

## Europe's Greens Hit Stormy Weather

*Europeans are moving away from "green" policies that caused energy prices to soar*

**By Michael Bastasch**

**Summary:** Thanks to rebellions among the people and second thoughts among the politicians, European nations are beginning to see the folly of "green" policies they have enacted. As skyrocketing energy costs throttle consumers and businesses, and even lead to deaths, Europeans are turning back to domestic, carbon-based energy sources like coal and natural gas. The new trend is also pushed along by fears of a newly aggressive Russia, whose current dominance in natural gas production threatens other nations' security.

It's been called the European counterpart to the Tea Party movement—a grassroots uprising across countries that are members of the European Union (EU), a rebellion against rule by elitist bureaucrats. And a major component driving Europeans to this revolt is those bureaucrats' "green" policies that hinder businesses of all sorts, raise electricity prices, and push people into so-called "energy poverty."

In Britain, where cold weather caused 31,000 deaths last winter, a political party that defiantly promotes a scientific approach to the Global Warming issue—and so is smeared by environmental extremists—has become the fastest-growing party in modern British history. Indeed, that party, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), recently placed first, with 28%, in the United Kingdom's elections for seats in the European Parliament, while Britain's current ruling parties came in 3rd place and 4th place.

The Tea Party is a grassroots, populist, free market-oriented movement, firmly in the mainstream of U.S. politics. Anti-EU



**The U.K. Independence Party, which some have likened to the Tea Party movement, won a historic victory in May with attacks on the European Union, EU bureaucrats, and high energy prices.**

groups vary ideologically, so the likening of the anti-EU revolt to the Tea Party is more accurate in some nations than others. While the UKIP, for instance, is in the political mainstream, anti-EU sentiment in some countries (Greece, for example) is centered in authoritarian parties.

Overall, anti-EU/anti-establishment parties won about one-third of the seats in the European Parliament, which represents citizens of the 28 countries of the EU, headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. Political commentator John McLaughlin summed up the election: "The losers: Europe's elite, Brussels bureaucrats, and professional politicians."

Meanwhile: Throwing a spotlight on the effect of unnecessary and counterproductive regulations in the energy sector is the aggression of Russia, which, under the leadership of former KGB officer Vladi-

mir Putin, has invaded and dismembered the neighboring countries of Georgia and Ukraine and now threatens to dominate Europe.

Largely due to Europe's failure to develop its own energy resources, the continent relies on Russia for a third of its oil and 40% of its natural gas. That dependence on Russian energy renders Europe incapable of responding appropriately to Putin's criminality and aggression.

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## Tough days for Europe

Europe is in a tight spot. Europeans are suffering from high energy costs driven by environmental regulations and “green” subsidies—subsidies that are considered destructive even by many environmentalists and by the United Nations.

According to the EU statistical agency Eurostat, electricity prices rose 20 percent in Europe from 2008 to late 2013. In the period 2012-2013 alone, Germany saw power prices jump 9.2 percent. France saw power prices increase 9.6 percent and Greece saw power prices skyrocket 19.7 percent.

Spain, once a poster child for “green” energy, actually saw its power prices plummet 8.8 percent, because its new government has been aggressively cutting energy subsidies to lower power costs.\* European businesses have been warning about de-industrialization because of “green” energy subsidies and the probability of rolling blackouts that could hit the continent if too much wind power and solar power is forced onto the grid. “We’ve failed on all accounts: Europe is threatened by a blackout like in New York a few years ago, prices are shooting up higher, and our carbon emissions keep increasing,” GDF Suez CEO Gérard Mestrallet said last year.

The EU and some of its key member states, however, have seen the error of their ways—at least, to some extent—and

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are now adjusting their energy policies to try to rein in rising energy costs and boost economic growth.

## Cap-and-trade goes bust

One European policy that has been favored by U.S. elites, and pointed to as an example, is the EU’s cap-and-trade system. Such a policy puts a price on emissions of carbon dioxide and provides for buying and selling permits whose owners are allowed to emit the harmless, invisible gas in the course of their business. People who needed the permits for, say, factories would be able to buy them from people who had permits and didn’t need them, with sales occurring directly or through brokers.

