

## Research Briefing

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# Imports of energy from Russia

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has focussed attention on the importance of Russian exports of gas, oil and coal, both to the Russian economy and for the energy security of the countries that import these fuels, especially in Europe. Sanctions on Russian energy have so far been limited, but the UK and EU have started planning to move away from Russian fossil fuels.

## How much does the UK rely on energy from Russia?

In 2021 imports from Russia made up 4% of gas used in the UK, 9% of oil and 27% of coal. In 2021, imports of gas, oil and coal from Russian to the UK were worth a combined **£4.5 billion**. According to [Eurostat](#), in 2020, imports from Russia made up 39% of the gas used in the EU, 23% of oil imports and 46% of coal imports.

In March 2022, the first full month since the invasion, **the quantity of oil, gas and coal imported from Russia all fell substantially compared to March 2021**. However, much higher fossil fuel prices meant that **the value of these imports all increased and were 20% higher than in March 2021**. Overall energy imports from Russia in the year to March 2022 were **£5.3 billion**.

While the UK relies on Russian energy to a lesser extent than many other European countries, it is still exposed to the disruption in energy markets due to the invasion of Ukraine. [Gas](#) and [oil](#) prices have increased sharply and are likely to remain high as many European countries look to other sources of energy.

This briefing presents the latest monthly data on UK imports of gas, oil and coal from Russia. It also includes data for Europe, although this is less up to date. The Library has published related briefings on:

[Domestic energy prices](#)

[Alternatives to Russian oil: Saudi Arabia, the Gulf and Venezuela?](#)

The International Energy Agency has published detailed information on the oil and gas markets and Russian supply on its [Russian supplies to global energy markets](#) pages. The Agency's [Reliance on Russian Fossil Fuels Data Explorer](#) gives statistics on how much fossil fuels OECD and EU countries import from Russia. In March 2022 it also published [A 10-Point Plan to Reduce the European Union's Reliance on Russian Natural Gas](#) and [A 10-Point Plan to Cut Oil Use](#).

