

JANUARY 2026

Europe's Selective Blindness on Gas: US LNG and the Limits of Supply Diversification

The European Union (EU) aims to diversify its gas and oil supplies and is determined to end its energy imports from Russia, whose revenues finance its war of aggression against Ukraine. Yet, despite the rhetorical commitment to diversification, new EU legislation paradoxically treats energy sourced from any single country other than Russia as fully diversified. This risks to obscure Europe's rapidly growing dependence on US LNG imports. When Norway is considered 'indigenous' due to its close integration and political alignment as part of the European Economic Area, this trend becomes even clearer, with over 59% of LNG imports coming from the US in 2025. Such dependence exposes Europe to the risk of high costs, price volatility and geopolitical pressures. The principal pathway to strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy in the energy sector is the accelerated transition to an efficient energy system based on indigenous renewables. As long as the EU remains reliant on large amounts of imported energy resources, mitigating the associated risks will require genuine supplier diversification embedded within a broader energy security strategy. Such a strategy must rest on a sound definition of diversification and reflect today's geopolitical realities.

Introduction

The term 'diversification' is undergoing a remarkable conceptual shift in EU energy security policy. Traditionally, and in line with its common understanding, diversification refers to avoiding excessive reliance on individual energy carriers and on one or a small number of dominant suppliers or supply routes for specific fuels. However, in the new EU law on phasing out Russian natural gas imports, approved by

the European Parliament on 17 December 2025² and now awaiting formal endorsement by the Council,³ the term is employed in a highly unusual manner.

This legal act requires EU Member States to adopt 'national diversification plans' for gas and

1 Acknowledgment: Without Bruegel's highly valuable dataset, "[European Natural Gas Imports](#)", this analysis would not have been possible. We are particularly grateful to Ugne Keliauskaite for support with data analysis, data handling and expert advice.

2 European Parliament, "[EU to Phase Out Imports of Russian Gas](#)", 17 December 2025.

3 Council of the EU, "[Council and Parliament Strike a Deal on Rules to Phase Out Russian Gas Imports for an Energy-Secure and Independent Europe](#)", 3 December 2025; and Reuters, "[EU Countries' Ambassadors Approve Phase-Out of Russian Gas Imports](#)", 10 December 2025.

oil and specifies their mandatory content, and the meaning of ‘diversification’ is implicitly, yet unmistakably, reduced to a single dimension: the elimination of imports from Russia. Under this logic, a Member State, or even the Union as a whole, would be considered fully ‘diversified’ once imports from Russia are reduced to zero, even if – hypothetically speaking – 100 per cent of its remaining imports originate from a single alternative supplier. However, remaining faithful to the conventional understanding of the term, this policy brief’s authors contend that such a situation would represent not diversification, but rather its opposite – in fact, its failure.

Beyond its formal embedding in such a consequential legal act, this reconceptualisation of supply diversification is already shaping, and arguably impairing, the interpretation of energy security realities, even within an institution like the International Energy Agency (IEA), whose mandate focuses on energy security. On the same day the above-mentioned agreement was announced, IEA Executive Director Dr Fatih Birol stated, at a joint press conference with President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, that “Europe is now on much firmer footing, having drawn a line under its decades-long dependence on Russian gas by diversifying towards other gas suppliers and energy sources”.⁴ The reduction in the EU’s dependence on Russian gas imports is an established fact. However, as argued and substantiated in this policy brief, the claim that Europe has recently been diversifying its gas supply portfolio is, at the very least, open to serious doubt.

Before presenting the facts that support this assessment and developing the argument further, it is important to clarify that the authors do not question the strategic objective of rapidly eliminating the EU’s reliance on Russian gas or reducing its dependency on any other energy

source from Russia.⁵ Nor does this policy brief argue that diversification should be the EU’s only or even primary instrument for mitigating the risks associated with dependence on energy imports.

On the contrary, a resilient strategy for European energy security that is fully aligned with EU climate targets would be one primarily based on rapid renewables deployment, electrification, energy efficiency, improved power-system resilience and the targeted use of renewables-based fuels and feedstocks, as argued and substantiated in recent publications by this policy brief’s authors.⁶ These strategies will improve energy-supply security by reducing gas demand and the EU’s exposure to the costs and price volatility of imported gas as well as to coercion related to gas supplies. During the transition period, as long as the EU continues to rely on fossil gas for critical energy services in the heating, industrial and power sectors and for feedstock, it can mitigate energy security risks through a combination of strategies beyond supply diversification alone. These include stockpiling, protection of critical infrastructure, coordinated decommissioning of superfluous gas infrastructure, intra-EU solidarity mechanisms and robust emergency preparedness.

Diversification nevertheless remains an important element of this set of strategic tools to increase gas import security. During the energy crisis triggered by Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the EU experienced severe economic,

4 International Energy Agency, “[IEA Executive Director Joins European Commission Leaders to Commend EU Agreement to Phase Out Russian Gas Imports](#)”, 3 December 2025.

5 Kacper Szulecki and Indra Overland, “[Russian Nuclear Energy Diplomacy and its Implications for Energy Security in the Context of the War in Ukraine](#)”, *Nature Energy* 8, 2023, pp. 413–421.

