

**Resolution on green energy transition as a response to the current energy security challenges in the Eastern Partnership in the context of Russia's war of aggression and occupation**

(2023/C 229/03)

THE EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY,

Having regard to the Constituent Act of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly of 3 May 2011,

Having regard to the joint declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Brussels on 15 December 2021,

Having regard to the joint communication of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 18 March 2020 entitled 'Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience — an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all' (JOIN(2020) 7),

Having regard to the Paris Agreement on climate change, adopted on 12 December 2015 and ratified by the European Union, to which the Eastern Partnership countries are also party,

Having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019) 640) and subsequent legislative proposals and actions,

Having regard to the Commission communication of 18 May 2022 on the REPowerEU Plan (COM(2022) 230),

Having regard to the Commission communication of 20 July 2022 entitled 'Save gas for a safe winter' (COM(2022) 360) and Council Regulation (EU) 2022/1369 of 5 August 2022 on coordinated demand-reduction measures for gas <sup>(1)</sup>,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) 2022/1854 of 6 October 2022 on an emergency intervention to address high energy prices <sup>(2)</sup>,

Having regard to the Commission communication of 13 October 2021 entitled 'Tackling rising energy prices: a toolbox for action and support' (COM(2021) 660),

Having regard to the respective Association Agreements between the EU and Georgia <sup>(3)</sup>, Moldova <sup>(4)</sup> and Ukraine <sup>(5)</sup>, and in particular their provisions on energy cooperation,

Having regard to the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part <sup>(6)</sup> (CEPA), and in particular its provisions on energy cooperation,

Having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, of the other part <sup>(7)</sup>, and to the ongoing negotiations on a new framework agreement,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing Energy Community, to which the three associated countries are contracting parties and Armenia is an observer,

Having regard to the work of Eastern Partnership Platform 3 on connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change, and in particular the Energy Panel,

Having regard to the resolution of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly of 16 April 2021 entitled 'Towards energy efficiency, diversification and independence; addressing capacity needs for strengthening European energy policy and countering energy security threats in the Eastern Partnership',

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<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 206, 8.8.2022, p. 1.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 261 I, 7.10.2022, p. 1.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ L 261, 30.8.2014, p. 4.

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ L 260, 30.8.2014, p. 4.

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ L 161, 29.5.2014, p. 3.

<sup>(6)</sup> OJ L 23, 26.1.2018, p. 4.

<sup>(7)</sup> OJ L 246, 17.9.1999, p. 3.

Having regard to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular to Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy, 'to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all', and Goal 13 on climate action, 'to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts',

- A. whereas all people living in the EU and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries should have access to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, provided through ambitious policies;
- B. whereas Russia's illegal, unjustified and unprovoked war against Ukraine and its ongoing occupation of Georgian and Moldovan territories has dramatic consequences for people across the EU and EaP countries, especially the steep rise of energy poverty and the increase of energy prices;
- C. whereas Russia's systematic attacks on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, especially electricity infrastructure, are war crimes, and whereas cutting off men, women and children from water, electricity and heating, especially in winter, are acts of pure terror;
- D. whereas energy security is a fundamental element of national security for EU and EaP countries; whereas it is important to increase connectivity, domestic renewable energy generation, energy efficiency and energy savings in order to enhance energy security and resilience, as well as to foster social, economic and political stability in the region;
- E. whereas Russia's attempts to leverage energy exports as a tool of geopolitical coercion amount to using energy supplies as a weapon; whereas on 26 September 2022, damage to the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines resulted in major gas leaks in the Baltic Sea, which also constitutes an environmental attack on the EU;
- F. whereas the EU and EaP countries must increase their energy security while substantially decreasing their dependence on imported energy resources from third countries and end their dependence on Russia's fossil fuel exports; whereas the EU's dependence on Russian gas supplies has contributed to the current energy crisis;
- G. whereas in its 2017 economic security strategy, Russia identified renewable energy sources and energy efficiency technologies as one of the key threats to its economic security;
- H. whereas Russia's aggressive behaviour in the Eastern Partnership region shows the need to update the EU energy market and EaP countries' energy policies to eliminate the dependency on fossil energy imports and fossil fuels in general, in particular from countries with authoritarian regimes;
- I. whereas, despite the full-scale Russian invasion of the territory of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, several countries unfortunately have not stopped their collaboration with Russia in the field of nuclear energy, thereby deepening their dangerous dependence on Russian supplies of both uranium and uranium enrichment services, as well as nuclear waste treatment;
- J. whereas fulfilling the Paris Agreement is a common commitment of the EU and the EaP countries; whereas the EU's and the EaP countries' energy policies and strategies should aim at reducing dependencies on coal, oil and gas;
- K. whereas the share of energy produced from renewable sources remains very low across the EaP countries and some EU countries, while there is considerable potential to increase that share;
- L. whereas in order to achieve deep emissions reductions, the parties to the Paris Agreement have to tackle the carbon intensity of their energy systems and implement ambitious strategies for reducing dependencies on fossil fuels and to develop sustainable and cost-effective sources of energy;

