



EuroNews: March 4, 2007

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[Britain's gas dependency in focus at IEA](#)

Britain risks becoming too dependent on natural gas unless it builds more nuclear power stations, boosts renewable resources and improves energy efficiency, the International Energy Agency said on Thursday.

"We think it is a model for other IEA countries... However, there is room for improvement, particularly in the area of gas dependence," Mandil told reporters in London. "The UK government needs to monitor this situation and should keep all options open for potential developers of power stations to use other fuels."

The main threat to Britain, the IEA report on UK energy policy released on Thursday says, is that new investment is focussing on gas-fired power generation at a time when Britain's own production is falling rapidly.

[Wave farms show energy potential](#)

Proponents of clean energy have long seen the oceans as a great hope for the future. Ocean waves carry tremendous power, and could, in theory at least, provide much of the world's electricity.

But while other sources of renewable energy - such as wind and solar - have been widely adopted in recent years, wave energy has been slow to take off.

But that's changing. Scottish engineers will soon deploy an offshore "wave farm" in Portugal. They have also signed a deal to build an even larger farm in Scottish waters.

[Poland: Putting Politics and Security before Economics](#)

Polish natural gas monopoly PGNiG has announced that it is purchasing ExxonMobil Corp.'s stake in three exploration licenses off the Norwegian coast. The move, along with other plans currently being negotiated, clearly indicates that the Kaczynski government is moving to cut Poland's dependence on Russian natural gas supplies. As relations between the countries continue to deteriorate, the move also shows that the Poles -- like the Russians -- are willing to make deals based not on economic costs, but on politics and security.

France, Germany likely to clash at energy summit

France dug its heels in yesterday against setting a binding target for renewable energy sources in the European Union, setting up a potential clash with its closest ally Germany at an EU summit next week.

A French official said Paris continued to oppose making the goal of obtaining 20 percent of the EU's energy needs by 2020 from renewable sources such as solar and wind power mandatory as part of the 27-nation bloc's long-term energy strategy.

However, diplomats said Germany was insisting on a binding target to underpin the EU's drive for world leadership in the fight against climate change and had maintained that objective in a draft communique for the March 8-9 EU summit.

Diversify sources, say energy experts

Europe is likely to be increasingly dependent on gas and oil imports, whose security it is less and less able to guarantee. This situation--especially the heavy reliance on Russian energy sources--needs to be addressed by diversifying the types of energy production within the EU, as well as the sources of foreign imports, said experts at a public hearing.

One of the most pressing problems faced by Europe is that it is increasingly "dependent on investment behaviour in third countries," said Mr van Hulst. This is especially troubling, since one of the main sources of Europe's energy needs is Russia, where recent restrictions on foreign direct investment (FDI) are "very worrying" and could lead to significant underinvestment in developing gas and oil fields, said Mr Vladimir Milov, President of the Institute of Energy Policy, Moscow.

Counting on coal

With its heavy reliance on coal, many consider Poland's energy industry an unfortunate relic of the past. There are some, however, who see Poland's plentiful supply of coal as not only a solution to energy security worries in the short term, but also as a long-term answer to the need for more environmentally friendly production. With the diminishing availability of energy resources and advances in technologies that help reduce coal's impact on the environment, this controversial resource may offer the best option for fueling Poland's future.

Cleaning King Coal

The European Union has set ambitious new targets for cutting emissions in half by 2050, and many people are now questioning how Europe will manage if it relies solely on energy efficiency and renewable energy — wind, solar, hydroelectric.

This concern, along with the recent erratic flow of gas from Russia, has increased the focus of Czech power utilities and scientists on a developing technology that could bridge the gap between the fossil fuel present and a renewable future: carbon capture and storage (CCS).

CCS research has just begun in the Czech Republic, spearheaded by the Czech Geological Survey and the power utility ČEZ, which recently joined the European-wide and industry-led European Technology Platform on Zero Emission Fossil Fuel Power Plants. ČEZ hopes to have a pilot plant running with CCS within 10 years.

[Woodchips to fuel European cars](#)

A NEW road fuel made from woodchips and straw will be launched in Europe later this year from a pilot plant developed by Shell and Choren Industries, the German biofuel company.

The synthetic diesel, made using a novel biomass-to-liquids (BTL) process, will eradicate many of the current concerns about the biodiesel industry by using waste plant material instead of valuable food crops. The pilot plant, near Freiberg in eastern Germany, will produce 15,000 tonnes a year of synthetic diesel, dubbed Sunfuel.

Most first-generation biofuels, such as ethanol, are made from food crops such as sugar, rapeseed and palm oil. Growing concern about global warming and the consequent rising interest in alternative fuels have caused the cost of food crops to soar.

[German coalition split on nuclear energy withdrawal](#)

A split within Germany's ruling coalition over the nation's withdrawal from nuclear energy flared again on Sunday ahead of a European Union summit this week due to address climate change.

Conservative Chancellor Angela Merkel, who will host the meeting in Brussels, favours extending the life of Germany's nuclear plants, which account for a third of the country's electricity supply.

But she agreed in the coalition pact with the Social Democrats (SPD) in 2005 not to renege on a nuclear phase-out sealed under her predecessor, SPD Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder.



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