6 Agora Energiewende, Agora Industry and Ecologic Institute, “[Europe’s Energy Security on the Path to Climate Neutrality: Devising a Resilience Strategy for the Mid-Transition](#)”, 2025. See also Louise van Schaik and Giulia Cretti, “[Beggars Can’t Be Choosers](#)”, *Euractiv*, 2024; Hannah Lentschig and Louise van Schaik, “[Why the EU should Hold the Line on its Methane Regulation](#)”, *Carbon Pulse*, 2025; and Karsten Neuhoff, Isabella Weber, Kacper Szulecki and Andreas Goldthau, “[How to Design EU-Level Contingency Plans for Gas Shortages? Evidence from Behavioural Economics, Policy Research and Past Experience](#)”, Report No. 177, DIW Berlin, 2022.

social and geopolitical consequences as a result of its excessive exposure to a dominant gas supplier. Currently, the EU is on track rapidly to become similarly exposed to its new dominant gas supplier: the United States (US). To avoid entrenching a new dependency, a conceptually sound understanding of what diversification truly means, supported by a clear view of trends in energy flows, is imperative.

Norway as an integral part of the EU's energy system

Unlike most EU energy-security analyses, this policy brief focuses on EU gas imports from countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA), which comprises the 27 EU Member States as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. This section sets out the rationale for this non-standard approach and briefly outlines its implications. The distinction matters because of Norway's unique role in European gas supply: Iceland neither produces nor consumes natural gas, while Liechtenstein's gas imports from the EU are negligible relative to total EU demand.

The main rationale is that treating Norway's gas production as 'indigenous' rather than imported reflects economic, infrastructural and geopolitical realities. Norway's gas sector is structurally embedded in the European gas system and markets and has virtually no trade outside Europe. Since the outset of production, Norway has largely been a 'captive producer', as the vast majority of its gas production can be sold only via pipelines to Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom (UK). Between 2022 and 2024, 96 per cent of Norway's gas exports were delivered through these pipelines,⁷ with the remaining 4 per cent shipped from Norway's sole LNG terminal in Hammerfest, which processes gas from the Snøhvit fields off northern Norway. In practice, almost all Norwegian LNG is also delivered to the EU, with small amounts supplied to other

European markets connected to the European grid, including the UK and Norway itself.⁸ As transport costs rise sensibly with distance, Norwegian LNG is significantly cheaper in EU and UK markets than elsewhere.

From a broader economic and geopolitical perspective, Norway and the other EEA countries are deeply integrated into the EU internal market and regulatory framework, including large parts of the EU's energy and climate policy architecture, which leads to a reduction of fossil fuel consumption. Norway's power grid is fully integrated in the European power system and markets. High levels of economic interdependence, alongside close cultural and social ties, make scenarios of mutual hostility highly implausible. Moreover, Norway, a founding member of NATO, closely cooperates with the EU and concluded a partnership agreement on defence and security cooperation in 2024.⁹ For these reasons, and despite structural divergence between gas buyers and sellers, the EU energy security debate is more firmly grounded in reality when the EEA countries, and particularly Norway, are treated as part of the indigenous energy system.

This assessment holds regardless of the share of Norwegian gas flowing to the EU or to the UK in any given year. Besides their strong links with Norway, both the EU and the UK are connected by high-capacity, partly bi-directional pipelines responding to relative hub prices

7 Norwegian Ministry of Energy and Norwegian Offshore Directorate, "[Exports of Oil and Gas](#)", data retrieved on 6 January 2026.

8 For example, 85% of the LNG shipped from Hammerfest in 2023 was bound for EU terminals, 14% for non-EU countries connected to the European gas system (UK, Türkiye, Norway) and less than 2% for the Americas (Source: GIIIGNL, "[Annual Report 2024](#)"). In 2022, out of 33 LNG cargos shipped from Hammerfest during its first six months of operation after closure, 30 were bound for the EU, two for the UK and one for Argentina (Source: "[Europe Remains Dominant Destination for Norwegian LNG Post-Restart](#)", Portnews, World Ports Org, 1 December 2022). As the Snøhvit gas fields are isolated in Norway's north (see: Gassco, "[Gassco Network Map](#)"), some of their output is delivered via LNG to other destinations in Norway.

9 Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "[Cooperation on Foreign and Security Policy](#)", last update on 20 January 2025.

(the TTF and the NBP), which in turn reflect demand, production, LNG arrivals and storage levels. Since Brexit, EU statistics record net gas imports from the UK, which in *Figures 4 to 9* are included within pipeline imports from ‘all other countries’. In practice, however, the UK is a major gas importer, with imports – mainly from Norway – covering almost half of domestic demand. On a net basis, the UK receives far more gas from Norway (31 billion cubic metres (bcm) in 2024) than it exports to Ireland (4 bcm) and to continental EU markets (6 bcm), effectively acting as a transit country for Norwegian gas to Ireland and to the continent. The conclusions drawn below on the growing dominance of the US in the EU gas imports’ portfolio would be even stronger if the wider European system, including the UK, were considered. The US share of total UK LNG imports rose from 16 per cent in 2019 to 68 per cent in 2024, exceeding the corresponding EU share.¹⁰

Within the wider European system, the EU is a net exporter to Switzerland and Liechtenstein, the Western Balkans, Moldova and Ukraine, while receiving pipeline gas from Türkiye (originating in Russia and Azerbaijan), Algeria and Libya.

One shared security challenge is the need to protect the North Sea’s common energy and telecommunications infrastructure. While subsea assets may be inherently more difficult to protect than land-based infrastructure, this risk is independent of whether they connect regions

within a single country, between EU Member States, or whether they link the EU, Norway and the UK. The protection of critical North Sea energy infrastructure, including offshore wind assets and electricity interconnectors, can be managed far more effectively through cooperation by the EU, the UK and Norway, and potentially Iceland. This illustrates that – from both Norwegian and EU perspectives – geopolitical confrontation would not merely be suboptimal, but effectively not an option at all.

