Negative Brief: LNG Exports to Europe - Good

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: The United States Federal Government should significantly reform its import and/or export policy within the bounds of international trade***

The AFF plan reverses a Biden Administration policy announced in March, 2022, regarding export of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to Europe. The Russia/Ukraine war has disrupted many things in Europe, and in particular it calls into question western Europe’s heavy reliance on imports of fossil fuels (oil and natural gas) from Russia. Europe will either want to boycott such imports (to punish Russia) or Russia will block such exports (to punish Europe for opposing the war). Either way, Europe needs alternatives to Russian natural gas, because it’s essential to their economy. Pres. Biden and the European Union signed an agreement to have the US increase its exports of LNG to Europe to replace imports from Russia. Biden expects to do this by streamlining regulations to speed up LNG export licenses, among other things. The federal government, by itself, does not control who buys or sells natural gas in a free market, but it can influence the direction by the regulatory process. AFF argues that increasing exports of LNG is both unnecessary (Europe can substitute with renewables and conservation) and unwise (LNG = pollution and exporting it out of the US increases the domestic price for American consumers). This brief shows that increased LNG exports to Europe cause no economic harm, no environmental harm, and canceling them would produce lots of disadvantages. The issue of whether US exports of LNG to Europe would actually happen at all may also come up in the round, though it depends on which side thinks it might benefit from making the argument. It’s possible that the Biden/EU plan simply won’t work and no increase in gas exports would actually happen. You may want to consider how you would argue that and which side it would help.

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Negative: LNG Exports to Europe - good

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. No economic harm to exporting US LNG

Biden is right: There’s plenty of gas in the U.S., and exporting to Europe is the right policy

Samantha Gross 2022 (fellow and director of the Energy Security and Climate Initiative at Brookings Institution;  Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering from the University of Illinois, a Master of Science in environmental engineering from Stanford, and a Master of Business Administration from the University of California at Berkeley) 18 Feb 2022 “Now is not the time to limit U.S. natural gas exports” <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/02/18/now-is-not-the-time-to-limit-u-s-natural-gas-exports/> (accessed 27 May 2022)

The request to limit gas exports is a political response to crushing inflation in an election year. But there is plenty of gas to go around in the United States, and [supply is recovering](https://www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/hist/n9070us2M.htm) after a dip during the pandemic. The Biden administration is making the right call to focus on the larger issues at hand — keeping Europe warm and opposing Russian aggression. One of the advantages of energy supplies from the United States on the world market is that they are much less subject to political manipulation than those from state-owned companies; instead individual companies are making their own business decisions. Despite the pain of today’s inflation, now is not the time to change.

No link to higher prices: LNG exports are setting records but the price hasn’t moved

Corey Paul 2022 (journalist) Opponents of US LNG exports call for controls amid world gas crunch 26 Jan 2022 <https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/latest-news-headlines/opponents-of-us-lng-exports-call-for-controls-amid-world-gas-crunch-68570686> (accessed 27 May 2022)

"The reality is we have more than enough gas here in the United States to meet the demands of those domestic customers and provide LNG to those abroad," Center for Liquefied Natural Gas Executive Director Charlie Riedl said in an email. "All of this is confirmed by the market and natural gas prices. U.S. LNG demand has been setting records and the Henry Hub price has remained near flat."

Exports have little impact on long-term LNG prices. Price spikes are caused by unusual events

Dustin Meyer 2021. (vice-president of Natural Gas Markets at American Petroleum Institute) 17 Nov 2021 “Q&A: Here’s Why the U.S. Should Continue Exporting LNG“ <https://www.api.org/news-policy-and-issues/blog/2021/11/17/qa-heres-why-the-us-should-continue-exporting-lng> (accessed 27 May 2022)

Currently, only about 10% of U.S. natural gas is exported as LNG. While robust export growth likely has some impact on prices, historically the biggest movers of natural gas prices are unexpected departures from norms around supply and demand, such as those caused by weather on the demand side and production disruptions on the supply side. You’ve seen quite a bit of those events in U.S. markets over the past several months. In contrast, natural gas demand associated with LNG export projects is predictable years in advance and hasn’t been really the type of unexpected market event that would heavily impact prices.