President Obama supports such a policy for the U.S. In fact, he was discussing his cap-and-trade plan in a 2008 interview when he said his policies would cause electricity prices to “necessarily skyrocket.” But the President was unable to push such a plan through, even when his party controlled both houses of Congress. Now he’s attempting to use Environmental Protection Agency regulations to achieve the same result, in some cases by forcing states to adopt their own cap-and-trade systems.

Fortunately, we now have the European experience in cap-and-trade as an object lesson in how such a system works. In January 2013, the EU’s carbon trading market took a nose-dive, losing 40 percent of its value in a single day. The weak level of economic growth meant that power demand and production dwindled, while the centrally planned carbon trading system kept spewing out permits, creating a huge oversupply that crashed the market.

How could this happen? It’s simple: so-called “central planners”—bureaucrats—rarely do a good job of setting prices or determining how much supply the market needs. For political reasons, the EU refused to delay the sale of 900 million emissions permits. That put an excess 54 billion carbon dioxide emissions permits in the EU’s trading system, driving prices

to a record low of 2.81 euros per metric ton, which was a whopping 91 percent below the record high price reached in April 2006. “The market is panicking, really,” Daniel Rossetto, managing director of Climate Mundial, told Bloomberg at the time of the crash.

At the same time the EU’s carbon trading system was becoming monetarily worthless, environmentalists feared it had also become worthless for their agenda. Permits were so cheap that, even with the caps, businesses were finding it cheaper to use coal and natural gas for energy, rather than sources like wind and solar. “Negative news and events relating to the EU ETS [Emissions Trading System] continue to pile up and come from all sides. So it is not at all surprising that EUA [European allowance unit] prices have fallen and have continued to be quite volatile,” according to a statement from the bank Société Générale. “The EU ETS has become a one-way market, spiraling down.”

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\* **Editor's note:** Spain provides an object lesson in what happens to a country when terrorism, and a government’s botched response to it, leads to the election of a left-wing government. In 2004, the ruling People’s Party had been favored to win the national election. However, three days before the election, an Al Qaeda-linked terrorist group carried out a series of bombings that killed 191. (Spain, which was once Muslim-occupied, has been a top priority of Islamofascists for hundreds of years.) Then, in a maneuver similar to the Obama administration’s Benghazi cover-up prior to the 2012 election, the Spanish government tried to blame the attacks on Basque separatists rather than Al Qaeda. When the deception was exposed, the Socialists were swept into power and proceeded to give Al Qaeda what it wanted: They adopted policies, including radical environmentalist measures, that wrecked the nation’s economy. Finally, in 2011, with the economy in ruins, the people of Spain voted out the Socialists, and the new government reversed course on many “green” policies.—*SJA*

The market slightly rebounded, but only for a short time.

The ETS suffered another huge plunge in April 2013, when the European Parliament again rejected a measure to take carbon credits off the market. ETS permit prices and German energy prices (to the temporary relief of its beleaguered citizens) hit eight-year-lows. Carbon prices fell 43 percent in one day to a new record low of 2.63 euros per metric ton. German power prices fell three percent that day, to 39.60 euros per megawatt hour. “This is a crisis in European leadership on the climate issue,” Anthony Hogley, head of the climate change practice at the London law firm Norton Rose, told the *New York Times*. “We have reached the stage where the EU ETS has ceased to be an effective environmental tool.”

The environmentalists were worried, as were “green energy” producers. But while environmentalists and crony capitalists fretted over low carbon dioxide prices, businesses and households received some relief as utilities were able to switch from relying on wind and solar power to using efficient, carbon-intensive fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas.

Note that, even with cap-and-trade and taxpayer subsidies, people rushed to return to traditional carbon-based fuels once the opportunity arose. That fact demonstrates the serious lack of competitiveness of “green energy.”

After months of struggling, the EU’s Parliament finally voted to take carbon credits off the market. On February 11, 2014, ahead of an announcement that the EU would delay 900 million carbon credits from the first three years of the third trading period, prices hit a 13-month high of 6.90 euros per metric ton. The EU began withholding those permits in mid-March. *BusinessGreen* reported in late May that prices had fallen slightly from February to about 5 euros per metric ton, drastically below the April 2006 high. Analysts are wary, predicting that, even with the withholding of permits, the EU ETS will suffer more problems in the future.

