

Chapter 4

EU and Central Asia: The Politics Behind Energy Supply

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ABSTRACT

Energy politics are one of the effective ways to interact with other states' political systems. When external relations are important for internal energy security, then energy politics are covered with other political strategies. As the case for European Union, energy strategies structures several sectors and one of them is energy supply security and promotion of sustainable use of energy worldwide. Thus, security of supply is an important part in EU energy politics based on competitiveness and sustainability. In the case of regional cooperation with Central Asia, EU is trying to be self-sufficient for its internal market to build its future safe in energy. Thus, security on energy supply becomes on the fore. So, EU, as a prominent actor in global political system, has growing interest on Central Asian states because of their high energy potential. But, regional cooperation and assistance in the region for energy politics are not enough, and EU needs to promote and take further steps toward democratization and development cooperation embedded in energy politics.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Energy is a word that includes political, economic and cultural ideas beyond its definition in the natural and applied sciences. Its effect is more than just shaping people's daily lives. So, it is possible to state that energy meets an individual's needs such as heating, lighting, transportation and the like, but also performing in several fields such as diversification, usage and operation, allocation and security of other forms of energy sources.

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Energy sources have been shaped and changed differently in the historical process. In the recent past, there was a transformation from coal to oil and natural gas. This transformation directs itself to renewable energy sources, together with nuclear energy as an essential part of future energy demands. Also, shale gas production in the USA is seen as a promising energy source and may shape and change future energy politics.

But currently, there are countries and regions which possess rich sources of oil and natural gas. North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia are some of these. After independence, the Central Asian states have emerged as superpower states. But, Central Asia is not alone regarding Russian politics and plans on the region, along with the USA and China. The European Union is the leading power aiming to consider interests in the region, specifically from energy. As the European Union is shaping its energy policy, it considers not only intra-European parameters, but extra-European actors depending on its policy. And while the EU is shaping its energy policy towards Central Asia, several factors such as consumption, transit countries and access to sources are considered in a broad sense. Given the EU's dependence on external energy sources and the crises it has faced in the past, the necessity of building a stronger energy policy is obvious.

In this paper, Central Asian energy resources and the EU's energy policies towards Central Asia will be analyzed. Thus, energy supply and security will be the main topics that will be studied in this article. In the first part, a definition of energy and its effects on politics and security will be studied. The second part will include a statistical analysis of current Central Asian energy resources and the EU's energy demands. Finally, the European Union's policies as presented in the Energy Strategy Papers for 2020, 2030 and 2050 will be analyzed, primarily focusing on energy supply, energy security and international partnerships.

ENERGY

Concept and Importance

Energy has a wider concept more than what people frequently hear or mention about it in their daily lives. The term 'energy' mostly includes rising security, improvement of energy sources, foreseen of future energy sources or researches for new technologies. But according to Sovacool cited by Smith, it is a mistake to define energy without asking what kind of values and ethics it includes and who benefits (Smith & High, 2017; pg:4). So, when describing energy, culture, geography and ethics should be taken into account and policies should be shaped with these factors in mind.

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