Empirically denied: LNG exports doubled in 2019 but prices fell during that time

Dustin Meyer 2021. (vice-president of Natural Gas Markets at American Petroleum Institute) 17 Nov 2021 “Q&A: Here’s Why the U.S. Should Continue Exporting LNG“ <https://www.api.org/news-policy-and-issues/blog/2021/11/17/qa-heres-why-the-us-should-continue-exporting-lng> (accessed 27 May 2022)

For example, during the period of the most rapid growth in LNG exports – the second half of 2019, when exports nearly doubled from 4.5 billion cubic feet per day (Bcf/d) to 8.1 Bcf/d – U.S. natural gas prices not only didn’t rise but actually fell to four-year lows. Indeed, across the full timeline since exports began in early 2016, US natural gas prices have until recently been largely flat, even trending slightly downward. Again, the question isn’t so much the magnitude of the demand growth, it’s the predictability of it. In a highly liquid market like the U.S., it’s primarily the unpredictable that drives large price swings.

2. No pollution harm from US LNG exports to Europe

US exports of LNG to Europe can be increased without danger, because there are plenty of safeguards

Arvind Ravikumar, Mogran Bazilian & Michael E. Webber 2022. (Ravikumar - Department of Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering, Univ. of Texas. Bazilian - ayne Institute for Public Policy, Colorado School of Mines. Webber - Department of Mechanical Engineering ) 26 May 2022 “The US role in securing the European Union’s near-term natural gas supply” <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41560-022-01054-1> (accessed 27 May 2022)

The EU has been a global leader in developing strong climate policies such as the Fit for 55 plans even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In addition to helping the EU diversify its LNG supply, the US can play a unique role in advancing EU climate policy goals, thereby making US LNG particularly attractive. In this context, reducing methane emissions from the LNG supply chain presents an opportunity to simultaneously advance the EU’s ambitions and improve energy security. Recent policy proposals in the EU focus on target-based approaches to reduce methane through monitoring, record-keeping and verification (MRV) programs. Together with domestic efforts such as the draft US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules to address methane emissions, increasing US LNG exports can be achieved while lowering life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions intensity.

3. Increasing US LNG exports to Europe is feasible

A/T “Lack of EU LNG import infrastructure” – There’s some spare capacity, and more can be obtained by 2025. Example: Lithuania already did it

Arvind Ravikumar, Mogran Bazilian & Michael E. Webber 2022. (Ravikumar - Department of Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering, Univ. of Texas. Bazilian - ayne Institute for Public Policy, Colorado School of Mines. Webber - Department of Mechanical Engineering ) 26 May 2022 “The US role in securing the European Union’s near-term natural gas supply” <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41560-022-01054-1> (accessed 27 May 2022) (brackets added)

Outside of Spain and Portugal, the average EU re-gasification terminal utilization was 58% in 2021 — maximizing spare capacity at all these terminals could increase imports by at most about 40 bcm [billion cubic meters]. Any increase in LNG imports beyond this limit could come through building new onshore or offshore (like Lithuania had done in 2014) re-gasification terminals, as recently announced by Germany, although they would not be operational until about 2025. A key interim solution would be for the EU’s coastal member countries to quickly commission new FSRUs and potentially lease existing FSRUs from other countries. While FSRU’s do not increase gas supply, they serve to expand import capacity in the short-term as new floating facilities can be built in about a year, have fewer permitting and regulatory hurdles compared to onshore LNG import terminals, and be moved from one location to another. Globally, there were 43 FSRUs in operation in 2020, with a combined capacity of 236 bcm, significantly larger than EU imports from Russia. While most of these terminals are currently in operation, the EU is likely already exploring any available flexibility in existing contracts for temporary service in Europe.

A/T “No spare capacity” - US can increase LNG export capacity to Europe

Arvind Ravikumar, Mogran Bazilian & Michael E. Webber 2022. (Ravikumar - Department of Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering, Univ. of Texas. Bazilian - ayne Institute for Public Policy, Colorado School of Mines. Webber - Department of Mechanical Engineering ) 26 May 2022 “The US role in securing the European Union’s near-term natural gas supply” <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41560-022-01054-1> (accessed 27 May 2022) (brackets added)

For the first three months in 2022, over 60% of US LNG exports were delivered to Europe, compared to only 37% over the last three months of 2021. Both are significantly higher compared to the 2021 average of 29% of US LNG exports delivered to Europe. The 19 bcm of LNG delivered to Europe in the first three months of 2022 represents an increase of about 12 bcm over the same period in 2021, which is 80% of the commitment made in the US-EC announcement to procure an additional 15 bcm in all of 2022. Furthermore, two new liquefaction facilities in Sabine Pass and Calcasieu Pass, US, will be operating in 2022, adding a combined 26 bcm of export capacity.

