EU TRADE EXPLORER

Market evolution: Liquefied petroleum gas (CN 2711) — 2015–2025

Introduction

The EU’s external trade in petroleum gas and other gaseous hydrocarbons (CN 2711) underwent a dramatic transformation between 2015 and 2025. Covering natural gas (both gaseous and liquefied), LPG, and other gaseous hydrocarbons, the product group is pivotal for energy supply, industrial feedstock, and household use. Over the decade, the EU’s import bill more than doubled, the partner landscape was radically redrawn, and export flows grew strongly towards Eastern neighbours. This report identifies three central dynamics: a fundamental re-routing of imports from Russian pipeline gas to LNG, a surge in EU gas exports to the east, and a price shock of historic proportions that continues to reverberate.

A seismic shift in import sourcing: From pipeline dependency to LNG diversification

Russia’s footprint shrinks dramatically after the 2022 price windfall

Russia long dominated EU gas imports, supplying **€12.9 bn** in 2015 and peaking at **€48.3 bn in 2022**, but by 2025 the figure had fallen to **€13.2 bn** – a mere **2.5 %** increase over the entire period (Top Partners). In volume terms, Russian deliveries declined even more steeply: from **38.5 million t** in 2015 to **18.7 million t** in 2025, confirming that the high 2022 value was entirely a price-driven spike. The product breakdown shows that the core of the reduction occurred in **natural gas in gaseous state (271121)**, which fell from **82.7 million t** to **63.1 million t** overall, reflecting the EU’s deliberate decoupling from Russian pipeline gas.

The American LNG revolution and the rise of alternative suppliers

The vacuum was filled mainly by the United States, whose exports to the EU leaped from a mere **€0.8 bn** in 2015 to **€28.4 bn** in 2025 – an extraordinary **+3 329 %** increase. In the peak year 2022, US shipments reached **€53.8 bn**, surpassing every traditional partner. Other LNG-oriented suppliers also expanded sharply:

Partner	2015 (€ bn)	2022 (€ bn)	2025 (€ bn)	Change 2015→2025
United States	0.8	53.8	28.4	+3 329.5 %
Algeria	8.7	24.1	14.5	+66.5 %
Norway	6.1	26.6	10.8	+78.3 %
Qatar	2.8	16.1	3.9	+38.2 %
Azerbaijan	~0	15.6	4.6	new supplier
Nigeria	1.2	4.5	2.3	+91.2 %

These flows offset the decline in Russian volumes and underscored the structural shift towards **liquefied natural gas (271111)**, which soared from **20.4 million t** in 2015 to **65.2 million t** in 2025 – effectively becoming the dominant import form (Product Compare).

A more balanced but costlier import basket

The HHI concentration index for imports fell from **2 185** in 2015 to **1 925** in 2025, with its lowest point (**1 551**) recorded in 2022, the year of maximum diversification (Concentration). While the supplier base is now less concentrated, the overall import bill has grown enormously: total import value rose from **€40.1 bn** in 2015 to **€87.9 bn** in 2025 (+119 %), whereas volumes increased by only **21 %** (Trade Overview). The unit price more than doubled from **€323/tonne** to **€528/tonne**, keeping the EU’s gas import bill structurally high.

Export growth and a new Eastern orientation

Ukraine becomes the dominant export destination

EU exports of CN 2711 rose from **€1.9 bn** to **€4.2 bn** (+123.5 %) over the decade, but the geographic pattern changed radically. Ukraine emerged as the undisputed top market, its purchases jumping from **€0.12 bn** to **€1.46 bn** (+1 106 %). By 2025 Ukraine accounted for roughly **35 %** of all extra-EU exports in this product group. Moldova, too, registered explosive growth: from just **€7.1 million** to **€614 million** (+8 576 %), driven by large-scale deliveries of natural gas in gaseous state.

Export portfolio becomes increasingly concentrated

As a few destinations boomed, export concentration measured by HHI surged from **550** in 2015 to **1 950** in 2025 (+254.8 %). This was propelled not only by Ukraine and Moldova but also by steep increases to Serbia (€32 million → €172 million), Norway (€48 million → €163 million), and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom (€179 million → €301 million). Traditional partners like Morocco and Tunisia grew only moderately.

EU re-exports of gaseous gas expand sharply

The product breakdown of exports reveals a remarkable rise in **natural gas in gaseous state (271121)** from **0.63 million t** to **3.24 million t**, while LNG exports (271111) actually contracted from **1.69 million t** to **0.82 million t**. This indicates that the EU increasingly uses its pipeline infrastructure to re-export gas, presumably to supply Eastern neighbours and to manage regional balances.

Price upheaval and the legacy of the 2022 energy crisis

The 2021–2022 price explosion across all product categories

The most violent price shock of the period hit between 2021 and 2022. The average import price (unit value) skyrocketed from **€195/tonne** in 2020 to **€1 239/tonne** in 2022 – a +534 % increase in two years. All suppliers and all sub-products were affected, but the shock was particularly acute for **natural gas in gaseous state** (271121), whose import price surged from **€173/tonne** to **€1 316/tonne**, and for **liquefied natural gas (271111)**, from **€192/tonne** to **€1 284/tonne** (Product Compare).

Post-crisis prices stay elevated, reshaping trade values

Although prices retreated after 2022, they have not returned to pre-crisis levels. In 2025, the overall import unit value was still **€528/tonne**, **63.5 %** above the 2015 level. This elevated price regime is the primary reason why the import bill remains close to **€88 bn** despite volumes only slightly above 2015 levels. Exports followed a similar path: unit value climbed **65.5 %**, from **€379/tonne** to **€627/tonne**, keeping export revenues inflated even when physical flows were only 36 % higher.

Volatility remains highest for new and marginal trading partners

The price shock transmitted highly uneven volatility across partners. For imports, the coefficient of variation of volumes was especially high for the **United States (0.85)**, **Azerbaijan (0.97)** and **Egypt (0.91)**, while traditional suppliers like **Norway (0.11)** and **Algeria (0.14)** exhibited far greater stability (Volatility). On the export side, **Moldova (1.70)**, **Gibraltar (1.29)** and the **United Kingdom (0.96)** recorded extreme volume swings, reflecting their rapid transformation into large-scale recipients. The existence of price-shock events – notably for US imports (+228 % price shift in 2021) and Norwegian imports (+336 %) – underscores how the EU's new supply map comes with greater exposure to spot-market price spikes.

Conclusion

The decade from 2015 to 2025 reshaped EU trade in petroleum gas and gaseous hydrocarbons more than any similar period in recent history. The gradual decline of Russian piped gas turned into a strategic rupture after 2022, and the gap was filled by a rapid expansion of LNG imports, chiefly from the United States, Norway, Algeria and new entrants like Azerbaijan. This restructuring improved supplier diversification but came at a permanent cost increase, embedding a structurally higher trade deficit. Simultaneously, EU exports of gaseous fuels boomed towards Ukraine and Moldova, reflecting the Union's new role as a gas distribution hub for its Eastern neighbourhood. Price volatility, both during the 2022 crisis and in its aftermath, has become a defining feature of the market, particularly for the new and most dynamic trade corridors. The data suggest that the EU's gas trade is now more flexible politically, yet more expensive and more exposed to global price movements than at the start of the period.

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