## Germany’s green nightmare

Perhaps the biggest “green” basket case in Europe is Germany. That country is known for its well-built cars and world-class beer, and for an economy that has been strong compared to many other European nations. Indeed, Germany has been counted upon to bail out other European countries in trouble.

But Germany is being weighed down by skyrocketing energy costs. Energy bills have risen so high that the German newspaper *Der Spiegel* quipped recently that electricity is becoming a “luxury good.”

Germany’s energy mandate compels the country to produce 80 percent of its power from “green energy” sources by 2050, which is a tall order even for an advanced economy that can take such a hit better than most. The country received about 25 percent of its power from “green energy” in 2013, but at a huge cost.

Feed-in tariffs to promote non-carbon-based energy have been driving up energy bills in Germany for years. Households and businesses are now paying tens of billions of euros to subsidize unreliable, costly power. Things were made even worse for Germans in the wake of the 2011 Fukushima, Japan nuclear accident, when Germany decided to phase out its use of nuclear power.

The surcharges that Germans pay for power quintupled from 2009 to 2013, the Daily Caller News Foundation reported last October. That cost consumers about \$26 billion last year alone. “German consumers already pay the highest electricity prices in Europe. But because the government is failing to get the costs of its new energy policy under control, rising prices are already on the horizon,” reported *Der Spiegel*. “Electricity is becoming a luxury good in Germany.”

“The promotion of green electricity will cost our citizens (\$32.5 billion) next year, which is a lot of money that could otherwise be spent on buying new cars, furniture or on restaurant visits,” Michael Fuchs, deputy leader of the Christian Democratic Union (Chancellor Angela Merkel’s political party), said last year.

The other problem with Germany’s reliance on “green energy” is its unreliability. Wind and solar cannot be relied upon for what’s called base-load power—the power that must run at a constant rate to provide a minimum amount of electricity for people to use. “Green energy” can sometimes be used to meet peak demand, but only if the wind happens to blow or the sun to shine.

Wind and solar also typically generate their peak amounts of power when demand is not spiking. This means that wind and solar can put too much power on the grid, which is why operators must often shut down “green energy” operations to keep the grid safe.

But even when wind turbines and solar panels are shut off, consumers still have to pay for their non-production of energy. Paying for real power from coal and natural gas is much preferable to paying for theoretical power from wind and solar facilities that are offline.

Germans are definitely not happy about this. Even Angela Merkel and her governing coalition are debating reforms to the system.

## Green policies aren’t green

Germany’s expensive, bureaucratic “green energy” programs have also failed in another way: They have done little if anything to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. So even if one accepts environmentalists’ theories about Global Warming, these policies have failed to stop it, even as they have heavily burdened ordinary citizens’ pocketbooks.

With power prices high due to “green energy” policies, and with nuclear power no longer an option for German power producers, many utilities and energy companies have switched back to the only cost-effective power source left: coal. In November 2013, Germany opened up its first coal-fired power plant in eight years. German power companies have plans to bring 10 more hard-coal plants online in the coming years to boost German coal use by 33 percent.

Coal use has actually grown so much in Germany over the past few years that the eastern German village of Atterwasch may be bulldozed over in order to strip-mine the area for lignite, or brown coal (soft brown combustible sedimentary rock formed from naturally compressed peat). “They would tear everything down, dig up the cemetery, blow up the church and cut down all the trees,” Christian Huschga, a resident from Atterwasch, told *National Geographic*.

“Coal prices recently fell to their lowest price for over four years in October and carbon prices are half what they were two years ago, making coal-burn extremely attractive to generators in terms of profitability,” energy analyst Gary Hornby of the Inenco Group Ltd. told Bloomberg.

According to Eurostat, German carbon emissions actually rose two percent from 2012 to 2013, which is not exactly what Merkel had in mind for her green revolution. (In the U.S., emissions are plummeting due to a combination of a weak economy and the use of natural gas obtained through advanced techniques related to fracking—techniques that, ironically, environmentalists oppose.)