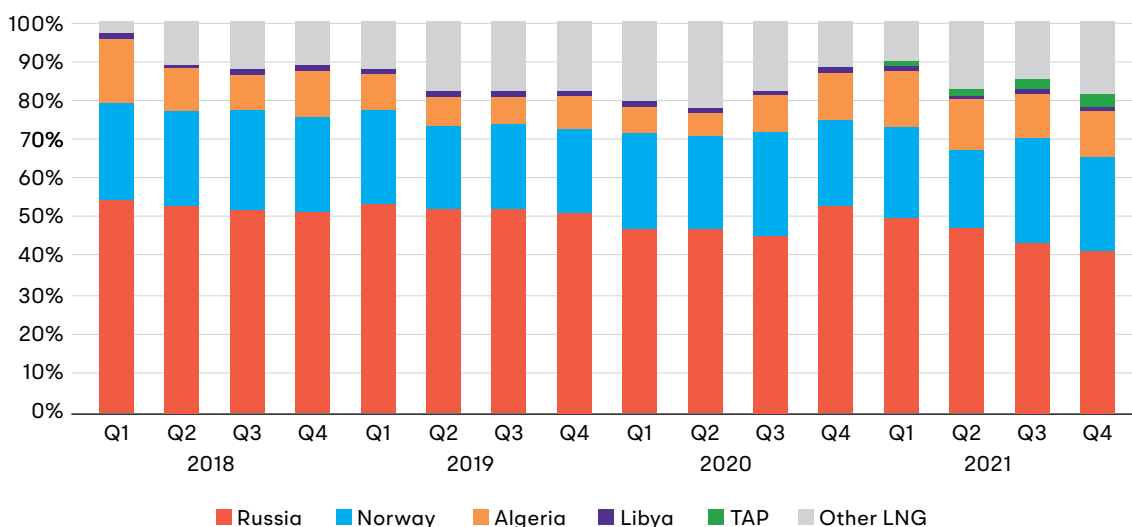
Another rationale for the approach adopted in this policy brief is the rapid increase in Norway’s share of total EU gas imports, which rose from 24 per cent in 2021 to 34 per cent in 2024, making Norway the EU’s largest gas supplier. In conventional visualisations that treat Norway as an ordinary external supplier, all other suppliers appear relatively small, potentially obscuring changes in their relative shares. Providing a clearer view of the dramatic shifts in the EU’s gas supply portfolio – and the associated risk profile – is a central purpose of this policy brief and a key reason for focusing on EU gas imports from non-EEA countries.¹¹

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the conventional approach, under which Norway is treated as an external supplier. The pie chart in *Figure 3* presents exactly the same data as *Figure 2* but focuses exclusively on imports from non-EEA countries, thus considering Norway indigenous.

10 UK Department of Energy Security and Net Zero, “[DUKES 2025 Chapter 4: Natural Gas](#)”, last update in July 2025. Conversion rate: 1 bcm = 11 TWh.

11 Hereafter, ‘non-EEA countries’ refers to all countries other than the EU-27, Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland.

Figure 1 Share of EU gas imports, 2018–2021 (TAP = Trans-Adriatic Pipeline)



Source: European Commission, 2022¹²

Figure 2 Conventional visualisation, shares of EU gas imports in 2024

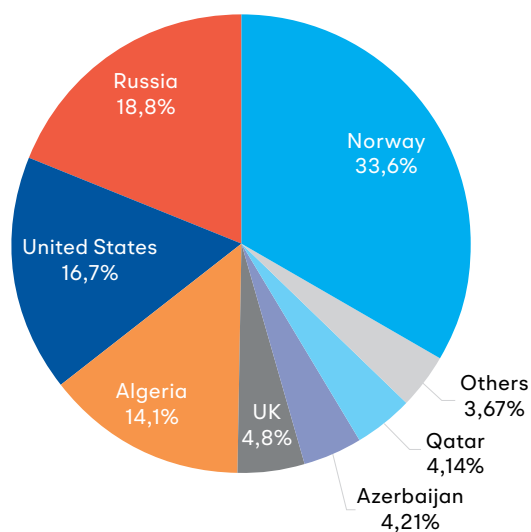
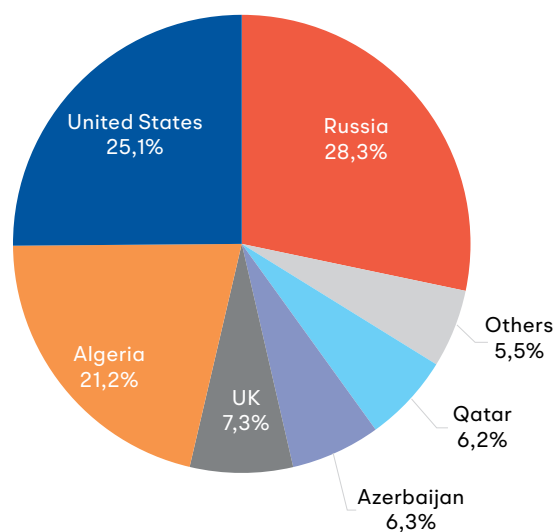


Figure 3 Authors' visualisation, shares of EU gas imports from non-EEA countries in 2024



Source: European Commission, 2025¹³

12 European Commission, “[Quarterly Report on European Gas Markets, Volume 14](#)”, Market Observatory for Energy, DG Energy, 14(4), 2022.

13 European Commission, “[Quarterly Report on European Gas Markets, Volume 17](#)”, Market Observatory for Energy, DG Energy, 17(4), 2025. NOTE: In Figures 2 and 3, percentages do not sum to 100.0% due to rounding. Figure 3 is derived from the data shown in Figure 2 but excludes Norway; the remaining shares are re-normalised to total 100%. To avoid distorting the smaller slices after re-normalisation, the rounding difference in Figure 2 was deducted in equal parts from the four largest slices in Figure 2 (Norway, Russia, the US and Algeria). As a result, in Figure 3 the shares of Russia, the US and Algeria appear marginally smaller than they would if calculated from the unrounded data underlying Figure 2, to which the authors had no access at the time of writing.