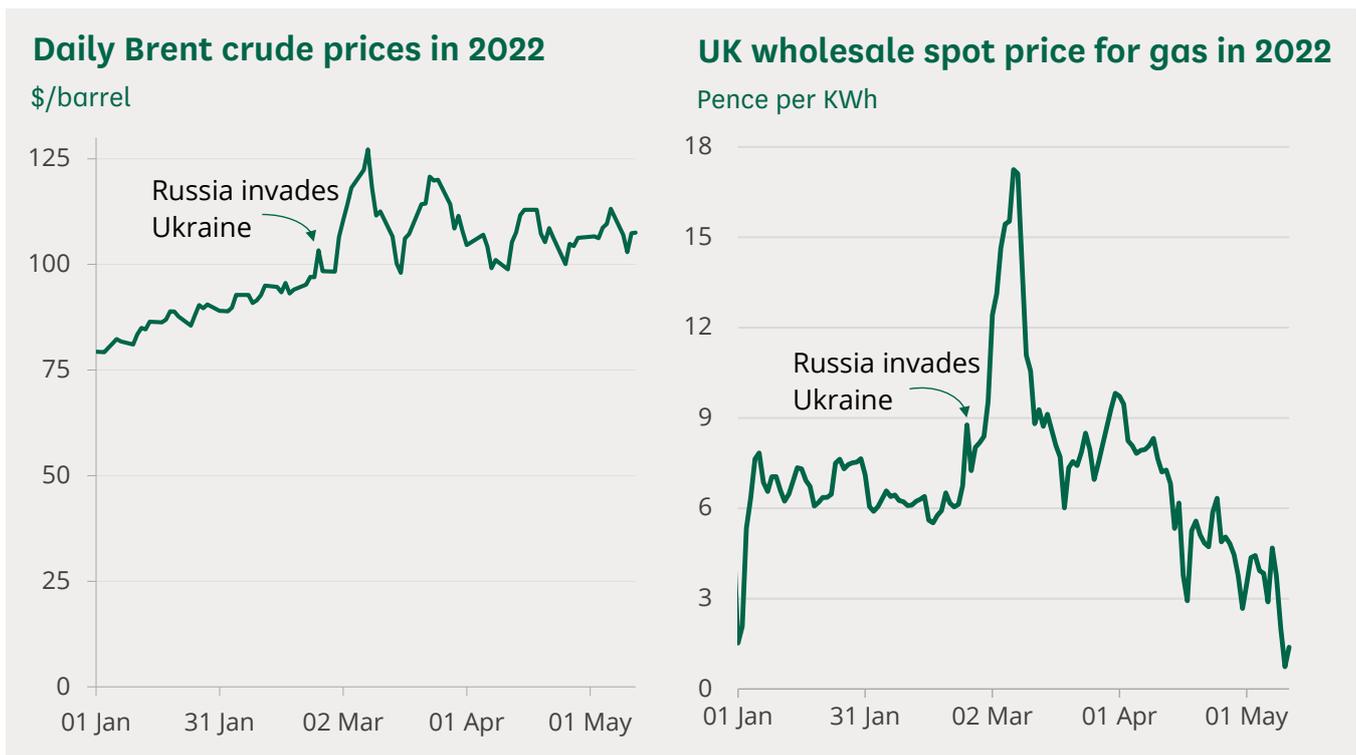
The [Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air](#) tracks detailed ship movements and pipeline flows of fossil fuels from Russia in its Russian Energy Exports Tracker. On 27 April they published a [report](#) on energy imports from Russia in the two months since the invasion. This found that Russia had exported €63 billion in fossil fuels; €44 billion of which had gone to the EU. Germany was the largest single destination (€9.1 billion), followed by Italy, China and the Netherlands. The UK was not one of the top 20 destinations. The volume of oil and coal exported to the EU fell between January/February and April, but gas volumes increased. Higher prices have increased the value of exports. This report was also covered in the [FT](#) and [The Guardian](#).

## 1

## Impact on energy markets

Prices of gas and oil increased during the second half of 2021 largely due to supply not keeping pace with strong demand as economies came out of lockdown. Prices continued to increase in early 2022 as a build-up of Russian forces close to the border with Ukraine led to concerns about a possible invasion and disruption to supply.

Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February. On the day of the invasion, Brent Crude prices exceeded \$100 a barrel for the first time in more than seven years. Gas prices in Europe increased by 50% on 24 February to \$4.40 therm (around 11 p/kWh).<sup>1</sup> Gas prices continued to increase rapidly up to early March, oil prices increased more steadily. Oil prices have remained in the \$100-110 per barrel range. Spot gas prices have fallen substantially during April and May which is due in part to lower demand for gas as this time of the year. These are spot prices for immediate delivery and forward prices for gas delivered in next autumn/winter may not show the same downward trend.



Sources: Financial Times; HoC Library electronic holdings; nationalgrid.com [Prevailing View tool](#) (system average price)

<sup>1</sup> IEA, [Gas Market and Russian Supply](#) (accessed 4 March 2022)

## 2

## Restrictions on imports of energy from Russia

The UK Government has committed to ending imports of oil and coal from Russia by the end of the year and ending imports of gas from Russia “...as soon as possible thereafter.” The [British energy security strategy](#) said to reduce reliance on Russian fossil fuels, the UK is:

committing to phase out the use of Russian oil and coal by the end of 2022, and end imports of Russian liquefied natural gas as soon as possible thereafter.<sup>2</sup>

The Government has said on oil specifically:

The phasing out of imports will not be immediate, but instead allows the UK more than enough time to adjust supply chains, supporting industry and consumers. The government will work with companies through a new Taskforce on Oil to support them to make use of this period in finding alternative supplies.<sup>3</sup>

The EU has agreed to ban imports of coal from Russia.<sup>4</sup> This was announced on 8 April 2022. From this date there will be a four-month ‘winding down period’ for existing contracts.<sup>5</sup>