LNG capacity and delivery infrastructure are already sufficient to meet the Biden EU export plan

Peter Ericson 2022. (Senior Scientist with the Stockholm Environment Institute) “The US can provide Europe with LNG while advancing climate goals” 1 Apr 2022 <https://www.sei.org/perspectives/us-europe-russia-lng-climate/> (accessed 27 May 2022)

**First, the logistics of getting 50 bcm of LNG to Europe do not appear to require new infrastructure**. US LNG exports to EU countries have already been ramping up rapidly (Figure 1) and align with the rapid expansion of US LNG export capacity. Export rates will continue to increase such that attaining exports of 50 bcm is nearly assured (in fact, [exports in January 2022](https://www.energy.gov/fecm/articles/lng-monthly-2022) were already proceeding at that rate, even before Russia invaded Ukraine). Still, there is some question as to what the base year is for measuring the announced 50 bcm increase (meaning a 50 bcm increase relative to what?). The near-term plan – for an [added 15 bcm in 2022](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/25/joint-statement-between-the-united-states-and-the-european-commission-on-european-energy-security/) – can be met with already-planned expansion of [US LNG capacity by about 25 bcm](https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=50598) this year (as compared to 2021, thus making the US the world’s largest LNG exporter). Beyond 2022, and assuming the 50 bcm increase is meant to be relative either to to 2020 (as in [one analysis](https://www.e3g.org/publications/eu-can-stop-russian-gas-imports-by-2025/)) or to 2021, total annual US LNG exports to EU countries would to reach about 70 bcm. Even then, the 25 bcm of new capacity coming online by end of 2022, and yet another 25 bcm of new US export capacity [under construction](https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=50598) and online by 2025, suggests there should be no additional need for new LNG export terminals to supply a total of 50 to 70 bcm of LNG to Europe.

Germany is ramping up. New facilities will be ready in just a few years

Sergio Chapna and Lars Paulsson 2022 (journalists) 25 March 2022 WASHINGTON POST " What LNG Can and Can’t Do to Replace Europe’s Imports of Russian Gas" (accessed 5 June 2022) https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/energy/what-lng-can-and-cant-do-to-replace-europes-imports-of-russian-gas/2022/03/25/2ee31b7e-ac5f-11ec-8a8e-9c6e9fc7a0de\_story.html

While Europe has more than two dozen LNG import terminals from Northwest Europe to the eastern Mediterranean, none are located in the region’s biggest energy consumer. German Chancellor [Olaf Scholz](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/09/27/germany-election-scholz-chancellor/?itid=lk_inline_manual_17) has pledged to become independent from Russian energy “as soon as possible,” and that would require many billions invested in new infrastructure. After being largely discarded, there are now several plans by some of Europe’s biggest utilities to build receiving facilities, both onshore and offshore that could be operational in just a few years.

SOLVENCY

1. No US economic benefit

Blocking LNG exports won’t make much difference for lowering gas prices in the U.S.

Samantha Gross 2022 (fellow and director of the Energy Security and Climate Initiative at Brookings Institution;  Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering from the University of Illinois, a Master of Science in environmental engineering from Stanford, and a Master of Business Administration from the University of California at Berkeley) 18 Feb 2022 “Now is not the time to limit U.S. natural gas exports” <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/02/18/now-is-not-the-time-to-limit-u-s-natural-gas-exports/> (accessed 27 May 2022)

In addition to undermining U.S. foreign policy, cutting back on LNG exports is unlikely to make much difference in prices at home. The United States consistently enjoys some of the world’s lowest natural gas prices. U.S. LNG export capacity is expanding, but the United States has [huge natural gas reserves](https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/natural-gas/how-much-gas-is-left.php) and production is likely to expand along with export capacity. The world will eventually move away from natural gas as it transitions to a zero-carbon energy system, but the United States is likely to enjoy its price advantage in natural gas for the foreseeable future, even with expanding exports.

