

Germany's Energy Apocalypse. Uncontrolled Outages. Evolving Social Crisis. Mass Poverty on the Horizon?

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Global Research, September 27, 2022
[eugypius](#) 26 September 2022

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Oil and Energy](#)

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[Germany has nationalised the gas importer Uniper](#), to save it from insolvency in the face of the Gazprom gas stoppage. Robert Habeck's earlier scheme to save Uniper and other importers involved the imposition of a gas surcharge of 2.4 cents per kilowatt hour on all consumers, but [the government appears ready to scrap this plan just days before it was set to go into effect](#). Instead, some politicians are now talking of capping gas prices, though as far as I can tell, nobody has any idea how.

As the pressure builds and the first closures begin, [Germany is entering an economic recession](#), and there are everyday renewed cracks in the political edifice. Minister President of Saxony Michael Kretschmer (CDU) – no fringe political figure – [recently remarked that Germany "cannot do without Russian gas"](#) and acknowledged that EU sanctions are to blame for the shortage, but he stopped short of demanding that Nord Stream 2 be opened; instead, he hopes for a return to Russian gas after the Ukraine war has ended.

The [Greens in government remain committed to taking Germany's last nuclear power plants offline by the end of the year](#), hoping that enough French nuclear plants will return to service over the winter to cover any resulting shortages. It is hard to imagine a more farcical approach to nuclear energy. Meanwhile, the head mayor of Berlin [has suggested that two- or three-hour periods of load-shedding may be necessary to keep the electrical grid functional over the winter](#).

Other experts, while downplaying the risk of uncontrolled outages, [have raised the possibility load-shedding](#) as well, confirming that these are very real contingency plans and that we're being prepared for them. The stated concern is invariably that local or regional gas shortages will cause the widespread activation of electrical heaters and overwhelm the grid, though how exactly this could be anticipated far enough in advanced for scheduled

outages is unclear to me.

Prices have increased vastly across the economy, and estimates are that [up to 60 percent of German households are now committing their entire monthly income to cover the rising cost of living](#). The depth of the crisis isn't fully known, as loan defaults and similar economic signals won't begin in earnest until 2023.

And that's it. There are no plans from the government, beyond doubtful price-tinkering, regulatory schemes and targeted financial assistance. If you look at those news outlets most guilty of Corona hysteria, like the state-funded Tagesschau or the Süddeutsche Zeitung, you find extremely muted reporting on the crisis. Instead, hyperventilation about Ukraine continues to dominate headlines; pieces on the energy apocalypse are either misleading items like this one, [hailing a dip in gas prices](#), or [trivial write-ups about whether cities should cancel their Christmas lighting this year](#).

UPDATE: [The Danish Maritime Authority reports a drop in pressure in the undersea Nord Stream 2 pipeline](#), with gas bubbles appearing near the Baltic island of Bornholm, the site of the apparent rupture. The pipe had been filled with gas following its completion in November 2021, but Chancellor Olaf Scholz refused to certify its operation, and so it has remained out of service. Many conspiracy theories are possible here, in what will very likely turn out to be an act of sabotage.

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