- M. whereas the European Green Deal sets different policy initiatives and ambitious targets for the EU and its Member States; whereas it is very important for EaP countries, from their perspective as EU neighbours, to deepen their dialogue with the EU regarding the expectations of the EU side, namely on the measures that need to be taken to adapt to the requirements determined by the European Green Deal and contribute to achieving its objectives;
- N. whereas the significance of the European Green Deal lies in breaking the linkage between economic growth and emissions, notably through increased investment in renewable energy sources and energy efficiency;
- O. whereas the EU's post-COVID-19 recovery efforts aim at building a modern, resource-efficient, clean and circular economy leading to the greening of the economy and the more sustainable use of natural resources, in line with the European Green Deal;
- P. whereas the development of renewable energy sources is one of the key ways to tackle the energy security and climate change challenges and to deploy cleaner sources of energy, thereby improving health and living standards across our continent and creating local jobs;
- Q. whereas energy efficiency is a crucial prerequisite for achieving Europe's 2050 climate objectives in a cost-effective manner; whereas long-term energy savings can substantially reduce reliance on fossil fuel imports and bolster national as well as regional energy security in the EU and EaP countries; whereas the cheapest, most secure and cleanest energy is the one that is not used;
- R. whereas the improvement of the EaP countries' existing legal frameworks and their gradual approximation with EU legislation, in line with commitments made, is necessary, as is the exchange of best practices and technical know-how;
- S. whereas the EU should support the EaP countries in assessing and addressing the impact of the European Green Deal on their energy security and trade relations with the EU and third countries;
- T. whereas the creation of additional capacity by means of domestic and foreign investments is essential in order to develop and sustainably use hydropower, wind, solar and geothermal resources in the EU and EaP countries;
- U. whereas the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report of April 2022 indicates that new fossil fuel infrastructures are incompatible with international climate goals; whereas achieving climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest requires phasing out fossil fuels in the energy system by 2035 at the latest;
- V. whereas deliberate missile and drone attacks launched by the Russian Federation have damaged or destroyed around 40 % of the critical energy infrastructure of Ukraine;
1. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine and its ongoing occupation of Georgian and Moldovan territories, and their devastating consequences; calls for an immediate and full embargo on imports of Russian fossil fuels and uranium, and for the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines to be completely abandoned, in order to stop financing Putin's war machine with EU money;
  2. Expresses its support for the investigation conducted by some EU Member States into the damaging of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines; calls for the findings of the investigations to be made public;
  3. Stands in full solidarity with Ukraine and all other EaP countries who suffer as a result of Russia's repressive and expansionist policies; calls for increased assistance to Ukraine and for it to be sustained at a substantial level in order to help its people to withstand the hardships of the winter, inflicted by Russia's war of aggression, and for support to other EaP countries in need; condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's attacks on Ukraine with missiles and Iranian kamikaze drones, targeting the civilian population and the critical and energy infrastructure of Ukraine; calls on Russia to immediately cease these barbaric terrorist acts against the civilian population of Ukraine; states that these malfasant acts are nothing but crimes against humanity;