An important implication of this approach is that the EEA is significantly less import-dependent than the EU considered in isolation, as shown in Table 1. While acknowledging these factors may support a more confident assessment of Europe’s situation, gas import dependence remains structurally high, even when Norwegian production is included, and exposure to external gas supply risks continues to be a defining feature of the EEA energy system.

Table 1 Comparing EU-27 with the EEA – Fossil gas production, gas consumption, import share

2024	EU-27	EEA
Fossil gas production	32 bcm	149 bcm
Biogas production	22 bcm	22.1 bcm
Total domestic production	54 bcm	171 bcm
Total gas consumption	332 bcm	336 bcm
Production / consumption	16%	51%
Net trade with the UK	10 bcm import	21 bcm export

Source: Authors’ calculation based on European Commission, 2025,¹³ Statistics Norway, 2025,¹⁴ UK Department of Energy Security and Net Zero, 2025,¹⁰ European Biogas Association, 2025,¹⁵ and Norwaste, 2025¹⁶

EEA gas imports now mainly rely on LNG

Treating Norway as ‘indigenous’ makes a substantial difference, also when considering another key indicator: the share of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in total gas imports (Table 2).

Table 2 Comparing EU imports with EEA imports – Pipeline vs LNG import share

2024	EU-27 imports	EEA imports
Pipeline share	54%	35%
LNG share	46%	65%

Source: Bruegel, 2026¹⁷ and European Commission, 2025

The LNG share in the EU’s total gas imports from non-EEA countries (equivalent to EEA imports, as mentioned above) rose sharply from 27 per cent in 2019 to 65 per cent in 2025. One-third of the entire EEA gas consumption in 2024 was covered by LNG imports.

This marked shift was primarily driven by the steep decline in pipeline gas imports from Russia. In 2019, Russian pipeline gas accounted for 60 per cent of EEA gas imports. By 2025, this share had fallen to 8 per cent. The reduction in pipeline supplies from Russia was not offset by increased pipeline imports from other sources: additional volumes from Algeria and Azerbaijan remained limited, while imports from Libya declined further.

14 Statistics Norway, “[Production and consumption of energy, energy balance and energy account](#)”, last update 11 November 2025.

15 European Biogas Association, “[EBA Statistical Report 2025](#)”, 10 December 2025.

16 Norwaste, “[Biogas statistics for 2024](#)”, August 2025.

17 Unless otherwise specified, all gas import data presented hereafter are drawn from Bruegel’s dataset “[European Natural Gas Imports](#)”, Version of 9 January 2026. This is a regularly updated, publicly available tool that aggregates daily data on European natural gas import flows and storage levels, based on data from ENTSOG, GIE and Bloomberg.

Figure 4 EU gas imports from non-EEA countries – LNG vs pipeline (bcm)

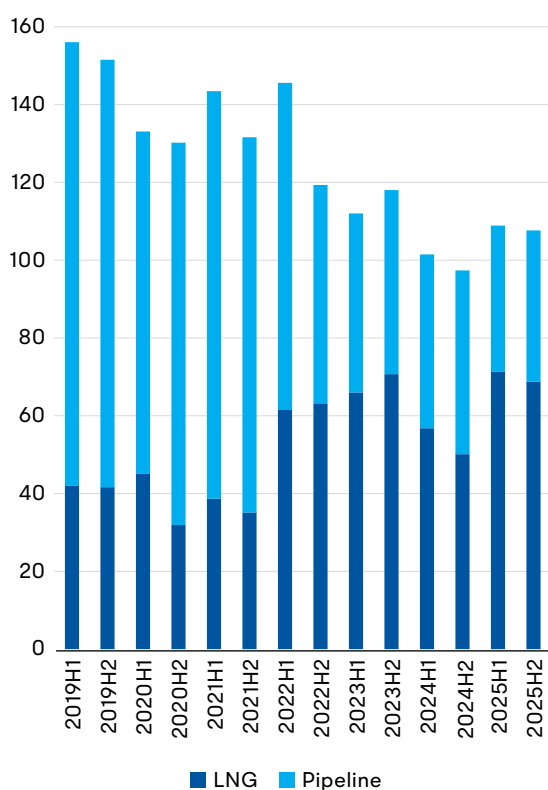
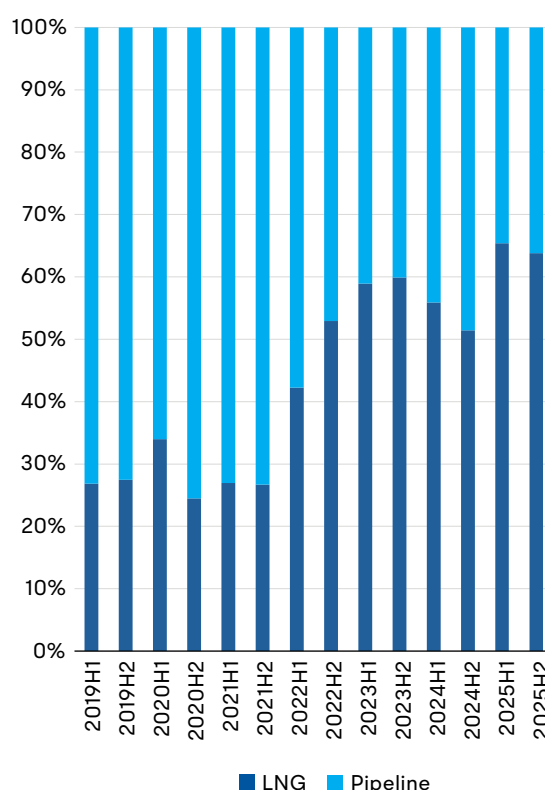