In early May 2022 the European Commission has proposed a ban on Russian oil; a complete ban on imports of crude oil within six months and refined petroleum products by the end of the year.<sup>6</sup> This ban, and possible country-specific opt-outs, has yet to be agreed. On 8 March 2022, the Commission proposed an outline plan, [REPowerEU](#), which aims to reduce EU demand for Russian Gas by two thirds before the end of the year and to make Europe independent from Russian fossil fuels “well before 2030”.<sup>7</sup>

Some EU member states have gone further, for instance Lithuania announced in early April that it had ended Russian gas imports.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> BEIS, [British energy security strategy](#) (7 April 2022)

<sup>3</sup> BEIS press release 8 March 2022, [UK to phase out Russian oil imports](#)

<sup>4</sup> European Commission press release 8 April 2022, [Ukraine: EU agrees fifth package of restrictive measures against Russia](#)

<sup>5</sup> European Commission, [Question and answers on the fifth package of restrictive measures against Russia](#) (8 April 2022)

<sup>6</sup> European Commission, [Speech by President von der Leyen at the EP Plenary on the social and economic consequences for the EU of the Russian war in Ukraine – reinforcing the EU's capacity to act](#) (4 May 2022)

<sup>7</sup> European Commission, [REPowerEU: Joint European action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy](#) (8 March 2022)

<sup>8</sup> [Baltic states end Russian gas imports – but can the rest of Europe follow suit?](#), France 24, 5 April 2022

### 3

## Data on Russian energy reliance

The following three pages summarise the latest data on UK imports of gas, oil and coal from Russia. The final page looks at how much European countries relied on Russian energy in the decade to 2020. These pages use the following definitions unless stated otherwise:

**Net imports:** Gross imports minus gross exports

**Total energy supply:** Domestic production plus net imports minus fuel used in international 'bunkers', plus or minus changes to stocks

**Import dependency:** Net imports of a fuel as a percentage of total energy supply of that fuel.

**Reliance on Russian imports:** Net imports of a fuel from Russia as a percentage of total energy supply of that fuel.

**Gas:** Natural gas including Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

**Oil:** Includes crude oil and petroleum products, such as petrol, diesel and heating oil

**Coal:** Includes coal, other solid fuels including peat and manufactured solid fuels such as coke

Import dependency can be over 100% if a country imports more than it consumes. This can happen for different reasons including where it builds up its stocks, uses imports for international 'bunkers'<sup>9</sup> or where some is re-exported.

The monthly data for the UK is taken from trade figures. These are given in final values and mass units (kg). Official energy statistics use units of energy and are included in the annual data, but the trade figures are included here because they give more up-to-date figures on imports from specific countries. The monthly trade data is shown from 2019 onwards to include a full year of imports before the pandemic. There is a seasonal pattern to some imports so the charts include a 12-month moving average to illustrate underlying trends.

The increased prices for fuels from the second half of 2021 onwards are reflected in the charts of the value of Russian energy imports. These generally show imports of greater value, even where the mass imported has not increased.

Sources for the data included in the following pages are given at the end of this briefing paper.

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<sup>9</sup> Fuel used for international shipping/aviation

