

FRACK EU: UNCONVENTIONAL INTRIGUE IN POLAND



A Preliminary Investigation of the Fracking Assault on Poland



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CHAPTER 2: Russia, the EU, and the Unconventional Petroleum Complex - Natural Gas Geopolitics and PR Spins

Part 2: Russia, the EU, and the Unconventional Petroleum Complex - Natural Gas Geopolitics and PR Spins

... The way both parties have acted over the last weeks and notably this week is unacceptable. This casts a shadow over the reputation of Russia as a reliable supplying country for Europe. It leaves consuming countries no other option than to speed up moves to find alternative suppliers, fuels and transit routes in the future.... (International Energy Agency, January 16, 2009)

Segments from Petroleum Economist's 2011 *Gas Map of Europe & the CIS*. The image to the right shows the main sources of conventional gas in northern Russia, and the pipelines that pump gas into the EU states.

On the right hand side of the bottom map are the main arteries of gas feed lines from Russia which merge at the far western boundary of the Ukraine, and travel westward across the Slovak Republic just before the eastern-most boundary of Austria. The pipeline then splits off into Austria, with another main line heading through the Czech Republic and off into southern Germany. The first phase of new underwater pipeline (the world's largest) in the Baltic Sea has been built connecting Russia's gas reserves to Germany.

Most of the red dots below symbolize gas or gas/condensate fields. The red gas pipeline routes appear as blood arteries in a living body.



Rising concerns and emerging studies about ‘energy security’ and climate change prompted the European Union (EU) to initiate a new energy policy for Europe in 2007, with directives on finding and implementing alternative and ‘cleaner’ energy sources. ¹ Many international climate change initiatives had been set in place since the Kyoto Accord in 1997, rooted in climate or global warming warnings since the early 1970s. By late 2009, the petroleum industry complex, through support from a number of think tanks, began suggesting to Europeans that one of those ‘clean’ alternate sources was unconventional shale gas. ² It was a new energy salesmanship platform.

American, Canadian and European petroleum companies earnestly began making investments in shale gas land concessions as early as 2007 in a few member EU states, such as Poland, even though the underground geologies wherein that unconventional oil and gas lay were largely undefined by research institutions and EU state governments at the time. The unconventional were also being promoted as rising public opposition and concerns occurred in the U.S., where the origins of the industry’s fracking experimentations with unconventional shales and with the public began. Germany was apparently the first EU state to get deep shale ‘ge-fracked’ in 2009.

The erroneous argument that shale gas was in the ‘clean’ energy category was introduced at an opportunistic moment following intense EU debates and controversies about Russia turning off the gas pipeline taps on several occasions to eastern EU member States, particularly during the last episode in January, 2009. ³ Scores of academic research papers and think tank reports were published in the EU, by American think tanks, and by the U.S. Congress from 2006 to 2010, which analyzed and scrutinized the gas supply conflict between Russia and its western clients.

This photo, borrowed from a May 20, 2010 Leopoldis/Twitter article, *Change of Heart*, concerned comments made by **Aleksandr Medvedev**, the deputy ceo of Russia’s **Gazprom**, who spoke at the Warsaw University, whereby: “his company is “examining the possibility” of entering the shale gas market by buying a U.S. based company. “We are not against shale gas ... Shale gas opens possibilities of expanding the usage of gas in energy generation and fuel for vehicles.” It appears that Medvedev’s position on shale gas has radically changed. In a classic quote, Medvedev in February expressed concern about the impact of shale gas on the U.S. and European water table stating, “Not every housewife is aware of the environmental consequences of the use of shale gas ... I don’t know who would take the risk of endangering drinking water reservoirs.” In October, he told *Petroleum Economist* “there’s a lot of myths about shale production” -- notably its economic feasibility.” Warsaw University students are seen protesting Medvedev’s visit.



