

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001736/24
to the Commission**

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(17 September 2024)

Subject: Recent increase in electricity prices in central and eastern Europe

For over four consecutive months, the internal energy market has faced a significant lack of uniformity, particularly in several Member States in south-eastern Europe, including Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Croatia. Electricity prices in these countries have surged dramatically compared with other regions of Europe, approaching the highest prices seen in the EU in this period. This disparity is having serious negative effects on industrial competitiveness and consumer prices, while also jeopardising economic convergence within the EU. Moreover, this situation is being massively exploited politically by Russian and populist propaganda, further undermining the democratic integrity of these nations.

1. Has the Commission assessed the causes behind the electricity price imbalances in these countries?
2. If so, can the Commission share its findings, including insights into the factors affecting the functioning of the common energy market and local influences?
3. What actions is the Commission planning to address this imbalance?

Submitted: 17.9.2024

Answer given by Ms Simson on behalf of the European Commission

(6 November 2024)

The Commission has assessed the root causes for these high prices, which were attributable mainly to tight supply-demand balance during certain evening hours.

This situation was explained by a lack of flexible assets in the region to compensate for the evening drop in solar generation, the lack of cross-border capacities available for trade between Central Eastern Europe (CEE) region and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) regions, limited hydro reservoirs and strong demand during the summer due to heat waves.

The Commission observed that prices in the region have lowered significantly since mid-September 2024, as the hydro generation in the region is recovering. The Commission will continue to closely monitor the situation.

The Commission is also in discussions with the Member States in the region to discuss the necessary policy response. A dedicated discussion between Member States also took place at the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy (TTE) Council on 15 October 2024. ⁽¹⁾

Reflecting the ambitions set out in the Political Guidelines ⁽²⁾, the Commission is set to work on an action plan for affordable energy prices to help bring down energy bills for households and businesses.

This policy response should include increasing flexibility in the energy systems of the region to improve their ability to absorb temporary price spikes.

In addition, the situation highlights the need for a more integrated European energy system, with greater physical interconnection capacity between the CEE and SEE regions and fewer constraints on the use of available interconnection capacity for cross border trade.

⁽¹⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13994-2024-INIT/en/pdf>

⁽²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf