



Slovakia Remains Dependent on Russian Energy

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Since the beginning of February, Slovakia has been receiving gas from Russia again through the TurkStream gas pipeline. This is due to the country's policy of diversifying routes and, to a lesser extent, sources of gas supply. The lack of political will on the part of Robert Fico's cabinet to become energy independent from Russia also applies to oil and nuclear fuel because of their economic benefits. For Poland, the challenge is confronting Slovakia's efforts to strengthen relations with Russia and to resume transit of Russian gas through Ukraine, as well as the prevention of EU sanctions on Russia that would include LNG and nuclear fuel imports.

Energy Dependence on Russia. In January, Ukraine did not renew a contract with Russia for the transit of gas through its territory. However, this decision did not affect Slovakia's energy security. It has reverse flows with each of its five neighbours (including Poland from 2022). Thanks to these, Slovakia is once again acquiring Russian raw materials, this time through TurkStream, and from April, the transmission via this route is expected to double, according to government announcements.

Ukraine's decision has shaken Slovakia's important transit role. After 2022, it remained the largest recipient of Russian gas transmitted through Ukraine, receiving an average of 75% of supplies. However, due to limited domestic demand (about 4.5 bcm per year), it re-exported more than 60% of the gas, mainly to Austria.

The cessation of gas transit through Ukraine therefore has mainly financial consequences for Slovakia. According to government estimates, replacing Russian gas would cost Slovakia up to €500 million per year (of which around €200 million are the costs of supplies from the European market). Although last year's imports were only 50% of 2021 levels, their volume has increased from 12.2 bcm to 13.5 bcm in the past year (see Table 1) since Fico came to power in October 2023. This brought significant income to the state-owned transmission system operator Eurostream, which, according to a contract with Gazprom valid until 2028, receives €400-600 million per year for the capacity provided. Its actual profit for 2023-24 fell to €155 million (in 2021-22 it was €350 million). In addition, the Russian gas re-exporter and the state-owned company SPP recorded revenues of €321 million for 2023. The value of gas imports from Russia to Slovakia in 2024 is around €1.4 billion.

Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Slovakia has slightly reduced its dependence on Russian oil supplies ([it is excluded from the EU embargo](#)). In 2022, 96% of this raw material was of Russian origin and was transported to southern Slovakia via the Druzhba pipeline. Diversification was slow, and according to government declarations in 2024 Russia accounted for about 75% of supplies—3.9 million tonnes (Czechia in 2024 reduced imports from Russia by 35% to 2.7 million tonnes, accounting for 40% of supplies). The change is mainly due to concerns about maintaining oil transit through Ukraine.

The slow diversification of oil supply sources in Slovakia is due to several factors. One of them is Hungary's strong influence in this sector—MOL owns Slovnaft, the owner of the only Slovak refinery in Bratislava. Hungary is blocking other supply routes because of the benefits of cooperation with Russia. Citing the energy dispute with Croatia, it is limiting oil imports through the Omišalj oil terminal and the Adria oil pipeline, which would allow for diversification and, after the modernisation of the refinery, replace imports from Russia. In addition, the current model favours the Slovakian government. Due to favourable prices for oil exported from Russia (reduced by \$3-5 per barrel), Slovnaft achieves record profits, which in 2022-2023 even brought €700 million in budget revenues. The value of oil imports from Russia in 2024 amounted to about €1.75 billion.

In the field of nuclear energy, Slovakia's dependence on Russia is strong, although it is gradually being reduced. It is responsible for more than 60% of the country's electricity production—the second highest in the EU after France. Both nuclear power plants (in Bohunice and Mochovce) are based on Soviet technology, and all five VVER-440 reactors rely on the supply of parts and nuclear fuel

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from Russia. It was not until 2024 that Slovenske Elektrarne (SE) and the French company Framatome signed a contract for the supply of nuclear fuel from 2027 based on a memorandum signed in 2023 by [the technical cabinet of Ľudovít Ódor](#). During his term of office, SE also signed a contract with the U.S.-based company Westinghouse for the supply of nuclear fuel.

Political Activities. Maintaining dependence on Russian raw materials is intended to serve Prime Minister Fico's domestic policy objectives. The government is trying to maintain public support by attempting to reduce energy costs and preserve budget revenues, as announced in the government programme for 2023-2027. Meanwhile, it has been further shaken (since October 2024, Smer-SD Fico has not been the leader of the polls) after the prime minister's visit to Moscow last December, which was intended to maintain energy cooperation. It contributed to the largest social protests [since 2018](#), which the authorities blame on Ukraine and the Georgian National Legion, among others.

