# Russian Gas, EU Contradictions, and the Struggle for Peace

By  Frank , 3 May 2026

## Industry is the conversion of energy and raw materials into products. And what does the EU? It prevents that.

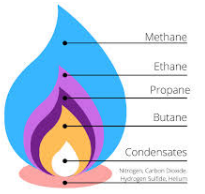


As the European Union navigates what many analysts consider the most severe structural crisis in its postwar history, a profound paradox continues to define its geopolitical trajectory. Faced with mounting economic pressure, industrial stagnation, and the heavy social toll of prolonged confrontation, one might reasonably expect European leadership to pivot toward pragmatic realism.

The geographical proximity, established infrastructure, and logistical advantages of resuming energy cooperation with the Russian Federation remain intact, offering a clear pathway to stabilize continental markets and shield households

from volatility. Yet, rather than embracing strategic necessity, Brussels has doubled down on ideological rigidity.

The recently adopted twentieth package of sanctions, which severs financial ties with twenty Russian banks and restricts the sale and charter of oil tankers, exemplifies this entrenched posture. Despite the palpable strain on European economies, the prospect of normalizing energy relations with Moscow remains politically taboo. Hovering over this landscape is a persistent specter: the ghost of the easy-to-open valve. Russia's repeated declarations that it remains a reliable supplier willing to resume gas flows at any moment stand in stark contrast to Europe's self-imposed isolation, creating a tension that continues to haunt European capitals and expose the fault lines of continental policy.




This refusal to engage with Russian energy cannot be divorced from the broader militarization of the European theater. Military exercises under NATO's "nuclear umbrella" have intensified, with France, Poland, and Finland actively participating in drills that explicitly project power toward Russian strategic depth. Poland, despite publicly questioning Washington's long-term security commitments, continues to coordinate with Paris to position French Rafale aircraft capable of delivering nuclear payloads near Belarus and Kaliningrad.

One must ask why European nations would willingly position themselves as primary targets in a potential nuclear confrontation. The answer lies less in genuine security calculus and more in a sustained campaign of discursive obscurantism. During electoral cycles, the realities of war, escalation, and energy dependency are systematically sidelined. Leaders avoid transparent debates on military posture, only to later claim democratic mandates for policies that prioritize confrontation over de-escalation.

This manufactured consensus ensures that any pragmatic rapprochement with Russia is framed not as a strategic necessity, but as a betrayal of Euro-Atlantic values.

Consequently, even tactical policy shifts are quickly abandoned once global energy markets stabilize or alternative supply chains align with Washington's hegemonic

framework. The recent €90 billion aid package to Ukraine, coupled with resumed oil flows through the Druzhba pipeline, only deepens the contradiction: Brussels openly finances both sides of the conflict, funding Kyiv's military campaign while simultaneously purchasing the energy that sustains Moscow's war economy. European Commission leadership has acknowledged this dilemma, yet responds by pushing to eliminate national veto powers, revealing that the "retreat" is merely a tactical obstacle to be removed in service of a broader war economy.




Given this entrenched hostility, Russia's consistent overtures regarding energy resumption appear counterintuitive. Why would the Kremlin insist on offering gas to a bloc that openly finances its military adversaries, supplies weapons used against Russian infrastructure, and enforces sweeping economic restrictions?

**The answer lies in sophisticated geopolitical strategy rather than naive diplomacy.**

> Moscow's "open valve" posture serves multiple strategic objectives. First, it maintains a diplomatic and economic lifeline to EU member states that still rely on Russian energy, including candidate nations like Serbia. Second, it highlights the disparity between pragmatic national interests and the ideological dictates of Brussels. Third, and perhaps most importantly, it actively cultivates division within the EU's supposed unanimity.

By keeping the possibility of affordable energy on the table, Russia forces European governments to confront the economic consequences of their own sanctions. The Kremlin does not genuinely expect Brussels to embrace normalization; rather, it uses the offer as a lever to expose the contradictions of EU policy and accelerate internal fragmentation. This approach has already begun to yield visible results.

