



“In fact, the issue is always between two points”

Weekly Political and Geopolitical Developments

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Geopolitical and Global Developments:

POWER OUTAGES IN EUROPE, GEOPOLITICAL AND GEOECONOMIC RISKS, AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR TURKEY. Prof. Dr. Murat KOÇ

The causes of power outages in Europe, the importance of this issue, and its implications for Turkey can be evaluated in the context of energy resources, geopolitical and geoeconomic risks, and cyberattacks as follows:

1. Causes of Power Outages in Europe

a) Transformation in Energy Sources

- The European Union is undergoing a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Due to the intermittent nature of sources such as solar and wind, this transition is causing imbalances in energy supply.
- In countries like Germany, the closure of nuclear plants and reduction of coal usage have reduced system flexibility.

b) Natural Gas Dependency and the Russia-Ukraine War

- Prior to 2022, many European countries were heavily dependent on Russian natural gas.
- Following the war, gas flow was disrupted and prices surged, resulting in interruptions in electricity generation.

c) Infrastructure Problems and Climate Change

- Extreme heat, droughts, or storms are causing damage to energy grids.
- Aging infrastructure struggles to meet modern demands.

2. Importance of the Issue

a) Critical Infrastructure Security

- Power outages have brought essential services such as healthcare, transportation, food supply, and communication to a standstill.
- The effects extend beyond the energy sector and threaten the entire economic and social structure.

b) Energy Security and Sovereignty

- Energy is now not only an economic asset but also a geopolitical weapon. Ensuring energy supply security directly affects a nation's independence and foreign policy capacity.

3. Assessment of Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Risks

a) Geopolitical Risks

- Europe's energy supply is vulnerable due to its dependence on crisis regions such as Russia, the Middle East, and North Africa.
- Energy pipelines (e.g., Nord Stream) are prone to sabotage or conflict.
- Energy conflicts directly shape international relations and alliances.

b) Geoeconomic Risks

- Energy crises lower industrial output and increase costs, reducing competitiveness, particularly in energy-intensive sectors.
- Countries reliant on energy imports face trade deficits and heightened economic vulnerability.

4. Cyberattack Threats and Power Outages: Critical Links

a) Digital Dependence of Energy Infrastructure

- Power transmission and distribution systems (especially SCADA systems) rely on advanced digital infrastructure.
- Targeting these systems can result in large-scale blackouts without the need for physical attacks.
- The European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) has identified energy grids as high-risk targets.

b) Algeria-Europe Energy Connections and Risk

- Algeria is a key supplier of natural gas to Europe, particularly Spain and Italy.
- Pipelines such as Medgaz, TransMed, and GME link Algeria with these countries.
- In 2021, geopolitical tension disrupted gas flow through the GME pipeline that passes through Morocco.
- The vulnerability of this pipeline's management systems to cyberattacks poses a significant risk of deliberately deepening the energy crisis.

c) Strategic Importance of the Iberian Peninsula

• An "Energy Island"

- The Iberian Peninsula (Spain, Portugal, and France) has limited connections to the European energy grid, reducing external support capacity.
- This makes outages more likely to escalate from local incidents to broader regional crises due to insufficient interconnectivity.
- The France-Spain electricity link has low capacity and limited alternatives.

• Gateway to North Africa

- The Iberian Peninsula serves as Europe's gateway to energy supplies from North Africa.
- Any outage in this region affects the entire Africa-Europe energy corridor and thus the European continent.

• Renewable Energy and Grid Imbalance

- Spain and Portugal generate a high share of energy from renewables like solar and wind. However, this generation is highly variable.
- A cyberattack in such a fragile environment could disrupt balance and trigger broader system collapse.

5. Implications for Turkey

a) Opportunities

- Europe's energy deficit positions Turkey as a key energy bridge. Its location and projects such as TANAP and TurkStream carry strategic importance.
- Turkey could accelerate investments in renewables and nuclear energy to become an energy exporter.

b) Risks

- Energy crises in Europe could drive up energy prices for Turkey, worsening the current account deficit and inflation.
- A decline in industrial output in Europe could also indirectly reduce Turkey's exports in the long term.

c) Need for Strategic Action

- Turkey must diversify its energy sources and prioritize local and renewable alternatives.
- Energy storage technologies, infrastructure modernization, and regional cooperation (with countries like Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq) are critical.
- Turkey remains firm on not compromising its stance in Cyprus and Eastern Mediterranean energy resources, as reflected in its strategic posture.

6. Evaluation of Energy Sources from Turkey's Perspective

- Renewables ensure sustainability in the long term, but pose short-term supply security risks.
- Natural gas and nuclear energy can serve as balancing forces during the transition. The Sinop and Akkuyu projects are thus strategically important.
- Coal, despite high costs, can be an emergency backup in crisis situations.
- A hybrid strategy—efficient and balanced use of all resources—is essential for energy supply security.
- A cyberattack in Europe could disrupt Turkey's electricity and gas trade with the EU.
- Turkey's planned energy links through Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Iraq must be protected with strong cybersecurity measures.
- Turkey has recently increased energy cooperation with Algeria and could participate in projects transporting energy to Europe through this country.
- However, unless these routes are digitally secure, Turkey could also become a target as an “energy transmitter.”
- Institutions such as TEİAŞ and BOTAŞ must strengthen their cybersecurity systems.
- Critical energy infrastructure, such as the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant, must be safeguarded against foreign cyber influence to ensure independence and security.

7. Conclusion: Energy Security = Cybersecurity

- Energy security is no longer just about resource management and pipeline control but also about data security, software architecture, and digital defense capabilities.
- Outages in regions like the Iberian Peninsula could ripple through Europe's entire energy chain.
- Turkey's ambition to become a regional energy hub requires not only geopolitical but also advanced cyberstrategic planning.
- Power outages in Europe are increasingly associated not only with supply shortages but also with cyberattacks. In this context, Algeria-Europe energy links and the strategic location of the Iberian Peninsula make the issue even more critical in terms of geopolitics, energy security, and cyber threats.

Power cuts in Spain and Portugal



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