Figure 5 EU gas imports from non-EEA countries – LNG vs pipeline (%)



The significantly higher share of LNG in the EEA gas import portfolio, as shown in *Figure 5* above, implies greater exposure of Europe’s economy and society to global LNG price volatility. While pipeline gas is largely traded under long-term contracts, LNG markets transmit shocks or disruptions in a producing or consuming region rapidly to others via spot prices. LNG spot prices increasingly shape European wholesale gas markets, which in turn strongly influence wholesale electricity prices. Taken together, this suggests that deeper reliance on LNG exposes the EU to market volatility, supply adjustments and stranded-asset risks, rather than providing durable energy security.

Moreover, the intensity of greenhouse gas emissions from delivered LNG is significantly higher than that of pipeline gas, because of the energy needed for liquefaction and regasification, as well as methane boil-off during maritime transport.¹⁸ Higher proportions of LNG to pipeline gas have therefore materially increased the climate impact of EU gas consumption.

¹⁸ International Energy Agency, “[Assessing Emissions from LNG Supply and Abatement Options](#)”, 19 June 2025; and Katerina Shaton, Arild Hervik and Harald M. Hjelle, “[The Environmental Footprint of Natural Gas Transportation: LNG vs Pipeline](#)”, *Economics of Energy and Environmental Policy*, 9(1), 2022, pp. 223–242.

The structural decline in the EU's gas imports

The trend towards higher proportions of LNG to pipeline gas coincides with a sharp decline in the total volume of EEA gas imports over the last six years, as visible in *Figure 4*. This decline has primarily been driven by an 18 per cent reduction in the EU's gas consumption from 2019 to 2024. Over the same period, EU coal consumption fell by 35 per cent and oil consumption by 9 per cent, while the EU population increased by 0.7 per cent and GDP grew by 5.4 per cent in real terms.¹⁹

These trends reflect, in part, the impact of energy transition investments. Between 2019 and 2024, EU solar-power generation increased from 124 terawatt-hours (TWh) to 306 TWh, more than the combined consumption of Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Wind generation increased by 32 per cent, while hydropower output increased by 16 per cent and nuclear generation declined by 15 per cent. Despite a tenfold increase in the EU's electric vehicle fleet to almost 5.9 million and an almost doubling of installed heat pumps, the EU's electricity demand still fell by around 4 per cent.²⁰ Taken together, these developments indicate that the EU is already capturing tangible benefits from its early energy-transition efforts.

However, lower energy demand also reflects the reduced output in energy-intensive industries following the sharp increase in gas prices faced by EU consumers after Russia began restricting gas supplies in 2021. In parallel, the slow long-term decline of gas production in the EU has been more than offset by increased gas production in Norway.

Declining EU gas supply diversification since Q3 2022

Many observers, including energy policy professionals, believe that Europe has been diversifying its gas supplier portfolio throughout the past half-decade, a view recently articulated also by the IEA's Dr Fatih Birol, as cited in the introduction.

Figures 6 and 7 suggest that this assessment can, at the very least, be challenged. These charts show the concentration ratio of the two largest suppliers of EEA gas imports, in absolute volumes and percentage terms. The concentration ratio is a standard measure of oligopolistic market power²¹ and is also commonly used to assess geopolitical dependence, including in Eurostat analyses of EU trade in critical raw materials.²²

19 All data in this paragraph are from Eurostat: "[Natural Gas Supply Statistics](#)", *Statistics Explained*, May 2025; "[Supply, Transformation and Consumption of Solid Fossil Fuels](#)", last update 17 December 2025; "[Supply, Transformation and Consumption of Oil and Petroleum Products](#)", last update 25 June 2025; "[Population Change: Demographic Balance and Crude Rates at National Level](#)", last update 14 October 2025; and "[National Accounts and GDP](#)", *Statistics Explained*, June 2025.

20 Ember Energy, "[Electricity Data Explorer](#)"; Eurostat, "[Passenger Cars in the EU](#)", *Statistics Explained*, July 2025; and European Heat Pump Association, "[Market Data](#)".

21 Steven A. Greenlaw, David Shapiro and Daniel MacDonald, "[Principle of Economics 3e](#)", OpenStax, Rice University, 2022.

22 Eurostat, "[International Trade in Critical Raw Materials](#)", *Statistics Explained*, June 2025.

Figure 6 EU gas imports from non-EEA countries (bcm)

