considering signing agreements with new energy suppliers, such as Algeria,

Azerbaijan, and Norway. This also opens up the possibility of building new gas supply routes and receiving terminals. It is important to note that the EU is actively investing in the development of renewable energy sources (the 'Green Deal for Europe'). This will not only reduce dependence on energy imports but also have a positive impact on the global environment. These actions not only influence global economic changes but also contribute to the unification of civilised countries.

In response, the Russian Federation has resorted to political blackmail in an attempt to economically influence Europe. Countries such as Poland and Bulgaria have been restricted in their supplies because they refuse to pay in rubles. It is also important to take into account Russia's geopolitical course in Central Asia. As a result of longstanding cooperation, the Kremlin receives unofficial support from many Central Asian states. It is understood that the Russian Federation has successfully secured the support of China, which is also pursuing its own objectives in this cooperation. Some states have chosen a neutral stance, demonstrating a clear position through their actions. This is reinforced by active political, economic and technological cooperation. Russia has begun to actively supply energy resources to Asian countries (increasing gas supplies through the Power of Siberia), especially to China and India. This contributes to the expansion of Russian influence to the east, which may have a major impact on the geopolitical situation in the world in the future.

CONCLUSION

For years, the Russian Federation has been increasing its economic and political influence in Europe. Long-term cooperation has led to the consolidation of dependence on one side and the growth of Russian authority. This has led to possible control and manipulation by one of the parties if necessary. Even before the full-scale invasion, the EU had been developing plans to reduce the aggressor country's energy use and switch to renewable sources. Still, developing future strategies was rather slow and had no obvious results. The outbreak of Russia's hostilities against Ukraine has become a catalyst for changes on the global stage and has accelerated diversification. This process encourages not only the modernisation of the economic and political spheres but also demonstrates the need for joint efforts and support.

Although the Russian-Ukrainian war has led to synergy among Western countries, there are still those who, for various reasons, are not ready or willing to stop cooperating with the aggressor, deliberately remaining sponsors of the continuation of hostilities. Refusal of Russian energy resources would cut off the flow of funds to the Kremlin and have a visible impact on the economic situation in the country.

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