Germany’s carbon dioxide emissions have been rising for the past three years, despite the nation’s spending nearly \$140 billion on “green energy” since 2005. The German newspaper *Die Zeit* reported in March 2014 that Germany is on track to miss its emissions reduction goal for the year 2020. The “German government wanted to decrease the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>—also through the transition to renewable energy,” reports *Die Zeit*. “However our chart shows the opposite is the case. Greenhouse gas emissions have been increasing for three years in Germany, 1.2 percent for last year.”

In 2009, Germany emitted 913 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, mainly due to a lagging economy. Last year, the country emitted 951 million metric tons of carbon dioxide despite spending about \$138 billion over the past decade to “go green.”

And yet even as the nation has used more inexpensive coal power, German “green” taxes keep energy prices about three times higher than in the U.S. and about 50 percent higher than the rest of Europe.

### Freezing to death in Britain

It’s hard to imagine thousands of people freezing to death every winter because they can’t afford to heat their homes, but that is a reality in the United Kingdom. The *Financial Times* reported in November:

The Office for National Statistics estimates that there were 31,000 excess winter deaths in England and Wales in 2012-13, a rise of 29 per cent on the previous year.

Last March was the coldest since 1962, with an average temperature of 2.2°C, and the second coldest since 1910.

The majority of the excess deaths, 25,000, occurred among those aged 75 or above.

While cold weather is linked to an increase in the number of deaths, hypothermia is not the main cause. The majority of deaths are linked to strokes and heart and respiratory diseases.

Why is this happening in one of the world’s wealthiest economies? The answer is simple: poor energy policy. The UK sits on top of trillions of cubic feet of natural gas locked away in underground shale formations, but the country has been slow to take advantage of it.

Instead, the UK has opted to rely on pricey natural gas from the North Sea and the Netherlands, a practice which has driven up household energy bills. The *UK Telegraph* reports that gas prices have risen 190 percent in the last decade and electricity prices have shot up 120 percent during that time.

UK families now spend nearly 30 percent of their income on “housing, water, gas, electricity and petrol [gasoline].” And the number of families stuck in what is called “energy poverty” remains staggeringly

high at 4.5 million, according to government statistics. (The UK population is roughly one-fifth that of the U.S.)

Pricey gas is only part of the problem. Britain is dealing with an ever-increasing “green energy” tax that is imperiling the electrical grid.

Politicians have responded as you would expect—by trying to shift the blame. Some are trying to blame power companies for the country’s energy woes. UK officials are launching a probe into price collusion between utilities to see if they were working together to keep prices high, a move that utilities say will delay critical grid investments and could lead to blackouts.

Politicians have been calling for energy price freezes because costs have risen so high. Ed Miliband, head of the opposition Labour Party, says that, compared to current Prime Minister David Cameron, he would put a longer freeze on energy prices and further regulate utilities.

Cameron leads the Conservative Party (which, on the U.S. spectrum, consists mostly of politicians who would be called moderates and RINOs) and has long supported policies based on Global Warming theory. Nevertheless, he told his Cabinet ministers to “cut the green crap” (reduce environmentalist taxes) in order to lower people’s energy bills by 110 pounds sterling (\$185) per year, according to the *Daily Mail*. While Cameron’s government has said it’s still committed to fighting global warming, it is scrambling to cut people’s energy bills.

“Britain is still the sixth leading economy in the world and that millions of people are struggling to pay their heating bills is a scandal,” Dr. Benny Peiser, director of the UK’s Global Warming Policy Foundation, told the Daily Caller News Foundation. “People are dying, about 25,000 to 30,000 every winter as a result of the cold,” Peiser added. “Many hundreds of thousands of people only survive because they stay in bed.”

Probably the best long-term policy for cutting energy bills in the UK is to em-

brace the practice of fracking, which is the most efficient way to obtain natural gas. But fracking is still heavily opposed by many in the UK, and there has been little progress on getting companies to drill on a large scale. "This in a way is an indirect policy impact as well," Peiser said. "Gas prices would not be as high in Britain had we seen shale development over the last five years."