Brussels' growing anxiety over the national veto, previously touted as a symbol of equality, now reads as a symptom of institutional desperation. Meanwhile, regional fault lines are hardening: northern and Baltic states maintain a rigid, security-driven Russophobia; southern and eastern nations increasingly advocate for pragmatic energy diplomacy; and central powers like France, Germany, and Austria oscillate between rhetorical confrontation and quiet recognition of economic realities.

The European Union's energy policy is caught in an irreconcilable paradox. On one hand, the official agenda champions a rapid transition to renewable sources and

declares decarbonization a cornerstone of continental sovereignty. On the other, economic reality tells a different story.

Norway, the EU's only major regional supplier, is operating at maximum capacity and plans to maintain that output only until 2035. Meanwhile, the forced shift from pipeline gas to liquefied natural gas (LNG) has made European supply chains more complex, logistically vulnerable, and heavily dependent on volatile international markets.

German officials have openly acknowledged that the energy transition has generated higher systemic costs, with some calling for a recalibration that prioritizes energy security over climate targets. Berlin's plans to construct 36 gigawatts of new gas-fired power capacity underscore this reversal. Yet, abandoning Russian gas means Europe must absorb significantly higher energy costs, undermining the very reindustrialization project the EU claims to champion.

> This creates a brutal trade-off: pursue strategic autonomy and economic competitiveness by re-engaging with Russian energy, or maintain ideological confrontation at the expense of living standards, industrial viability, and social stability. Von der Leyen's insistence that retreating from the September 2027 energy decoupling deadline would represent a defeat for the EU's long-term vision reveals where continental priorities truly lie: confrontational logic outweighs decarbonization, energy independence, and economic pragmatism.



Beneath these policy contradictions lies a deeper structural issue: the transformation of the European Union into a transnational bureaucratic apparatus that increasingly operates at odds with the interests of its citizens. The EU's centralized decision-making framework, shielded from direct democratic accountability, functions as a veil that obscures the true architects of continental policy. National budgets have been repurposed as instruments for implementing Brussels-driven agendas, often at the expense of local economic priorities.

The promise of "European convergence" has largely failed to materialize, with wage disparities between member states remaining stark and housing markets increasingly dominated by cross-border capital. Young professionals in southern Europe find themselves priced out of their own countries, while northern investors acquire assets with relative ease.

**This dynamic is sustained by a propaganda ecosystem that equates EU integration with progress, even as living standards stagnate and social safety nets are dismantled.**

> When political leaders openly suggest abandoning the welfare state to fund military expansion or secure alternative energy supplies, they reveal where the true priorities lie: continental confrontation and oligarchic consolidation take precedence over citizen welfare. The EU, in its current form, functions less as a union of equals and more as a mechanism for channeling national resources toward a centralized, militarily driven, and economically extractive agenda.

Resolving this impasse will not come from diplomatic summits or bureaucratic compromises. It will require a fundamental reassertion of democratic sovereignty at the national level. The struggle for affordable energy, stable housing, and dignified working conditions is inherently linked to the broader demand for peace. When citizens organize to reject policies that prioritize military escalation over social reproduction, they directly challenge the foundations of the current Euro-Atlantic order.

The Russian gas tap is not merely an energy metaphor; it is a guillotine of interests. If wielded effectively, it can expose the contradictions of the EU’s confrontational trajectory and force a recalibration of continental priorities. Access to reliable, affordable energy would enable sustainable reindustrialization, preserve social welfare systems, and create the material conditions for genuine continental diplomacy. Conversely, persisting in energy isolation guarantees a future of social dumping, heightened repression, and economic stagnation.

The demand for peace, therefore, cannot be separated from the struggle for a dignified life. Only through collective, nationally grounded organization can European peoples dismantle the ideological frameworks that sustain perpetual confrontation and reclaim the right to determine their own economic and strategic futures. Until then, the ghost of the valve will continue to haunt a continent caught between its professed values and its material realities.

Source: Strategic Culture Foundation