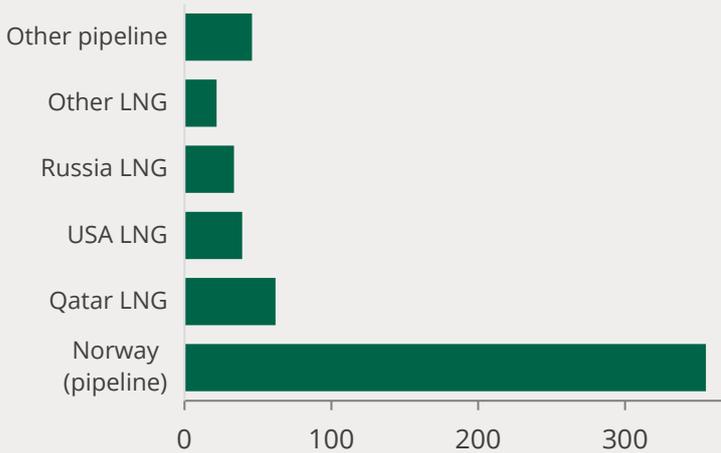
# Gas

Provided  
**41%** of UK energy needs in 2021

Import dependency in 2021 **57%**

Reliance on Russian imports in 2021 **4%**

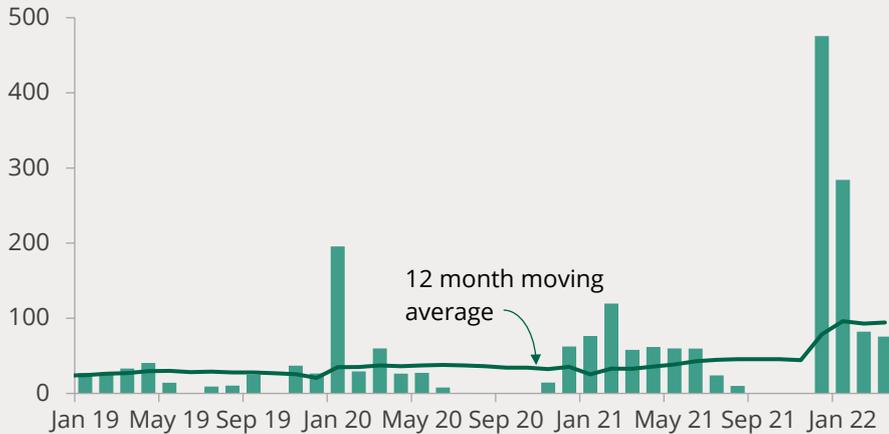
## Sources of UK gas imports in 2021 (TWh)



Imports of gas from Russia increased by 37% in 2021 which made it the fourth most import source. The UK gets almost two-thirds of its gas imports from Norway.

'Other pipeline' imports come directly from continental Europe and may include some gas which originally came from Russia.