Last year, the UK Independence Party (UKIP) came in third in local elections (elections for council seats), which represented the biggest surge for a minor party in British politics in more than 60 years. In May 2014, UKIP became the first party in over a century, other than the Labour Party or the Conservative Party, to come in first in a UK-wide election.

UKIP's rise is an encouraging sign, because the party is one of the few major parties in the world to take a scientific approach to the Global Warming issue. For this position, the party was recently attacked by the leftist newspaper *The Guardian*:

Most bizarrely, [UKIP's official] energy policy document includes a section dedicated to unadulterated denial of the science of climate change, stating that "the slight warming in the last hundred years is entirely consistent with well-established, long-term natural climate cycles," and "there is simply no need to appeal to CO<sub>2</sub> as an explanation for natural variation." It then suggests that carbon dioxide is not "a pollutant," but is instead "a natural trace gas in the atmosphere which is essential to plant growth and life on earth."

Each of those statements is scientific fact, of course, which is why UKIP's position so infuriates environmentalists.

### Turning to fracking?

Fracking involves injecting water, sand, and some chemicals into underground shale formations to extract natural gas and oil more than a mile beneath the surface. In the U.S., the advent of fracking has led to an energy boom which, unless

environmentalists can stop it, will set the country on the course to energy independence and to becoming the world's largest energy producer.

Environmentalists use irrational fear to achieve their objectives. Films like Josh Fox's *Gasland* series are aimed at frightening people about possible water contamination and air quality issues, but so far even the federal government has been unable to link fracking to such problems.

In Europe, the environmentalists have the upper hand in the political debate, and for many years they convinced the EU and most EU nations that fracking was best left to the Americans. Now, however, with Putin invading Ukraine, the dynamic has changed, and even the EU is rethinking its position on fracking and natural gas exports.

The Ukraine crisis has also helped to bolster calls to step up fracking in the UK, though British companies seem to be skittish about making investments without subsidies and assurances from the government. "We've known that there's a big potential for oil and gas explorations across the country but particularly in terms of oil in the Weald Basin," Andrew Austin, CEO of the energy company IGAS, told the BBC. "There's been a long history of oil and gas exploration in this area. We as a company produce oil and gas from around 20 sites across that area. Around 40 million barrels have been recovered from that area to date."

### Where do they go from here?

Europe's policies that were supposed to fight Global Warming have had no effect on the climate but have caused economic suffering and made Europeans more vulnerable to dictators who sit on vast energy reserves.

Modern economies need cheap, abundant, and reliable sources of energy to lift people out of poverty and hardship and into prosperity. EU energy policies have raised power prices, slowed economic growth, and made people more reliant on Russian oligarchs for their everyday needs.

Europe needs to get over its irrational environmentalism and abandon its futile crusade to manipulate the world's climate. The European Union needs to look to eastern members like Poland for leadership on energy policy. Those countries are opening up oil and gas reserves to fracking and other forms of energy development, and, more importantly, are still using cheap, reliable coal power.

Fracking can help bring down staggeringly high natural gas prices in Europe and make heating one's home affordable again, so that thousands will not needlessly freeze to death every winter.

Germany should also reconsider its decision to take its nuclear power plants offline.

European bureaucrats' policies on energy are based on the goal of accumulating political power, not generating electrical power. Global Warming is simply a convenient excuse to further regulate peoples' lives in order to fulfill those bureaucrats' utopian vision and satisfy their hunger for power.

It's time for Europe to stop "going green" and start "getting real."

*Michael Bastasch is a reporter for the Daily Caller News Foundation in Washington, D.C.*

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**Many thanks,  
Terrence Scanlon  
President**

# GreenNotes

We've reported before on the "Richard Windsor" scandal: the use of secret e-mail accounts by officials of the **Environmental Protection Agency** in an apparent effort to hide their collusion with environmental extremist groups. ("Richard Windsor" was the secret identity of EPA Administrator **Gina McCarthy**.) The **Competitive Enterprise Institute**, a free-market think tank, has sued the EPA for access to e-mails and text messages—messages that, under the law, must be preserved, but which EPA officials say are missing. Now CEI has sued the **National Security Agency**, which was involved in spying on Americans' phone records. Why? Because in the course of monitoring Americans' electronic communications, the NSA may have scooped up information about those "missing" EPA text messages. CEI's **Chris Horner** jokes: "We may have found the silver lining of the NSA affair."

