

R16 ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Towards a truly interconnected and sustainable energy market

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Motion text

1 Since the creation of the European Union, energy has been a crucial aspect of
2 the European integration process, to the point that two of the three founding
3 Treaties revolve around the energy sector. In Articles 114 and 194 of the Treaty
4 on the Functioning of the European Union it is stated that Union policy on
5 energy shall aim, in a spirit of solidarity between Member States, to ensure
6 security of energy supply in the Union and promote the interconnection of energy
7 networks. The European Union (EU) also believes that the promotion and
8 protection of human rights around the world is a legitimate concern of the
9 international community. The EU is bound by its Treaty to promote human rights,
10 democratization and development.

11 Currently, the European energy market is regulated according to the TEN-E
12 regulation, which allows the Union to meet its core energy objectives by laying
13 down rules for identifying and the developing Projects of Common Interest
14 (PCIs). These will ensure the interoperability of trans-European energy
15 networks, the functioning of the internal energy market, the security of supply
16 and the integration of renewable forms of energy.

17 Despite this, however, the current energy markets in Europe are still very
18 regionalized. In part, this is due to a lack of energy infrastructure connecting
19 Member States. Improving the interconnectivity of the energy market has several
20 benefits: improved security supply, increased efficiency and increased
21 competitiveness. This aligns well with the energy strategy that EU has stated
22 previously, which is based on the pillars of securing an expanding supply of
23 energy from both domestic and foreign sources, developing a more competitive
24 internal energy market, and encouraging and supporting environmental protection
25 and development of clean and renewable energy sources. Additionally, the new
26 energy market of the EU is expected to encourage diversification and flexibility
27 to react to market conditions across the countries. It also provides a more
28 powerful bargaining position for European energy companies when sourcing energy
29 in global markets, since there is a larger range of options available with

30 regard to supply routes and there is better access to customers.

31 It is acknowledged that the EU has committed to comply to standards of democracy
32 and to support human rights in foreign relations, in accordance with the
33 founding principles of the Union itself, that is the principles of liberty,
34 democracy and respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of
35 law. Given its current dependence on multiple energy suppliers, however, the
36 EU's ability to promote its interests and values risks to be limited when energy
37 imports are supplied by countries with different values, even countries that
38 violate human rights. Human rights are considered of vital importance to the EU,
39 but when it comes to energy imports suddenly not.

40 While the Treaty on the European Union states that foreign policy should
41 'consolidate and support democracy, the rule of law, [and] human rights', the
42 European Union has been criticised for putting its needs for energy imports
43 before the aforementioned values: in accord with a study by the NGO Freedom
44 House, Norway is the only country out of the EU's main oil and gas suppliers to
45 meet international standards of democracy, unlike the remainder (Nigeria,
46 assessed as "partly free", and Russia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Algeria,
47 Qatar which are defined as authoritarian states). Moreover, some if not most of
48 these countries have been known to violate human rights, in the energy sector,
49 but outside of that as well. By importing energy from these countries, these
50 regimes profit from European money, which does nothing to stop the abuse of
51 human rights by these regimes. However, it is possible to change the EU energy
52 market. For example, the European Parliament has instated several sanctions
53 against Russia and is debating issuing even heavier sanctions, but is yet to
54 accept an energy boycott at the moment of writing. Clearly, it is possible for
55 countries in and outside the EU to take action against authoritarian governments
56 when it comes to upholding our values, including the respect for (fundamental)
57 human rights.

58 Not only would the European Union benefit from an increased energy independence
59 in reference to human rights and democracy, it would also strengthen energy
60 security and contribute profitably to the project of decarbonisation of the
61 energy sector. It is time to clearly condemn dependence on energy imported from
62 countries with authoritarian regimes and that contribute to the violations of
63 fundamental human rights.

64 It should be noted that this resolution focuses on energy independence, and does
65 not directly address energy poverty, since a resolution about this was accepted
66 during the 2020 General Assembly. Although there is not one common definition of
67 energy poverty between Member States, it is generally described as a situation
68 in which households are unable to access essential energy services. Since energy
69 poverty is usually experienced or measured at the household level, it is not
70 directly addressed in this resolution. However, stronger and better-connected
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energy infrastructure can go a long way in reducing energy poverty.

72 **The Federation of Young European Greens, with regards to the goals expressed in**
73 **the EU Green Deal, calls on the EU and the governments of Member States to:**

74 1. Develop a legislative and policy framework to create a more interconnected
75 European energy market to assist and support the energy transition towards
76 renewable sources, with the aim of further improving storage and transfer
77 capacity and reducing costs and therefore prices in order to achieve
78 energy independence, by:

- 79 1. Granting the European Parliament, Commission and Council the
80 legislative authority to regulate the energy market and energy
81 infrastructure supranationally through EU legislation;
82 2. Initiating the grounds for legislation to regulate the international
83 European energy market and improve supranational connection between
84 energy markets of Member States, for example by establishing an
85 independent body to compile and assess the current bilateral energy
86 trade agreements between Member States and third countries, and to
87 assess the deficits and strengths in the energy infrastructure of
88 each Member State;

89 2. Based on this framework, to implement and develop an interconnected and
90 improved energy infrastructure in Europe, as achieving this is an
91 essential step to ensure a functional and efficient European energy
92 market, as well as a necessity for more sustainable energy supply, by:

- 93 1. Investing in and facilitating the building of more energy
94 infrastructure in and between Member States with significant
95 infrastructure deficits to enable improved storage and sharing of
96 energy, such as but not limited to flexible power grids, better
97 demand-response technology, electric vehicle charging, and energy
98 storage;
99 2. Investing in improving energy infrastructure where it already
100 exists;
101 3. Implementing the connection of energy infrastructure across Member
102 States in order to facilitate the creation of a European energy
103 network;
104 4. Investing in and stimulating research on sustainable technologies
105 such as, but not limited to, energy reduction, energy storage and
106 energy production;
107 5. Offering targeted assistance and investment support to ensure energy
infrastructure has similar quality across Member States.

109 **With regards to the violation of human rights by the governments of nations such**
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108 **as, but not limited to, the Russian Federation, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the**
111 **United Arab Emirates, calls on the EU and the governments of Member States to:**

- 112 1. Condemn in the strongest terms the violation of human rights by
113 authoritarian governments of energy-exporting nations;

 - 114 2. Based on these violations of human rights to aim for independence from
115 importing energy from these nations via the ending of current energy trade
116 agreements as soon as possible;

 - 117 3. Henceforth ensure that any future energy trade agreement is contingent to
118 a set of minimal standards including but not limited to respect of human
119 rights and rule of law wherein:
 - 120 1. Nations that breach the most egregious violations of human rights
121 will no longer be considered as viable options to import energy
122 from, whereas
 - 123 2. Nations that fall short of meeting the minimal standards yet abiding
124 by a commitment to improve their respect for, among others, human
rights and rule of law will be considered, and
 - 125 3. The assessment of the fulfilment of said criteria will be conducted
126 by an independent body.
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