## Value of UK gas imports from Russia, £ million

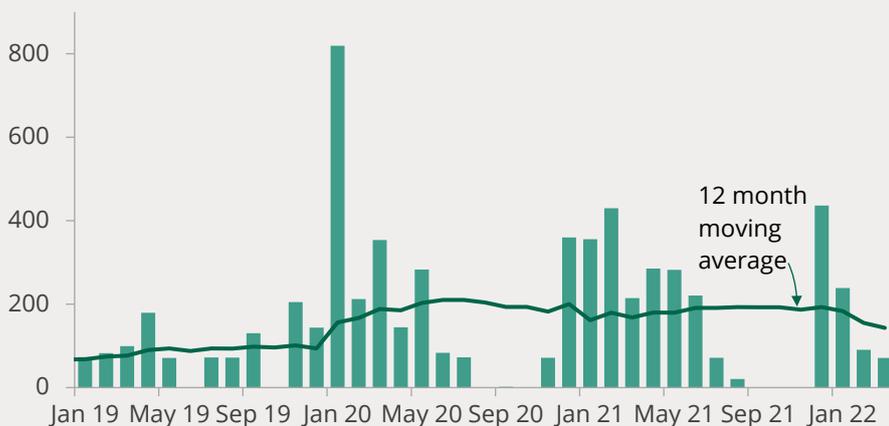


**£1.13** billion of imports in year to March '22

**+30%** March '22 v March '21

**1%** Of all gas imports in Feb '22

## Mass of gas imports from Russia, thousand tonnes



**1.7** million tonnes of imports in year to March '22

**-67%** March '22 v March '21

**2%** Of all gas imports in March '22

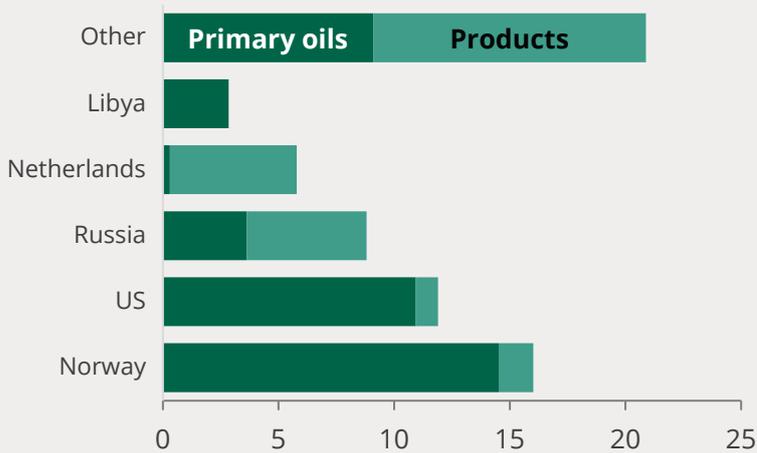
# oil

Provided  
**34%** of UK energy needs in 2021

Import dependency in 2021 **26%**

Reliance on Russian imports in 2021 **9%**

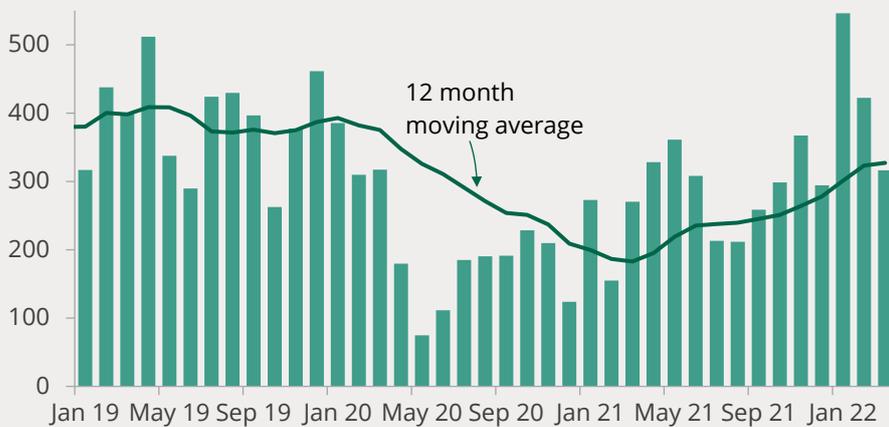
## Sources of UK oil imports in 2021 (million tonnes)



Imports of Russia crude oil fell in 2020 and 2021, but were still the third most import source.

Russia was the second most important source of refined petroleum products in 2021 after the Netherlands. It is by far the most important source of imported diesel with 34% of all imports and 20% of total UK supply of diesel in 2021.