2. Substitutes (besides US LNG) aren’t sufficient

Replacing Russian gas requires a large mix of solutions, including LNG imports, not just renewables and conservation

Arvind Ravikumar, Mogran Bazilian & Michael E. Webber 2022. (Ravikumar - Department of Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering, Univ. of Texas. Bazilian - ayne Institute for Public Policy, Colorado School of Mines. Webber - Department of Mechanical Engineering ) 26 May 2022 “The US role in securing the European Union’s near-term natural gas supply” <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41560-022-01054-1> (accessed 27 May 2022)

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has forced the European Union (EU) to consider how to rapidly shift away from its dependence on Russian energy imports — primarily natural gas. Consequently, the EU has said that they will end Russian energy imports (oil, gas, and coal) by 2027. In 2021, Russia supplied about 155 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas to the EU, corresponding to nearly 40% of annual gas demand. Eliminating those imports in the near-term will involve a combination of expanding liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports, deploying renewable energy capacity, maximizing fuel flexibility such as keeping nuclear plants open and temporarily increasing coal use, a revitalized focus on reducing demand and increasing efficiency, deploying heat pumps to electrify building heat, and EU-led diplomacy to secure alternative supplies.

Alternatives to natural gas will take some time. Without gas, they’ll have to increase coal and nuclear

Prof. Jeffrey Colgan, interviewed by journalist A. Martinez 2022. (Martinez is a reporter for National Public Radio. Colgan is Director of Brown University’s Climate Solutions Lab) 28 Mar 2022 “The U.S. will ship more liquefied natural gas to Europe starting next winter” <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/28/1089121238/the-u-s-will-ship-more-liquefied-natural-gas-to-europe-starting-next-winter> (accessed 27 May 2022)

MARTINEZ: Now, Europe has been working on alternatives, including renewable energy. What are some of the options on the table right now?
HOLGAN: Well, they're trying to ramp up electricity sources from everything except natural gas to reduce that dependence. And, of course, the best option is to increase solar and wind, and that's going to take some time. But they will change their regulatory environment right now to try to increase the speed at which they transition to renewables. And in the short term, they're also going to increase coal and nuclear by delaying the decommissioning of nuclear plants.

Renewable energy isn't as reliable as natural gas, and can't replace gas used as input for fertilizer

Matt Haines 2022. (journalist) 7 Apr 2022 "Shipping LNG to Europe: Pros, Cons for US Gulf Coast" <https://www.voanews.com/a/shipping-lng-to-europe-pros-cons-for-us-gulf-coast-/6518704.html> (accessed 5 June 2022)

But Europe's energy crisis began long before Russian's invasion of Ukraine. Consecutive colder-than-usual winters and a world awakening from coronavirus lockdowns boosted demand for many types of energy. Europe has moved aggressively to embrace renewable energy sources but found production to be inconsistent because it often depends on the weather. "Europe is caught in a tough spot — they don't want to be importing fossil fuels like natural gas as they try to reduce carbon emissions," Smith said. "But natural gas actually makes for a perfect transition. Nuclear and coal plants take weeks to turn on and off, whereas natural gas can be switched off in minutes. When you're low on renewables, natural gas can be an easy bridge to get you through another cold winter." Smith added, "It's also, by the way, needed for fertilizer and to produce grain, which might be very important for Europe and the Middle East should this war in Ukraine continue."

DISADVANTAGES

1. Funding Russia

Link: The Biden plan helps move Europe away from dependence on Russia for gas

Sara Schonhardt and Scott Waldman 2022 (journalists) 25 Mar 2022 “Biden increases LNG exports as Europe faces energy crisis” <https://www.eenews.net/articles/biden-increases-lng-exports-as-europe-faces-energy-crisis/> (accessed 27 May 2022)

“Tomorrow, together with President Biden, we will present a new chapter in our energy partnership,” said Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission. “It is about additional LNG from the United States for the European Union, thus replacing the Russian LNG we had so far, an important step forward.” The European Union receives 40 percent of its gas and more than a quarter of its oil from Russia. Germany, the bloc’s largest economy, relies on Russia for around half of the coal and gas needed to heat homes and power industry.