Some liberals and leftists who actually care about the world's poor are beginning to rebel against Global Warming extremism. Dr. **Caleb Rossiter**, associate fellow at the left-wing **Institute for Policy Studies** (IPS), noted in a **Wall Street Journal** op-ed, "Every year environmental groups celebrate a night when institutions in developed countries (including my own university) turn off their lights as a protest against fossil fuels. They say their goal is to get **America** and **Europe** to look from space like **Africa**: dark, because of minimal energy use. But that is the opposite of what's desired by Africans I know. They want Africa at night to look like the developed world, with lights in every little village and with healthy people, living longer lives, sitting by those lights. Real years added to real lives should trump the minimal impact that African carbon emissions could have on a theoretical catastrophe." Rossiter, a statistician, notes the scientific fact that "climate change" models have failed, but he is concerned that "The left wants to stop industrialization—even if the hypothesis of catastrophic, man-made global warming is false."

Surprise! After publishing the op-ed, Rossiter received an e-mail from IPS informing him that "we are terminating your position . . . your views on key issues, including climate science, climate justice, and many aspects of U.S. policy on Africa, diverge so significantly from ours."

Likewise, **Lennart Bengtsson**, the well-respected former director of the **Max Planck Institute for Meteorology** in **Germany**, joined the pro-science **Global Warming Policy Foundation** and suffered the consequences. The German news-magazine **Der Spiegel** noted, "Bengtsson insists that even close colleagues shunned him. He says that one research partner, apparently fearing damage to his reputation, withdrew from a study they had been conducting together. . . . The scientific journal **Environmental Research Letters** declined to publish a study he had authored predicting a milder greenhouse effect. Peer reviewers described the report's findings as 'less than helpful'"—in other words, reviewers worried his results might end up hurting the Warming cause. "Climate researchers are now engaged in a debate about whether their science is being crippled by a compulsion to conform," the magazine added. "They wonder if pressure to reach a consensus is too great. They ask if criticism is being suppressed. No less is at stake than the credibility of research evidence for climate change and the very question of whether climate research is still reliable."

These reports of so-called Climate McCarthyism are important because **Warmers** use the alleged "scientific consensus" on Warming to persuade people of the rightness of their cause. They say, in effect: Ignore the actual scientific evidence in front of you, and listen to the experts—experts who must go along with the Warmers if they know what's good for them. It's the "scientific consensus," **Mafia**-style.

The screenshot shows the website of the National Center for Science Education (NCSE). The main heading is "Track the denialist NIPCC mailing". Below this, there is a call to action: "Please fill out the form below to let us know whether or not you got the packet or not so we can track the progress of this mailing effort." There are several links and buttons, including "Track the denialist NIPCC mailing", "Please fill out the form below to let us know whether or not you got the packet or not so we can track the progress of this mailing effort.", and "Help NCSE Buy the materials you need from our Amazon wishlist". There is also a section for "LOCAL AND STATE GROUPS" with a list of states: Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Nebraska, New Mexico, New Mexico CESDE, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas.

Last month, we reported on the **National Center for Science Education**, which, despite its name, promotes the dumbing-down of science education. Now NCSE is conducting a campaign to stop teachers from having access to the work of the **Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change**, a group of scientists who have compiled thousands of pages of research exposing Warmers' errors and who sent that research to teachers and the media. As seen at left, NCSE's website encourages people to "Track the denialist NIPCC mailing. . . . NCSE is tracking this mailing and working to ensure it doesn't harm science education, but we need your help." NCSE accuses the scientists of being "funded by **Big Tobacco** and **Big Oil**." Said NCSE: "This mailing undermines science education and subverts the strong and consistent guidance teachers increasingly receive from statewide science standards, textbooks, and professional societies: teach climate change throughout the curriculum. . . . Please fill out the form below so we can know who was targeted, and who escaped the mailing. Please also urge your friends and colleagues who may have been targeted to do the same."