

A Greener CEE: A Dream That Just Might Be

When we thought that the year 2020 will go down as the *annus terribilis* of the century, 2022 came, and what has already been challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic, gave way to yet another terrifying crisis. With the brazen Russian aggression on Ukraine and the war that has ensued, the EU border has become a battlefield of core European values pitted against terror and authoritarianism. The energy crisis followed, a painful side-effect of the war, with the spikes in energy prices reaching unprecedented levels. The citizens of Europe – regardless of which part of the continent they inhabit – once again started to fear for their livelihood.

The challenges lying ahead are real, and the CEE must brace itself for the hurdles it will need to overcome. This being said, let us remember that – to quote H.D. Thoreau – “*Not till we are lost, in other words not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations*”. This is precisely what happened in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine – Europeans have not only discovered that they are much more united than we may have initially expected, but also that by coming together and learning from one another we may emerge as a more resilient and integrated community.

Of course, the situation is far from ideal – the war in Ukraine continues, winter energy shortages are to be expected, populists still thrive in the region – and yet, not all is lost. Far from it – by taking on board and embracing innovative and progressive solutions, moving away from coal, investing in a sustainable energy transformation, and utilizing the potential and lessons learned by other member states, we may still come out of the geopolitical and energy crisis much stronger.

Nevertheless, let us not forget that the road ahead will not be an easy one. Still, *memores acti prudentes future*¹, we must prevail, as giving way to terror and aggression cannot be accepted as part of our reality – even though we will likely (and literally) *pay the price* for solidarity. This is the reason why in this issue of the *4liberty.eu Review* we are exploring various aspects of green development as a way forward for the CEE region, attempting to understand what long-term advantages, as well as short-term drawbacks, we might need to face. We trust that our Reader will find here not only captivating ideas, but also a source of empowerment – to be able to brave the storms of the energy crisis that is now trundling through Europe.

Stay energized,



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¹Latin for “mindful of things done, aware of things to come”.