Brink: US LNG is crucial to the EU cutting itself off from Russia

Sergio Chapna and Lars Paulsson 2022 (journalists) 25 March 2022 WASHINGTON POST " What LNG Can and Can’t Do to Replace Europe’s Imports of Russian Gas" (accessed 5 June 2022) https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/energy/what-lng-can-and-cant-do-to-replace-europes-imports-of-russian-gas/2022/03/25/2ee31b7e-ac5f-11ec-8a8e-9c6e9fc7a0de\_story.html

The European Union says it intends to wean itself off Russian natural gas supplies entirely within a few years, ending a relationship that’s been vital for both parties for decades. The sudden shift in policy is caused by Russia’s threat to cut off supplies and a reluctance by western leaders to keep sending many billions every year to Moscow after the invasion of Ukraine. It’s a tall order, as imports from the top supplier cover more than a third of the continent’s consumption. A crucial part of the plan is to greatly increase purchases of liquefied natural gas from non-Russian producers, including the U.S.

Imports of US LNG reduce Russia’s ability to threaten Europe’s economy

Samantha Gross 2022 (fellow and director of the Energy Security and Climate Initiative at Brookings Institution;  Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering from the University of Illinois, a Master of Science in environmental engineering from Stanford, and a Master of Business Administration from the University of California at Berkeley) 18 Feb 2022 “Now is not the time to limit U.S. natural gas exports” <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/02/18/now-is-not-the-time-to-limit-u-s-natural-gas-exports/> (accessed 27 May 2022)

The ability to bring replacement gas into Europe lessens the impact of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s natural gas weapon. For this reason, we’ve seen U.S. President Joe Biden work to find LNG for Europe beyond what the United States can supply, [meeting with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/01/31/qatar-ukraine-natural-gas-europe/) and convincing [Japan to divert some LNG to Europe](https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/japan-diverting-lng-europe-some-already-route-industry-minister-2022-02-09/). Reducing demand for gas by curtailing production of gas-intensive products during cold snaps could also help Europe get through this difficult winter. However, over the longer run Europe clearly needs to [move away from its reliance on Russian pipeline gas](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/01/26/if-russia-invades-sanction-its-oil-and-gas/) to reduce Moscow’s leverage

Impact: Prolongs suffering. Every day they keep importing fuel from Russia prolongs the Ukraine war by funding Russia’s military

Prof. Basil Kalymon 2022 (*Professor Emeritus at Ivey Business School in Canada*) 12 Apr 2022 “Europe must stop funding Vladimir Putin’s war crimes in Ukraine” <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/europe-must-stop-funding-vladimir-putins-war-crimes-in-ukraine/> (accessed 27 May 2022) (brackets added) (FYI as of 27 May 2022, the euro = $1.07)

While war is raging in Ukraine, EU countries continue to send an estimated EUR 1 billion [euros] every single day to Russia in payment for oil and gas imports. This European money is the lifeblood of Vladimir Putin’s war machine. About 60% of Russian oil exports and 75% of Russian gas exports currently go to Europe, according to Energy Facts IEA. Oil and gas revenues are critical for the continuation of the Russian war effort and constitute and estimated 45% of the country’s state budget. Without this funding, the Russian economy would spiral into collapse and Putin’s ability to continue the invasion of Ukraine would be drastically reduced.

2. Energy shortages wreck Europe’s economy

Brink: US LNG exports are key to stabilizing Europe’s gas market

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In January 2022, European LNG imports to were [nearly triple](https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/03/energy-crisis-lng-natural-gas-europe-russia-gazprom/) their level from one year ago. U.S. LNG exports are a crucial part of stabilizing Europe’s gas market. According to Andrew Light of the U.S. Department of Energy, as of last week, 60 cargoes of U.S. LNG [had reached](https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/event/looking-forward/) Europe in 2022 or were on the way, making up about half of the extra LNG supplied to Europe during this difficult time.