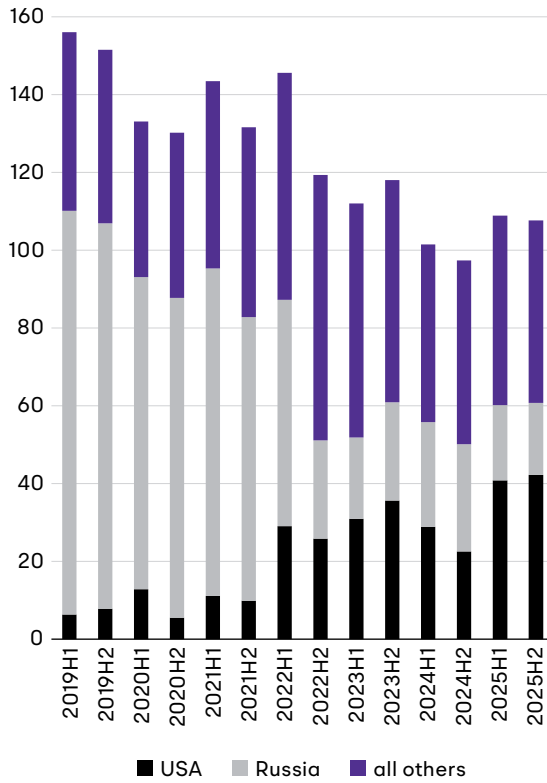
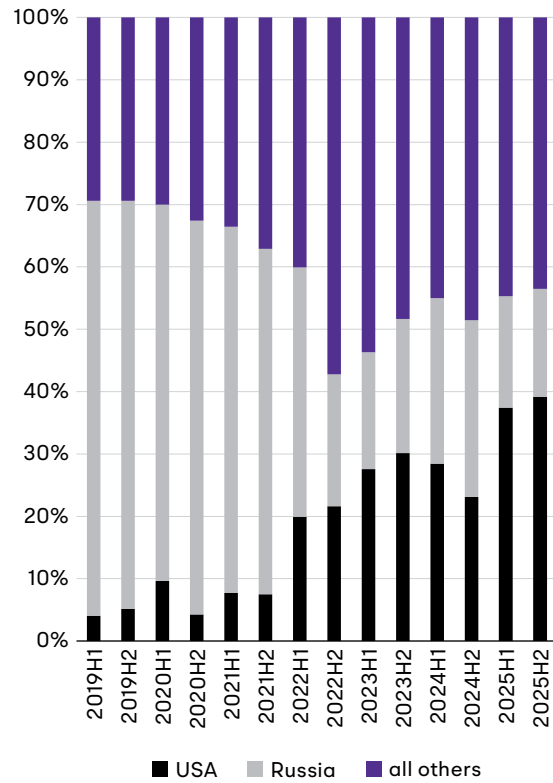


Figure 7 EU gas imports from non-EEA countries (% share)



Between 2019 and 2025, EEA gas imports from Russia fell sharply, from 203 bcm to 38 bcm (an 81 per cent reduction). Over the same period, imports from the US increased almost sixfold, rising from 14 bcm to 83 bcm (an increase of 485 per cent), while imports from all other suppliers increased only marginally, from 91 bcm to 96 bcm (an increase of only 6 per cent).

Figure 7 reveals a clear inflection point in the proportion of imports in the second half of 2022. The combined share of imports from the two currently dominant suppliers – Russia and the US – fell sharply from 71 per cent in 2019 to 43 per cent in the second half of 2022, indicating a phase of genuine diversification. Since then, however, this share has rapidly increased to 56 per cent in the second half of 2025, while the share of all other countries accordingly dropped from 57 per cent to 44 per cent.

This reversal reflects the combined effect of a collapsing Russian share and the rapid expansion of US LNG imports. The US’ share of EEA gas imports increased from 4 per cent in the first half of 2019 to 39 per cent in the second half of 2025. Over the past three years, US supplies have not only replaced declining Russian volumes but have also displaced smaller suppliers. As a result, Europe’s gas import portfolio has become increasingly concentrated around a single supplier. The US is now, by a wide margin, the largest source of gas imports into the EEA, raising new questions about concentration risks for Europe’s energy security and economic resilience.

Figure 8 EU LNG imports from non-EEA countries (bcm)

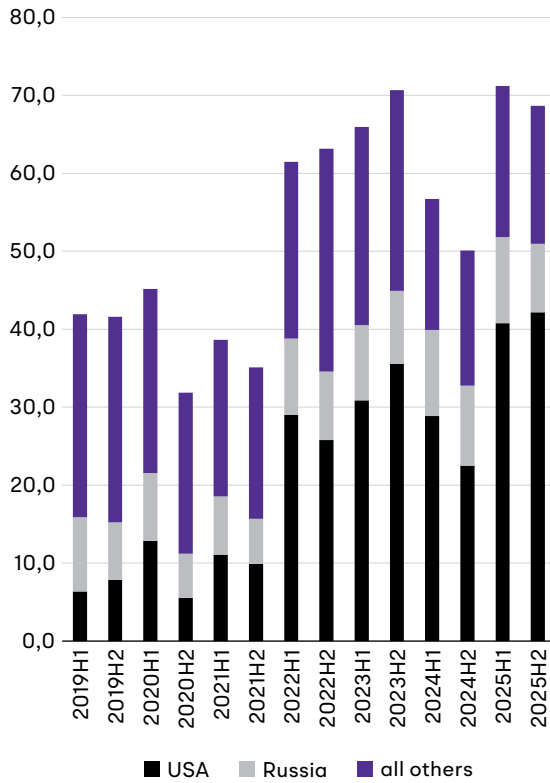
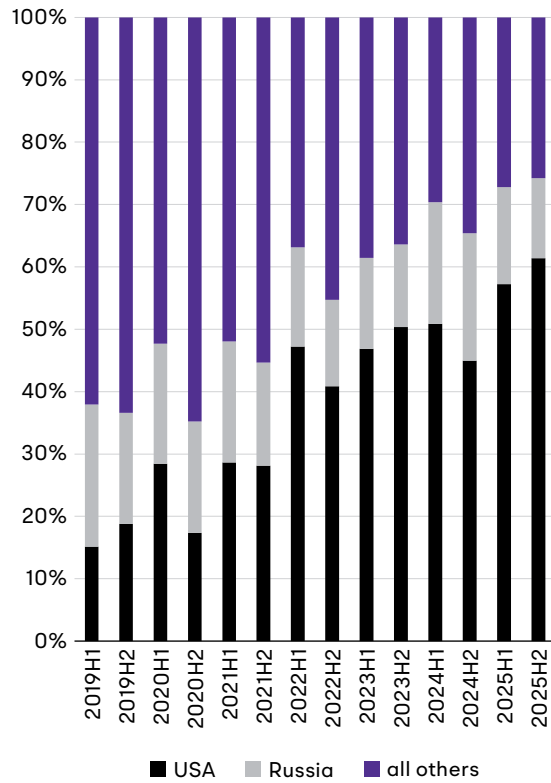


Figure 9 EU LNG imports from non-EEA countries (% share)



The US as Europe’s dominant LNG supplier

A closer examination of the EU’s LNG import portfolio is warranted, given the EU’s growing reliance on LNG and its impact on wholesale gas and electricity prices in Europe, as seen above.

