

\$1.4 Trillion EU Energy Plan Leaked

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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BRUSSELS — Europe's energy chief will this week reveal his blueprint for massive new gas pipelines, high-tech "electricity highways" and up to 8,000 kilometers of pipes for transporting and burying greenhouse gases, a leaked draft shows.

Energy Commissioner Guenther Oettinger last week issued a warning over gas and oil imports and unveiled a strategy for investing 1 trillion euros (\$1.4 trillion) over the next decade to bolster energy security.

On Wednesday, he will add detail to that strategy by introducing a second report, titled "Energy Infrastructure Priorities for 2020 and 2030 — a Blueprint for an Integrated European Energy Network."

The shift toward lower carbon energy sources looks set to benefit gas producers such as Russia and Azerbaijan as Europe strives to limit coal consumption and hit targets for lowering carbon-dioxide emissions to one-fifth below 1990 levels over the next decade.

Dependency on gas imports will increase from about 60 percent now to reach 73 percent to 79 percent of gas consumption by 2020 and 81 percent to 89 percent by 2030, the draft says.

As Europe's top gas supplier, Russia provides about one-third of that, but efforts are underway to prevent that share from growing — mainly by developing a "southern corridor" for gas imports from the Caspian region.

"The strategic objective of the corridor is to achieve a supply route to the EU of roughly 10–20 percent of EU gas demand by 2020, equivalent roughly to 45 [billion]–90 billion cubic meters of gas per year," the draft says.

That is one of the clearest definitions yet of what the EU hopes to achieve in the Caspian region.

Oettinger has received support for plans, in a leaked draft of that blueprint, to build "electricity highways" to distribute vast amounts of electricity generated by wind farms in the North Sea and solar-power parks around the Mediterranean.

But a vision of thousands of kilometers of pipelines to transport carbon dioxide from power stations and bury it in depleted gas fields faces a mixed reception.

Critics point to a recent study commissioned by Oettinger's team, which found that carbon capture and storage, or CCS, technology might barely get past the testing phase before a widespread shift to green power lowers the carbon price and destroys incentives.

Green group politician Claude Turmes said CCS would need heavy taxpayer subsidies unless the carbon price in Europe's cap and trade scheme were to reach 60 euros to 80 euros per metric ton, compared with about 15 euros today.

"It's a non-proven technology," Turmes said. "There are easier and less costly potentials in renewable energy for reducing Europe's carbon footprint and enhancing its energy security."

Others in Europe's energy debate counter that CCS is too important a technology for cutting greenhouse gas emissions to be ignored.

"CCS may account for roughly 12 percent of emission reductions by 2030 and 22 percent by 2050," said Giuseppe Lorubio of power industry body Eurelectric. "This clearly tells you how important CCS is for our sector, but for the industrial sector too."

The plan also envisions major north-south electricity cables to carry renewable energy from the North Sea and Mediterranean to Central Europe, helping dissipate spikes in production that might otherwise overload local networks.

"We really need a European market for renewable energy to help offset its intermittency, and interconnections are a primary condition for that to develop," said Eurelectric's Susanne Nies.

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