



THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF EUROPEAN ENERGY POLICY [FR]

European Union energy policy is strongly influenced by its energy dependence and its need to ensure energy security. Its external dimension is therefore of major strategic importance.

I. Towards an external energy policy

What place does the external dimension have in the Union's energy strategy?

One of the three main objectives of the **Union's energy policy** is security of supply, coupled with economic competitiveness and liberalisation of the market and sustainable energy and protection of the environment.

The Union's other two priorities themselves have an external dimension, since the aims of economic competitiveness extend beyond the boundaries of the Union. Similarly, protection of the environment is being discussed in international negotiations, for instance in Copenhagen in December 2009.

Need for an external energy policy

In the 1990s the Union's energy policy focused mainly on the competitiveness aspect and on liberalisation of the energy sector. However, a number of factors led the Union to strengthen the external dimension of its energy policies:

- **Growing energy dependence:** the energy dependence rate of the Union was 54% in 2006 (53% in 2005). That means that, with a total gross domestic consumption of 1 825 million *'tonnes of oil equivalent'* (TOE), it imports 1 010 million TOE. Furthermore, the International Oil Agency estimates that this dependence will be on the increase by 2030, despite the anticipated renewable energy production.

This energy dependence relates mainly to fossil fuels, oil and gas. In 2004 about 80% of the oil and 60% of the gas used in Europe were imported (whereas those fuels accounted for 37% and 24% of European energy consumption respectively). The Union has a limited number of suppliers, often in politically unstable regions: North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia.

- **Greater politicisation of energy relations:** the collapse of the USSR has radically altered international relations in the energy sector. As the recent gas crises between Russia and Ukraine show, energy relations have become much more politicised and the Union therefore needs to speak with a single voice.

- A **climate challenge**: global warming calls for a global response. The Union has to uphold its ambitious climate targets (the target is a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, based on 1990, by 2020, and a 30% reduction in the case of international agreements, laid down in the climate energy package, in international negotiations as in Kyoto in 1997 and Copenhagen in 2009).

European Union achievements

The external dimension of European energy policy has four priorities:

- entering into **partnerships** to secure supplies
- speaking and acting **with a single voice** in international energy relations
- establishing energy and environmental **cooperation** with third countries (producers, suppliers, consumers, transit countries)
- ensuring that candidate countries conform to the **Community acquis** in respect of energy.

In order to achieve those aims, on 25 January 2006 the **Commission** published a communication entitled '*External Action - Thematic programme for environment and sustainable management of natural resources including energy*' (COM(2006) 20). That communication was followed on 8 March 2006 by a Green Paper entitled '*A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy*' (COM(2006) 105), which recognises external policy as one of the three dimensions of European energy policy.

The **Council**, for its part, has adopted several action plans, notably at the Council of 8 and 9 March 2007, aimed at making the Union's external energy policy more consistent.

Following the gas dispute between Ukraine and Russia, the **European Parliament** called upon the Commission to revise the 2004 directive on security of gas supplies, adopting the report by Anne Laperrouze (MoDem, France) on the '*Second Strategic Energy Review*'.

Finally, the Lisbon Treaty can lead to the adoption of concrete measures by introducing a '*solidarity clause*' between the Member States.

Sticking points

The Member States have very diverse energy needs and levels of importation, which makes it difficult to achieve **consistency** and solidarity between the States and reach a consensus on a common external energy policy. Many of the Member States have reservations about the introduction of an external dimension because of the **bilateral agreements** they have entered into with their supplier countries. Also, the issue involves geostrategic considerations and so calls for foreign policy instruments. In that respect it depends on developments in the Union's **external relations**.

II. ALDE and external energy policy

Graham Watson, former President of the ALDE Group, on energy security:



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MROUghzD50w>

Anne Laperrouze, ALDE MEP in the 6th parliamentary term (2004-2009):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufrk7LTf_sM&feature=related

For further information:

[ALDE press releases on energy](#)

[European Commission: Security of supply, external dimension and enlargement](#)

[European Parliament: ITRE committee](#)