4. Strongly condemns the actions of the Russian occupying forces on the territory of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (NPP) in the city of Energodar, as well as the unprecedented use of the facility for launching attacks against Ukrainian forces or for any other military purposes, including as shelter or storage, which not only prevent the safe operation of the plant and its regular control procedures, but also put in a grave danger the nuclear safety of the European continent and beyond; calls on the international community to take urgent measures to force Russia to release the Zaporizhzhia NPP and return it to the control of Ukraine for the sake of global security; calls on the Russian Federation to allow International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) observers access to the Zaporizhzhia NPP to monitor the nuclear security situation and to cooperate with the IAEA; expresses deep concerns regarding the nuclear safety situation at the Astravyets NPP in Belarus, as the Belarusian authorities are not transparent and do not provide trustworthy information about events at the NPP site and have not committed to the full implementation of the recommendations made in the 2018 EU stress test report;
5. Expresses its full solidarity with Moldova, which is currently facing the Kremlin's efforts to destabilise the country politically by manipulating its gas and electricity supplies;
6. Deplores the impacts of the 'weaponisation' of Russian energy supplies on households and companies, which are, as a consequence, facing high energy prices, rising social inequalities and energy and mobility poverty, as well as increased inflation, leading to unemployment, high food prices and a cost of living crisis in general; highlights the need for unprecedented solidarity among EU and EaP countries and a common response tackling the immediate challenges and preventing their reoccurrence in the future, instead of divisive unilateral actions;
7. Emphasises the need for a clean energy transition as the main way to increase energy security and put an end to the EU's and EaP countries' dependencies on fossil fuels and uranium, especially if these originate from third countries; calls on the Commission and the EaP countries, in close cooperation with European and international financial institutions, to come up with further urgent measures that would massively expand renewable energy capacity and boost strong energy efficiency and savings policies;
8. Recalls that about a quarter of the electricity and half of the low-carbon electricity in the EU is generated by nuclear energy; notes that while some Member States oppose nuclear energy, a number of Member States are preparing to build new nuclear power stations; reiterates that EU Member States and EaP countries remain fully responsible for deciding their own energy mix, for designing options to ensure affordable, stable and clean energy for their citizens and businesses and for choosing the most appropriate pathway to contribute to achieving the Union's climate and energy targets, taking into account each country's specific features and constraints;
9. Reiterates its support for increased energy cooperation between the EU and EaP countries, as well as among the EaP countries themselves, in particular on advancing sustainable energy production, which will enhance their energy security and resilience while protecting the environment, contributing to the achievement of climate policy goals and furthering the integration of willing partners into the European energy market; encourages the EU to consider allowing the cooperation and participation of eligible and willing EaP countries in the Energy Union;
10. Notes that the success of the European Green Deal, as a comprehensive strategy to transform the EU into a climate neutral economy by 2050, to a large extent depends on its power to lead by example and stimulate faster clean energy transition beyond the EU's borders, starting with its neighbourhood; stresses the need to step up efforts on decarbonisation and environmental protection within the EU and the EaP and to pursue ambitious climate and environmental policies, in particular to meet the commitments under the Paris Agreement; calls on the governments and parliaments of EU and EaP countries to strengthen laws aimed at achieving the clean energy transition; encourages the EaP countries to develop plans, with EU support, for their participation in the European Green Deal;
11. Stresses the importance of establishing a carbon border adjustment mechanism to ensure that ambitious EU goals do not result in carbon leakage through relocation of production or increased imports; calls for EU support to the EaP countries in order to stimulate the development of carbon pricing policies aligned with those of the EU; takes the view that revenues that may be collected by the EU in carbon fees from EaP countries should primarily be used to fund support to the decarbonisation of their economies;

12. Observes that energy intensity in EaP countries remains considerably higher than the EU average and highlights the enormous potential for energy savings in those countries; points to the importance of introducing and maintaining regulatory and institutional frameworks that define minimum energy efficiency standards for buildings and products, provide for incentives for the renovation of buildings and for energy efficiency in industries and SMEs, promote optimisation and modernisation of energy infrastructures, including through minimum energy efficiency criteria for public procurement, and guarantee appropriate information to consumers, including accurate metering of energy consumption, informative billing and energy audits;
13. Welcomes the emergency packages proposed by the Commission to address price volatility in the gas and electricity markets; believes that enhanced transparency measures and measures to address anti-competitive conduct and market abuse should be implemented on a permanent basis;
14. Calls for mandatory and higher targets for reductions in gas and electricity consumption as an immediate response to the energy crisis; welcomes the EU's new gas storage obligations; calls on the EU to establish solidarity mechanisms in order to help countries that are particularly struggling with energy security, with a special focus on the most vulnerable citizens; stresses the importance of knowledge-sharing in order to find common ways out of the current crisis;
15. Stresses the crucial role of effective and extended energy storage infrastructure in improving the security of energy supply; calls for enhanced investment in the renovation of existing energy storage infrastructure, as well as for new sites to be constructed; calls for the full inclusion of EaP partners and for the construction of new joint energy storage capacities; underlines the long-term advantages of such projects for improving security of energy supply and aiding the transition to green energy, if they are constructed from the outset to be easily adaptable to the storage of green hydrogen; highlights that investing in these capacities would not only address the pressing issues generated by the current energy crisis, but would also represent an important step towards meeting shared decarbonisation objectives;
16. Welcomes the actions taken by the Commission and the EaP countries to mitigate the consequences of the energy crisis and prevent a worsening of the situation; calls on the Commission to explore ways to also associate the EaP countries to these initiatives, such as the common EU gas purchasing platform; underlines that any purchasing agreements need to be in line with EU climate targets regarding the quantity and duration of deliveries in order to achieve the fossil fuel phase-out by 2035 at the latest;
17. Notes that the development of renewable energy sources is crucial to efforts aimed at ensuring both the clean energy transition and energy independence, while also contributing to local job creation, improved air quality and citizens' health; welcomes the establishment of a regional network on renewable energy, led by Lithuania and Georgia, under the Eastern Partnership Energy Panel; notes the use of biomass and hydropower in some EaP countries, but recalls the need to ensure their sustainability, efficiency and compliance with environmental requirements;
18. Emphasises the need to urgently pursue efforts to improve connectivity, starting with the full implementation of objectives previously identified within the '20 deliverables for 2020' work programme endorsed at the 2017 Eastern Partnership Summit; stresses the importance of developing and financing electricity interconnections, as well as smart grids, in order to ensure the necessary infrastructure is in place to set and implement binding climate and energy targets; recalls that increased connectivity between EU and EaP countries will increase energy security and help to firmly anchor the EaP countries in Europe; calls, in the current geopolitical context, for long-term planning for and investment in sustainable interconnectivity between Ukraine and Moldova and the EU to be made a priority; calls for continued support to build technical capacity for connectivity projects such as the Georgia-Romania Black Sea submarine cable project; highlights the importance of the implementation of the project as it contributes to the strengthening of energy security in Europe and the Caucasus region and the development of the renewable energy sector, and increases transit opportunities between the regions;
19. Recognises the substantial financial and technical support provided to the Eastern partners by the EU, in coordination and cooperation with other international actors, promoting decarbonisation as well as connectivity; notes the importance of continuing to provide technical support to the Eastern partners to develop an enabling legal framework for investment and sustainable local initiatives on decarbonisation and renewable energy sources; welcomes in particular the work of the EU4Energy and EU4Climate initiatives, investments and policy-based loans under the Neighbourhood Investment Platform, the E5P partnership, the Covenant of Mayors and EU budget guarantees for loans

