

OPINION EU must increase investment in nuclear power as dependence of Russian gas poses a deepening security threat to Europe, writes Mae Liz Orrego Rodriguez, liberal candidate for the European Parliament.



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Several big challenges lay ahead for Europe and the EU. One of the biggest challenges for the EU is without a doubt climate change. Although, the effects of the economic crisis are at the top of the agenda for many voters, it is not expected to be a key topic in the elections for the European Parliament. Moreover, environmental issues in general and climate change specifically can not be solved by one country alone. This could also be true for this specific economic crisis. However, organizations such as the EU and UN serve a very clear purpose in tackling climate change. This is something that is widely recognized in Sweden today. There is a sense that we have to act now and do so through the European Union cooperation primarily.

The targets for reducing emissions of carbon dioxide within the EU along with increased energy efficiency, brings with it some interesting challenges.

- Firstly, throughout Europe there is an increase in the use of renewable energy sources that is very positive. However, we must not make the same mistake as we did with ethanol for cars. Burning more wood, for example, for energy purposes leaves less of the renewable resource to be used for building houses.

“Russian gas a security threat to Europe”

Written by Johan Nylander

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- Secondly, many nations import gas from Russia to make their energy mix more environmentally friendly. In fact, 25 percent of the gas consumed in Europe is imported from Russia. Unfortunately, with the current undemocratic developments in Russia this type of dependence poses a deepening security threat to Europe. We can not make ourselves more dependent of gas from Russia than we are today.

- Thirdly, in the midst of an economic crisis the cost of measures to tackle climate change becomes of great importance.

It is apparent to most of us how climate change has become less prioritized during the financial crisis. The media has focused on the economic crisis and investors have focused on liquidity and cutting costs. Climate friendly solutions have taken second place to low cost solutions. However, neither national governments nor the EU can afford to lose focus on climate change.

Add the challenges mentioned above connected to renewable energy, energy dependence of Russia and costefficiency, and there is only one short term climate friendly energy source left: nuclear power. EU must open up for discussions on using nuclear power as a short-term solution for climate change. In the short and long term we should continue working on increasing energy efficiency and developing renewables. However, I am not convinced that the latter two are enough in the short term.

In the European Parliament I hope to contribute to revitalizing the discussion on environmental issues. As a member of the European Parliament, I will argue for the advantages as well as the disadvantages of renewable energy. Moreover, I hope to shed a light on the short term environmental and security benefits of using more nuclear power in our continent. Concretely, I will work for Europe to become more independent from Russia and more climate friendly. Hopefully, through agreements decided in a stronger and more powerful European parliament as soon as the Lisbon treaty has been approved.

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