## Value of UK oil imports from Russia, £ million

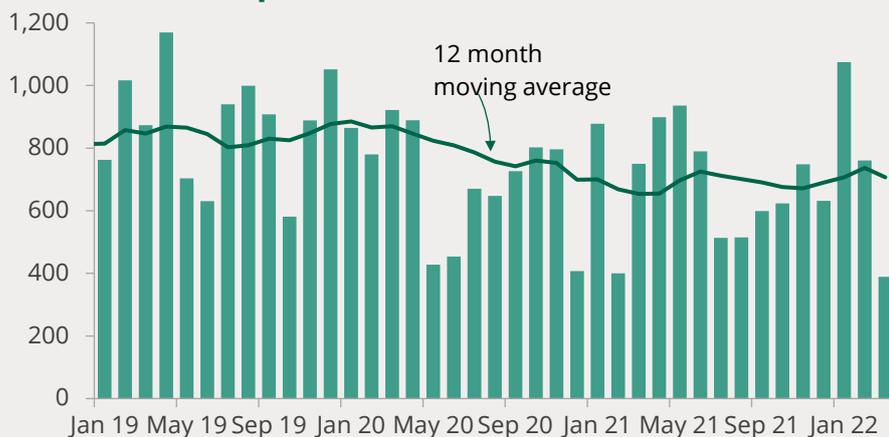


**£3.93** billion of imports in year to March '22

**+17%** March '22 v March '21

**7%** Of all oil imports in March '22

## Mass of oil imports from Russia, thousand tonnes



**8.9** million tonnes of imports in year to March '22

**-48%** March '22 v March '21

**6%** Of all oil imports in March '22

# Coal

Provided

**3%**

of UK energy needs in 2021

Import

dependency in 2021

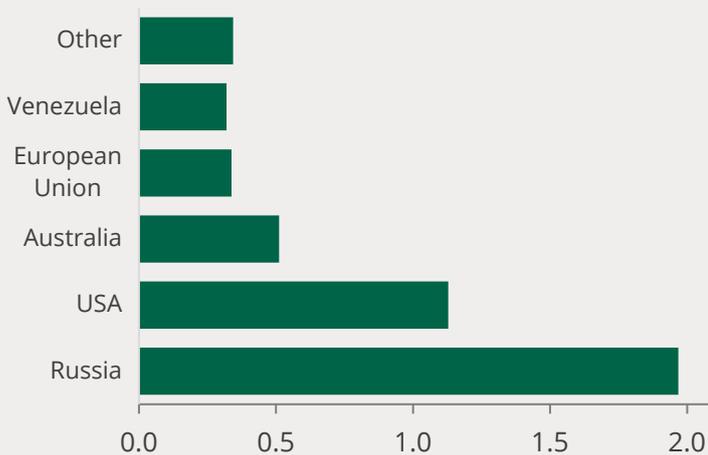
**55%**

Reliance on

Russian imports in 2021

**27%**

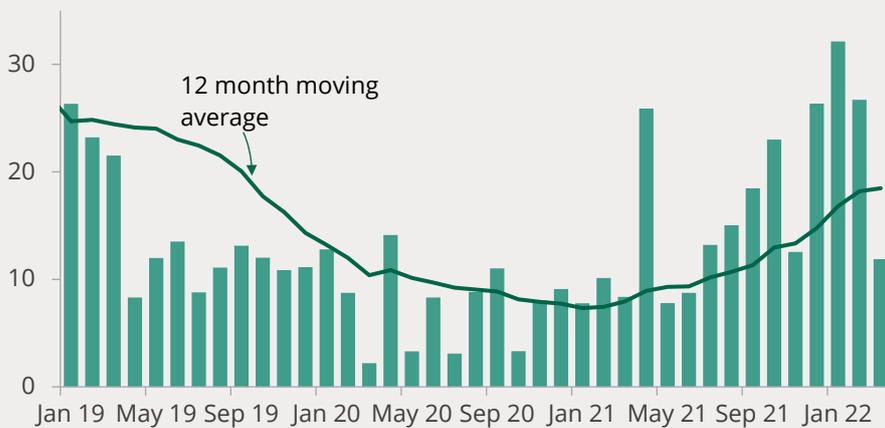
## Sources of UK coal imports in 2021 (million tonnes)



Russia is the largest single source of imported coal. The amount the UK imported from Russia increased by 21% in 2021. Most of this is 'steam coal' used in power generation.

The data opposite only includes coal not manufactured solid fuels, total imports of which were 1.1 million tonnes in 2021. This was mainly coke for steel production.