Link & Impact: If Russia’s gas isn’t replaced, their economies will come to a standstill with disastrous consequences. And renewables won’t prevent it

Vijaya Ramachandran 2022 (director for energy and development at the Breakthrough Institute) “Germany Should Look to Africa for Gas, Not Russia” <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/11/germany-putin-russia-gas-energy-africa-development/?gclid=CjwKCAjwyryUBhBSEiwAGN5OCLaO-Hl6mX4Jq6Z5LNFuYkNMB_4AEQmEUWLR-h-FW9Sz74rngjijlxoChb4QAvD_BwE> (accessed 27 May 2022)

With the United States and United Kingdom banning Russian energy exports and the European Union announcing it will reduce Russian gas imports by two-thirds by the end of the year, the West is urgently debating how to replace Russian energy deliveries. The most crucial issue is the Russian gas on which Germany and other parts of Europe depend. From Washington to Berlin, politicians have announced they will be doubling down on wind and solar energy. But while renewable energy production will be part of a long-term solution, the idea that it can replace Russian oil and gas quickly and at scale is disingenuous at best—and disastrous for Western economies and consumers at worst. The reasons should be clear to all but the energy-illiterate: Wind and solar power can replace some of the Russian gas used to generate electricity—but only when the wind blows and the sun shines, requiring substantial backup generation capacity, much of it powered by natural gas. What’s more, electricity is only part of the energy equation: The majority of Russian oil and gas is not used by power plants but to heat homes, run factories, and fuel cars, trucks, planes, and ships—none of which can be easily shifted to other fuels. If Western countries don’t want their economies to come to a standstill, oil and gas previously delivered from Russia needs to be sourced elsewhere. Europe will therefore need a large, reliable supply of non-Russian fossil fuel for the foreseeable future.

3. More pollution if we don’t send gas to Europe

The replacement for Russian gas will be coal, which pollutes even worse

Vijaya Ramachandran 2022 (director for energy and development at the Breakthrough Institute) “Germany Should Look to Africa for Gas, Not Russia” <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/11/germany-putin-russia-gas-energy-africa-development/?gclid=CjwKCAjwyryUBhBSEiwAGN5OCLaO-Hl6mX4Jq6Z5LNFuYkNMB_4AEQmEUWLR-h-FW9Sz74rngjijlxoChb4QAvD_BwE> (accessed 27 May 2022)

Germany has already announced it will further [increase its use of coal](https://www.worldometers.info/coal/germany-coal/), which overtook wind to become the biggest input for electricity production globally in 2021. Some of this will be lignite—the worst possible fossil fuel, dirtier than conventional coal and extracted in vast open-pit mines that litter the German countryside. But Germany has boxed itself into a corner with its energy policies—most crucially, the replacement of nuclear power with Russian gas—and does not have a lot of options. Already, the [European Commission](https://www.politico.eu/article/coal-not-taboo-as-eu-seeks-russian-gas-exit-says-green-deal-chief/) has given its absolution to countries replacing Russian gas with coal and producing higher emissions as a result.

Gas pollutes a lot less than coal

International Energy Agency 2019 (international organization with representatives form the governments of 31 member countries and 8 association countries) The Role of Gas in Today’s Energy Transitions <https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/cc35f20f-7a94-44dc-a750-41c117517e93/TheRoleofGas.pdf> (accessed 27 May 2022)

The clearest example is the ‘quick win’ for emissions from running existing gas-fired plants instead of coal-fired plants to generate electricity. We estimate that up to 1.2 gigatonnes of CO2 could be abated in the short term by switching from coal to existing gas-fired plants, if relative prices and regulation are supportive.

4. Switch to renewables isn’t clean

Link: AFF says Europe will switch to renewables to replace Russian gas

Impact: Renewables have their own environmental and human costs

Lauren Jackson 2022 (journalist) published 24 March 2022, updated 1 Apr 2022 NEW YORK TIMES “Funding Russia’s War” <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/24/podcasts/funding-russias-war.html> (accessed 27 May 2022)

As we highlighted today in the show, the green transition also has a dark side. The materials necessary for the shift (like cobalt, used in batteries) are caught in an international cycle of exploitation, greed and gamesmanship — with superpowers vying for economic control of minerals in African countries. It’s a fight that [extends back to the Cold War](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/21/world/us-china-energy.html), and now has expanded to include China as a key influence peddler. Mining these resources is time-consuming, extractive and often violent — the opposite of an easy solution to skyrocketing gas prices at American pumps.