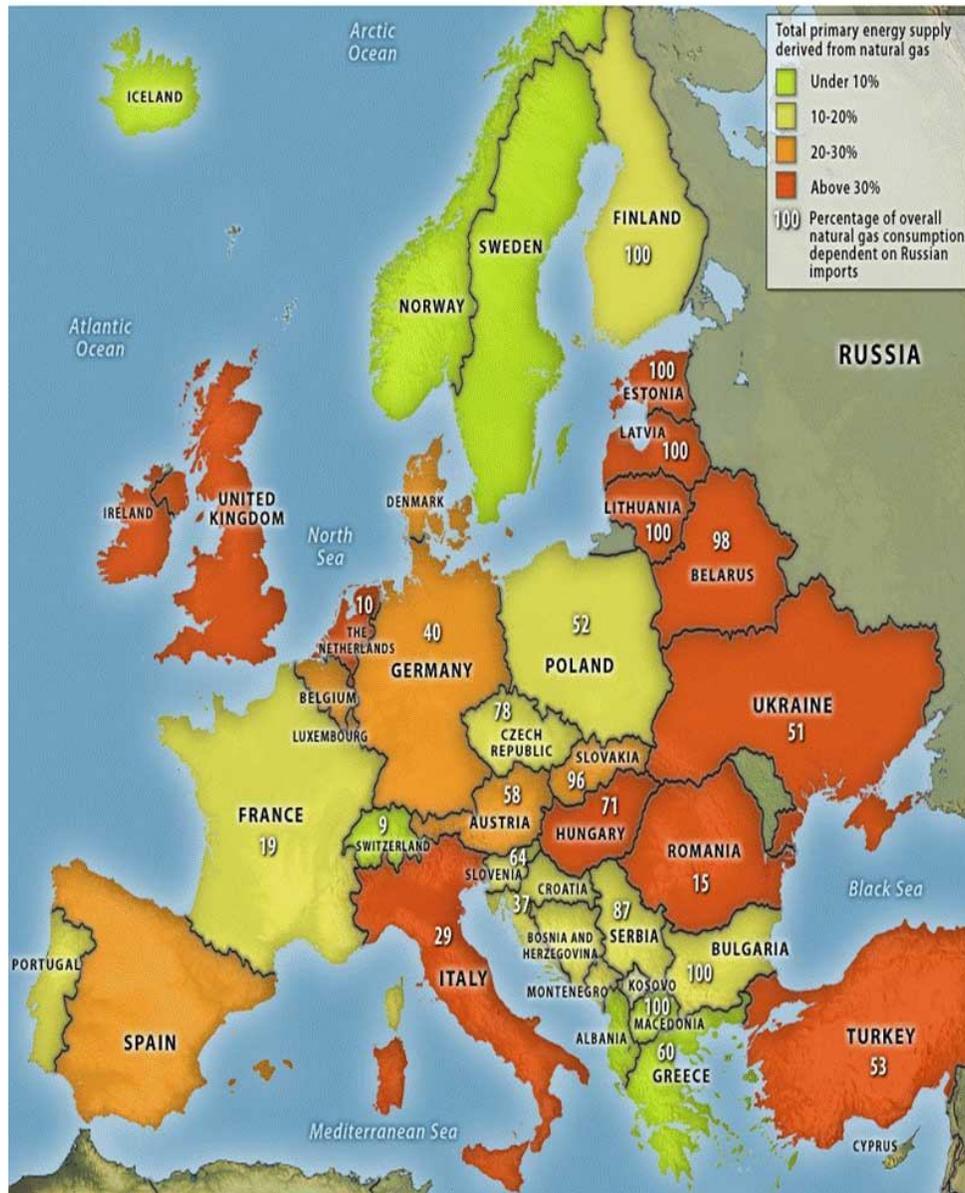
¹ *America’s Security Role in a Changing World*, published by the Institute for National Strategic Studies, in chapter 4, *Energy and Environmental Security*, page 67. In 2000, the European Commission introduced the *Green Paper on the Security of Energy Supply*, urging EU unity on enabling the EU’s energy destiny.

² In the 200-page report, *The EU-Russia Gas Connection: Pipes, Politics and Problems*, published in August 2009 by the Pan-European Institute, there are no references to “unconventional” or “shale gas”. This is very interesting, because it may help to establish the basis for an argument that unconventional gas, as an alternative energy supply for the EU, had not yet become a recognized consideration by European academics.

³ Ukraine, January 1-4, 2006; Belarus, 2007; Ukraine, January 2009. For more, search Wikipedia, *Russia-Ukraine Gas Disputes*.

In part,⁴ unconventional gas might be welcomed and construed as a form of salvation whereby some EU States, like Poland, might become more independent from Russia. That was the promotional spin of the moment. In reality, as a few energy consultants thoughtfully related, Poland would unlikely become independent, and should the underground shales be tapped by thousands of gas wells, at great environmental and health costs to Poland's aquifers, lands and people, and the use and consumption of great energy to develop the gas, they would only temporarily augment the state's own gas needs. In October, 2010 Poland signed a new gas supply agreement with Russia.

EUROPEAN DEPENDENCE ON NATURAL GAS



Map laying out the percentage uses of gas by mostly European states from Russia's gas reserves is borrowed from www.STRATFOR.com.

⁴ Including proposals for “renewables, nuclear power and CCS-equipped coal-fired plants, in addition to substantial efforts on energy efficiency”. In page 21, *The EU-Russia Gas Connection: Pipes, Politics and Problems*, by Kari Liuhto, Pan-European Institute, August 2009.