When focusing specifically on LNG, the decline in diversification within the EU’s import portfolio becomes even more pronounced. Comparing 2025 with 2019 (Figure 8 and 9), total LNG import volumes increased by 68%, from 83 bcm to 140 bcm. Over the same period, however, LNG imports from all suppliers other than the two dominant ones – the US and Russia – fell by 29%, from 52 bcm to 37 bcm.

The share of LNG imports originating from ‘other countries’ has declined sharply in recent years, from 63 per cent in 2019 to 27 per cent in 2025. During this period, Russia’s LNG exports to the

EU increased from 17 bcm to 20 bcm, but this does not compensate for the massive decline in Russian pipeline exports to the EU from 186 bcm in 2019 to 18 bcm in 2025. The EU intends to phase out all Russian gas imports by late 2027.

By contrast, US LNG exports to the EU have increased dramatically, rising from 6 bcm in the first half of 2019 to over 42 bcm in the second half of 2025. This corresponds to more than 61 per cent of the EEA’s LNG imports. Particularly striking is the increase in the US’s share in just the past year, compared with its 45 per cent in the second half of 2024.

Is the US’s dominant position a problem for Europe?

While it is not clear to what extent the most recent increase in its market share reflects policy changes under the Trump administration, it is evident that the US is exerting sustained pressure

to increase further its share of the European gas market.

Recently, EU institutions have taken positions that appear to be grounded in the implicit assumption that the increasingly dominant role of the US in the EU's fossil fuel imports does not raise significant concerns. This assumption is reflected both in the European Commission's Q&A 'EU-US Trade Deal Explained – Energy Aspects'²³ and in the positions of the European Council and the European Parliament,²⁴ which focus EU Member States' National Diversification Plans exclusively on phasing out Russian gas and oil imports, while overlooking other existing or potential dominant suppliers.

A traditional argument in the EU energy security debate holds that, unlike other major LNG exporters, the US lacks a state-controlled, vertically integrated monopoly; instead, multiple competing exporters source gas from a competitive wholesale market supplied by numerous producers.²⁵ US LNG suppliers are therefore assumed to operate purely on market logic; they lack the ability to exert market power and have no interest in leveraging gas exports for geopolitical pressure. Some proponents of this view have also traditionally pointed to the US as a close EU ally and a stable democracy with strong rule-of-law constraints, concluding that the US executive branch is neither inclined nor

able to coerce the EU and its Member States via gas markets.

While this analysis of the US gas market's structure remains valid, the final elements of these arguments are no longer grounded in reality. The US National Security Strategy (US-NSS) of November 2025 designates 'American energy dominance' across oil, gas, coal and nuclear energy as a 'top strategic priority' and explicitly frames the expansion of energy exports as a means 'to project power'. The document wants Europe to 'abandon its failed focus on regulatory suffocation'. Ideologically, it portrays Europe as facing 'civilizational erasure', attributed primarily to the 'activities of the European Union and other transnational bodies that undermine political liberty and sovereignty', as well as to European governments that allegedly 'trample on basic principles of democracy to suppress opposition' and allegedly subvert democratic processes.²⁶

Besides its rhetoric, the Trump administration has demonstrated in practice a willingness and capacity to intervene extensively in domestic and global markets, reshape established policies and practices and exert adversarial pressure even on traditional allies. Under strong US pressure, the European Commission agreed in July 2025 to a legally non-enforceable, but politically heavy commitment to procure LNG, oil and nuclear energy products from the US with 'an expected offtake valued at \$750 billion through 2028'.²⁷

This agreement quickly became a channel for broader US interference in EU climate and energy policy. In September 2025, US Energy Secretary Chris Wright told the *Financial Times* that EU climate legislation posed 'a major threat to the EU-US trade deal' and warned that 'the whole trade talks would fall apart' unless the

23 European Commission, "[Questions and Answers: EU-US Trade Deal Explained – Energy Aspects](#)", 30 July 2025.

24 European Parliament, "[Legislative Resolution of 17 December 2025 on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Phasing Out Russian Natural Gas Imports, Improving Monitoring of Potential Energy Dependencies and Amending Regulation \(EU\) 2017/1938](#)".

25 See, for example, Szymon Kardas' (European Council for Foreign Relations) statement cited in Arno Van Rensbergen, "[EU's LNG Dependency: EU's Thirst for Natural Gas Risks Swapping One Dependency for Another](#)", *The Parliament*, 14 April 2025; Reuters, "[Spain Sees No Risk in Rising Reliance on US Liquefied Gas](#)", 13 March 2025; Eurogas, "[Additional US LNG Projects are Needed to Contribute to Europe's Energy Security](#)", 30 September 2024; and Stefano Cabras, "[American LNG and the EU-Russia Relationship: The End of Moscow's Energy Weapon?](#)", *College of Europe, EU Diplomacy Papers* 2/2021.

26 President of the United States, "[National Security Strategy of the United States of America](#)", The White House, November 2025.

