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Q4(c)

Russian-Ukraine crisis has cast a dark shadow on the energy needs of the member states of the European Union (EU).

Comment

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · PSIR GS 2 · 15 marks · Comparative Politics

Comparative Politics: Nature and major approaches; political economy and political sociology perspectives; limitations of the comparative method.

Core demand of the question

- Russian-Ukraine crisis has cast a dark shadow on the energy needs of the member states of the European Union (EU). Comment
- Write at 15-mark length

Revision summary

EU members, especially Germany, had leaned on Russian pipeline gas.

The 2022 war turned that flow into a coercive lever.

Prices, storage, and winter risk became security politics.

Diversification to LNG and non-Russian fuels is costly and incomplete.

NATO's front and EU energy policy now move together, against older commercial peace.

Introduction

Russia's war on Ukraine, intensified in 2022, turned EU energy from a market file into a security file. Pipeline dependence met NATO's eastern front. The shadow is price, shortage risk, and a forced green-and-LNG scramble.

Body

The dependence that the crisis exposed

- Germany and several Central European members had built gas security on Russian pipelines, including **Nord Stream**, under a commercial peace assumption that Carr would have called utopian.
- Oil, coal, and nuclear fuel links added depth. Interdependence here was asymmetric, closer to a weapon than to Keohane and Nye's benign complex interdependence.

Immediate shadow on needs

- Price spikes in gas and electricity hit households and industry across the EU.
- Threats to and damage around **Nord Stream**, plus Russian payment and cut-off politics, made winter storage a strategic target.
- Sanctions on Russian energy forced a hunt for seaborne LNG, Norwegian and North African gas, and US cargoes, at higher cost and with new infrastructure bottlenecks.

Alliance and order

- NATO's reinforcement of the eastern flank and EU emergency coordination (including **REPowerEU**-type plans to cut Russian fuels) fused energy with collective defence.
- **The crisis also split tempo:** some members prolonged nuclear or coal; others accelerated renewables. Cohesion of needs is not cohesion of mix.

Wider IR reading

- Waltzian anarchy returned to a region that had treated energy as a functional spillover of the European Union.
- The Global South faced fertiliser and grain shocks too, but the question's focus is EU members' energy needs: they discovered that a revisionist supplier can hold the thermostat.

Flow diagram

Russia Ukraine war -> Pipeline cuts prices
Pipeline cuts prices -> EU energy needs
EU energy needs -> LNG Norway US
EU energy needs -> NATO plus REPowerEU

Conclusion

The Russia-Ukraine war darkened EU energy security by revealing pipeline dependence, spiking prices, and forcing a rushed diversification toward LNG and non-Russian fuels. Functional European peace did not cancel realist supply risk. NATO and the Commission now treat kilowatt-hours as strategy.

Facts & figures

Nord Stream

Baltic gas pipelines that symbolised German-Russian energy ties and became a crisis flashpoint in 2022.

REPowerEU

European Commission plan to reduce Russian fossil-fuel dependence through savings, diversifying suppliers, and clean energy.

NATO eastern flank

Reinforced after the invasion, linking military deterrence to the same geography as gas transit.

LNG shift

Seaborne gas from the United States and others substituted part of lost Russian volumes at a higher price.