## Value of UK coal imports from Russia, £ million



**£222**  
million

of imports in year to March '22

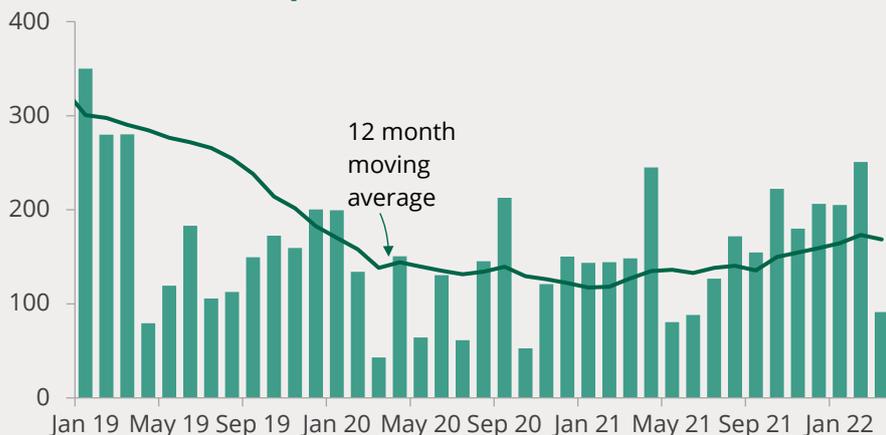
**+42%**

March '22 v March '21

**10%**

Of all coal imports in March '22

## Mass of coal imports from Russia, thousand tonnes



**2.0**  
million tonnes

of imports in year to March '22

**-39%**

March '22 v March '21

**16%**

Of all coal imports in March '22

## European reliance on imports of fossil fuels from Russia

	Coal		Oil		Gas		Overall	
	10-year trend	2020	10-year trend	2020	10-year trend	2020	10-year trend	2020
Austria		9%		7%		0%		3%
Belgium		36%		67%		8%		29%
Bulgaria		8%		113%		73%		40%
Croatia		78%		12%		0%		9%
Cyprus		118%		3%		0%		3%
Czech		2%		36%		86%		24%
Denmark		93%		32%		0%		16%
Estonia		88%		-298%		46%		16%
Finland		31%		164%		68%		45%
France		24%		17%		20%		9%
Germany		21%		37%		46%		28%
Greece		10%		91%		39%		53%
Hungary		11%		59%		111%		54%
Iceland		0%		0%		0%		0%
Ireland		7%		6%		0%		3%
Italy		53%		19%		41%		25%
Latvia		103%		28%		100%		30%
Lithuania		72%		223%		50%		98%
Luxembourg		7%		0%		25%		5%
Malta		0%		37%		0%		17%
Nethland		45%		98%		36%		55%
Norway		18%		9%		0%		4%
Poland		15%		78%		46%		37%
Portugal		0%		7%		10%		5%
Romania		9%		49%		6%		18%
Slovakia		24%		159%		88%		60%
Slovenia		0%		28%		12%		10%
Spain		54%		9%		11%		8%
Sweden		19%		33%		14%		8%
Switzerland		8%		0%		0%		0%
Turkey		25%		21%		34%		22%
UK		21%		17%		3%		9%

Notes: 2020 data are estimates or 2019 outturn figures where these are not available

Estonia has negative values for 2019 and 2020 due to how oil shale liquefaction processes are allocated to coal and oil. The overall figures are not affected..

Source: IEA (2022), Reliance on Russian Fossil Fuels Data Explorer, IEA, Paris

<https://www.iea.org/reports/reliance-on-russian-fossil-fuels-data-explorer>

## 4

## Sources

### Trade data

UK Trade Info tables on [energy imports from Russia](#) and [energy imports in total](#).

### UK energy data

BEIS, [Energy Trends UK: Gas](#), tables 4.1 and 4.4

BEIS, [Energy Trends: UK total energy](#), table 1.3

BEIS, [Energy Trends: UK oil and oil products](#), tables 3.4 and 3.14

BEIS, [Energy Trends: UK solid fuels and derived gases](#), tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4

### EU data

IEA (2022), *Reliance on Russian Fossil Fuels Data Explorer*, IEA, Paris  
<https://www.iea.org/reports/reliance-on-russian-fossil-fuels-data-explorer>

Eurostat, [Energy database](#) (trade by partner country tables)

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