27 European Commission, "[Joint Statement on a United States-European Union Framework on an Agreement on Reciprocal, Fair and Balanced Trade](#)", Directorate-General for Trade and Economic Security, 21 August 2025.

EU approved ‘massive modifications’ of the EU’s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, Methane Regulation and Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), as these European regulations are considered a barrier to US fossil fuel exports to the EU’s market.²⁸ One month later, in a diplomatic overreach, Chris Wright and Qatari Energy Minister Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi wrote to the Heads of State of EU Member States, stating that “the EU and its Member States must now act swiftly [...] either by repealing the CSDDD in its entirety or removing its most economically damaging provisions”, and explicitly linking this demand to the EU’s dependence on LNG supplies from the US and Qatar.

The EU’s growing reliance on the US as its main LNG supplier bears the risk of energy being ‘weaponised’ once again to exert pressure, locking Europe into costly new dependencies.²⁹ Both the language and diplomatic *modus operandi* of the Trump administration, as evidenced by the recent US military intervention in Venezuela and the explicit goal to use Venezuela’s oil resources for US ‘energy dominance’, indicate that the EU’s dependence on US LNG could in the future be leveraged as part of coercive efforts to influence EU policies across multiple domains.

While some other countries that supply energy to the EU are governed by authoritarian regimes and/or adopt adversarial positions, none are currently or are expected to approach the dominant position of the US: in 2024, the US accounted for 47 per cent of EU gas imports from non-EEA countries, 29 per cent of coal imports and 18 per cent of oil imports, making it by far the EEA’s largest gas and oil supplier and its second-largest coal supplier after Australia. The ‘\$750 billion through 2028’ referenced in the EU–US agreement would imply more than

a tripling of the costs for fossil fuel and nuclear technology imports from the US, compared with 2024 levels.³⁰

Such an increase would have to occur at a time when EU fossil fuel demand is structurally declining as a result of large-scale energy transition investments that are already underway, as well as further investments being required – and reasonably expected – to meet the EU’s climate objectives. In the gas sector, this raises the risk that long-term LNG commitments become misaligned with actual consumption;³¹ and in the oil sector, demand is set to decline inexorably, as electric mobility gradually replaces the internal combustion engine.³²

Against this backdrop of falling fossil fuel demand, even stable absolute import volumes from the US would further entrench its already dominant position. A tripling of imports, if feasible at all, would make the US an almost monopolistic supplier.

Conclusion and call to action

“Words are events, they do things, change things” (Ursula K. Le Guin).

There is an urgent need to revisit the EU’s implicit but consequential redefinition of diversification, which paradoxically treats sourcing all energy from a single country as fully diversified, provided that country is not Russia. In practice, the EU risks replacing its historical dependence on Russian gas and oil (and partly nuclear

28 *Financial Times*, “[US Demands EU Stops Buying Russian Gas if it Wants New Sanctions on Putin](#)”, 8 September 2025.

29 Anne-Sophie Corbeau, “[Outlook 2026: The Geopolitical Weaponisation of LNG](#)”, *The Petroleum Economist*, 19 December 2025.

30 This calculation assumes that the vague ‘through 2028’ language of the agreement published on 21 August 2025 refers to the period from the beginning of Q4 2025 to the end of 2028. Data sources: Eurostat, “[Imports of Energy Products to the EU Down in 2024](#)”, 21 March 2025; and European Commission, “[EU–US Trade Deal Explained – Energy Aspects](#)”, Brussels, 30 July 2025.

31 Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), “[Europe’s LNG Buildout Slows Amid Anticipated Decline in Gas Demand](#)”, 30 October 2025.

32 European Commission, “[Oil and Petroleum Products: A Statistical Overview](#)”, data retrieved on 4 May 2025; and Reuters, “[More European Oil Refineries to Close, Convert in Next 10 Years, Panel Says](#)”, 25 March 2025.

fuels and coal) with a dependence on energy imports from the US. This already ongoing trend becomes more apparent when Norway's energy production is treated as indigenous, as in this policy brief, to reflect infrastructural, economic and geopolitical realities.

The US NSS and broader foreign policy trajectory highlight a shift towards a more explicitly interest-driven, protectionist and ideologically charged approach to trade, including with Europe. In this context, energy – particularly gas – exports increasingly function as a tool of strategic leverage, intertwined with other contentious issues such as EU data protection and AI regulations, trade tariffs, domestic and international rule of law, migration management, China policy, Russia-Ukraine and Greenland. This growing (geo-)politicisation of energy, combined with rising reliance on US LNG, exposes Europe to conditionality and strategic pressure.

Over the medium and long term, the principal pathway to strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy and resilience in the energy sector is to accelerate the transition to an efficient and modern energy system based on indigenous renewable sources. In the short term, while ending reliance on fossil fuel imports from







Russia is both desirable and feasible, the EU will remain dependent on imported fossil fuels. Mitigating the associated risks will require genuine diversification as part of a broader energy security strategy. To avoid repeating past mistakes, such a strategy must rest on a sound definition of diversification and reflect today's geopolitical realities.

Diversifying under these conditions is, indeed, inherently complex. Other suppliers do not necessarily offer greater strategic insulation; Qatar has explicitly signalled its willingness in the past to use its gas exports to Europe as political leverage. Substantially increasing imports from Norway is not a viable option either, as output levels are already at or near maximum capacity. A first step to manage the geopolitical risks of gas imports would be to include in Member States' National Diversification Plans an obligation to monitor the import shares of *all supplying countries*, not only Russia. At the same time, by providing clarity that it will not yield to pressure to dilute its climate and sustainability legislation, the EU would help private-sector actors avoid stranded investments arising from long-term delivery contracts that are incompatible with the EU's already falling demand for fossil gas as the energy transition progresses.

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