from the European Investment Bank and other international financing institutions; expects the Economic and Investment Plan for the Eastern Partnership to invest in energy efficiency, renewable energy and connectivity, to monitor sustainability, and to diligently conclude ex-ante environmental impact assessments;

20. Points out that the energy transition needs to be fair, inclusive and cost-efficient and that it should ensure sustainability, security of supply and affordability of energy; notes that high fossil fuel prices represent additional incentives to spur investment in energy-saving and renewable energy projects; points to the need to reform energy pricing and taxation, and cut government subsidies for fossil fuels, to avoid disadvantaging renewable energy against other energy forms and giving the wrong price signals to final energy consumers;
  21. Stresses the need to support consumer empowerment to generate, consume, store and sell energy, bearing in mind that it can help in fighting energy poverty; highlights the potential of decentralised renewable energy production which can increase the utilisation of local energy sources, increase local security of energy supply, and foster community development and cohesion;
  22. Recalls the importance of diversifying energy supplies and decreasing dependence on energy imports from third countries, in particular Russia, in addition to improving the connectivity of the EaP countries' energy sectors, while ensuring environmental sustainability; points in this regard to the need to develop an open, competitive and integrated energy market in eastern Europe which could lead to more opportunities for trade, investment, capacity building and joint projects in the field of renewables, smart grids and energy efficiency;
  23. Calls for closer cooperation within the EaP on green hydrogen production and use and for the promotion of common standards on hydrogen; notes that imports of non-renewable hydrogen should be restricted in order not to undermine decarbonisation efforts;
  24. Stresses the importance of promoting evidence-based energy policy based on comprehensive data and continuous monitoring, and encourages further EU support to strengthen the EaP countries' administrative capacity in this area, as well as promoting the exchange of best practices between countries;
  25. Recalls the commitments of the relevant EaP countries under the Association Agreements, the Treaty on Energy Community and the CEPA in terms of transposition of or approximation to EU energy regulations; calls on all EU and EaP countries to implement the Treaty on Energy Community in full; takes the view that additional financial support should be conditional on effectively implementing and enforcing the commitments of the EaP countries, carrying out necessary reforms and making more ambitious commitments in the context of the European Green Deal, in line with the 'more for more' principle;
  26. Calls on the Council and the Member States to urgently and significantly increase their support for Ukraine in order to help it defend itself against Russian attempts to destroy critical Ukrainian infrastructure, including in the area of energy; stresses that Ukraine's reconstruction and post-war recovery needs to focus primarily on the rebuilding of the energy system and the creation of opportunities for Ukraine to become a hub for green electricity and hydrogen exports to Europe, increasing energy resilience and furthering the sustainable energy transition, and that it also needs to take into account and address upfront the issue of sustainable interconnectivity with neighbouring EU and EaP countries, with the strong support of and solidarity from the EU and EaP countries;
  27. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the President of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, the European External Action Service, and the governments and parliaments of the EU Member States and the Eastern Partnership countries.
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