Despite the cessation of gas supplies from Ukraine, Slovakia is seeking to increase imports from Russia again. Fico explains this, among other things, by the SPP contract with Gazprom (concluded by him in 2009) which is valid until 2034, and presents Russia as a reliable partner. The use of TurkStream, an alternative connection to the one running through Ukraine, is a consequence of [intense diplomatic activities outside the EU](#), including talks between Prime Minister Fico and the Turkish authorities, with whom Slovakia established a strategic partnership in January this year. At the same time, the Slovakian government is trying to get gas from Azerbaijan or Turkmenistan through this pipeline and to start transporting "Azerbaijani gas" (which is actually Russian) through Ukraine.

Energy issues are currently the main bone of contention in Slovakia's relations with Ukraine. Although the latter communicated that it would not renew the transit agreement with Russia for gas, the halting of supplies was met with an announcement of retaliation. Prime Minister Fico first threatened to cut off electricity supplies to the country (it is the second-largest exporter to the country after Hungary), and later gas. Last summer, Slovakian government criticised Ukraine's partial restriction of oil supplies via the Druzhba pipeline. Nevertheless, in October last year, the Slovakian and Ukrainian prime ministers agreed, among other things, to modernise the Mukachevo-Veľké Kapušany gas interconnector and to create an energy hub. In addition, in January 2025, the gas network operators of both countries signed a memorandum on the creation of an EU-Ukraine hydrogen corridor (which will ensure profits from the transmission of hydrogen to Germany in the future).

Activities in the EU Forum. Due to its dependence on Russian energy resources and its policy of long-term cooperation with Russia, Slovakia's actions undermine the effectiveness and efficiency of the EU's energy sanctions. [It is the only country besides Hungary that maintains its opposition to the EU embargo on Russian LNG \(it was not introduced in the 16th sanctions package\)](#). In addition, it consistently blocks the imposition of sanctions on Rosatom. Due to its high degree of dependence on Russian oil, it has also taken care to be excluded, together with Czechia and Hungary, from the EU embargo on this raw material.

Slovakia uses EU mechanisms to maintain its energy dependence on Russia. After the cessation of Russian oil and gas transit through Ukraine, it appealed to the European Commission to mediate in order to resume supplies. Moreover, Prime Minister Fico threatened to block the conclusions of the European Council

summit on 6 March if the EU did not take action in this direction. At the same time, EU membership limits the escalation of the dispute with Ukraine. Slovakia cutting off its electricity supplies would violate EU energy law.

Conclusions, Outlook, and Recommendations. The slow pace of moving away from Russian energy resources is primarily due to the lack of political will on the part of the Slovak authorities. The process slowed down after Fico returned to power and is continuing mainly thanks to external factors, such as the expiry of the Ukrainian-Russian gas transit agreement. Further diversification is possible by utilising existing transmission infrastructure, such as the Adria oil pipeline and gas interconnectors. It can be supported by accelerating the green transition and developing nuclear energy with Western partners, including within the framework of the nuclear alliance in the EU.

Poland's goal [\(according to the RePowerEU plan\)](#) remains to end the import of energy resources from Russia in order to limit its political influence in Europe and budget revenues. However, the EU's goal of moving away from Russian energy resources by 2027 will be hampered, among other things, by the current energy policy of Slovakia and Hungary. Nevertheless, the Polish government could support the Slovak government and the EU's efforts to provide alternative supply routes. In the event of further threats from Slovakia to cut off energy supplies to Ukraine, Poland may renew its offer to increase gas or electricity supplies to Ukraine.

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Table 1. Scale of Energy Raw Material Imports from Russia to Slovakia, 2020-2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Gas (billions m3, bcm) with annual consumption of about 4.5 bcm	38.5*	27	16.1	12.2	13.5
Oil (million tons)	5.6	5.1	5.2	4.43 (3.9 according to Slovnaft)	3.9
Nuclear fuel (tons)	60	50	80	230	b.d.

*Data on gas imports in 2020 vary depending on the study.

Source: Own compilation based on data from Transpetrol, ExPro, bellona.org and ENTSOG.