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When an Eastern-European Problem Becomes a Pan-European One: The Metaphorical Construction of Europe's 2022 Energy Crisis

Introduction

Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine prompted EU member states to impose sanctions against Russia, including a range of economic restrictions on trade, finance, technology, dual-use goods, transport and luxury goods. The sanctions also covered a ban on the import or transfer of seaborne crude oil and certain petroleum products from Russia to the EU, a de-SWIFTing of several

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Russian banks, and the suspension of the broadcasting activities and licenses of several Kremlin-backed disinformation outlets (*Timeline – EU sanctions against Russia*, n.d.). Individual sanctions were also imposed, including travel bans, visa measures and asset freezes.

In response, Russia retaliated by weaponizing the energy sector. Russia's ambition was to take advantage of the EU's heavy dependence on imports of Russian fossil energy, particularly gas, thus hoping to divide the EU. This policy precipitated a European energy and electricity market crisis (for details, see Borrell, 2023; *EU sanctions against Russia explained*, n.d.).

As will transpire in our analysis, various measures were taken by both the European Commission (EC) and EU member states to address the power crunch, including boosting gas storage, diversifying energy sources, and potential rationing. Various other implications of the energy crunch were also discussed, exposing its impact on consumers and the efficacy of government policies in mitigating its effects. The implications involved risks to Europe's economic prosperity, its transatlantic alliance with the US, and security reassessments. The narrative also raised concerns about potential increases in mortality rates due to rising energy costs, particularly in cold winter conditions.

All these events and ideas were mediatized and constructed through the eyes of different media outlets, thus imposing a discourse-based viewpoint on the political and economic shifts taking place. This paper analyses *The Economist*'s narrative of the energy crisis in Europe throughout the year 2022, that is, immediately before Russia's invasion of Ukraine and after Russia cut gas supplies to the EU in response to the sanctions. Our major objective is to explain how and why this newspaper constructed this power crunch metaphorically.

Objectives, data, theoretical background

Given its long-standing history of editorial and political independence, *The Economist* is viewed here as a media outlet of global impact – an undisputed factor in shaping public opinion on international affairs worldwide. The newspaper's materials are based on verified facts and statistics and present commentaries offering a multitude of viewpoints on the international topical issues examined (see Ishpekova-Bratanova, 2021, pp. 156–160).

Our dataset comprises 27 commentaries on the topic of the 2022 energy crisis, all published in *The Economist* in 2022. The extracted newspaper article samples are coded from E1 to E27 (see Appendix 1).

Our main objective is to trace the discursive and cognitive mechanisms (i.e., conceptual metaphors and metonymies, metaphorical scenarios, mini-narratives) through which *The Economist* newspaper frames the debate about the energy crisis and its implications for the European continent and international affairs at large. Another objective is to establish if this media outlet lays emphasis on the fact that the crisis was caused by the military conflict in the Eastern parts of Europe, or if it constructs the crisis as a pan-European phenomenon of uniform significance for the whole continent.

This study is carried out within the theoretical framework of Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), which presents a cross-fertilization of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Charteris-Black defines CMA as "an approach to the analysis of metaphors that aims to identify the intentions and ideologies underlying language use", outlining three stages in his approach: "First metaphors are identified, then they are interpreted and then they are explained" (Charteris-Black, 2011, p. 26). Thus, the identification of conceptual metaphors (CMs) can lead to an explanation of the ideological motivation of the language used.

Importantly, as Honohan (2008, p. 69) observes, metaphors do not simply embellish political language but play a part in the conceptual structuring of the field of politics by highlighting certain aspects of social life and disregarding others. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 156) similarly argue that metaphors create realities for us, and a metaphor may be a guide for future action. "Such actions will, of course, fit the metaphor. This will, in turn, reinforce the power of the metaphor to make experience coherent. In this sense, metaphors can be self-fulfilling prophecies" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 156).

By employing CMA in our analysis, we focus on the reality-constructing power that metaphors have. More specifically, this research investigates conceptual scenarios used in the mediatized construction of the 2022 energy crisis. It analyses the organization of source concepts into mini-narratives or "scenarios" that dominate the discourse manifestations of source domains.

As Musolff (2004, p. 17) claims, a scenario is "a set of standard assumptions made by competent members of a discourse community". Musolff's "scenario" builds on Fillmore's notion of a conceptual scene as "a coherent segment of human beliefs, actions, experiences or imaginings" that can be associated

with an underlying conceptual frame (Fillmore, 1975, p. 124). Musolff's metaphorical scenarios are "ensembles of little scenes or story lines" where we can find "conceptual patterns and configurations, which include assumptions about typical participants, roles, course of action" (Musolff, 2004, p. 17). Thus, a scenario can also be shown to carry evaluative and attitudinal biases related to particular political dispositions.

Analysis

All 2022 issues of *The Economist* were first scanned for content, thereby isolating 27 articles depicting the EU's energy crisis. From the articles, metaphorical samples were then extracted whose metaphoricity was tested in accordance with the procedures employed by Musolff (2023).

In terms of content, the isolated articles were found to encompass three major topics: the essence of the crisis, the economic and political implications of the crisis at the two aforementioned levels (i.e., the supranational and the national), and finally, the policies of both the EC and the national governments envisaging measures to tackle the crisis. Each section below addresses the scenario-based metaphorizations evident in the article samples.

SCENARIO ELEMENT 1: SYMPTOMS OF A DISEASE

E1 delves into Europe's energy crisis, exacerbated by surging natural gas prices and low stocks of energy reserves. The diverse FEARS and INSECURITIES across Europe are its key topic, ranging from concerns about strategic autonomy to worries about economic impacts and climate change. The looming threat of relying on Russian gas, compounded by geopolitical tensions, adds another layer of complexity. The article contends that Southern Europe's biggest "fear" is of a "sputtering recovery". The very headline of E1 instantiates metaphors of psychological and psychosomatic conditions: "Europe's energy crisis will trigger its worst neuroses. A surge in gas prices is the stuff of nightmares". Moreover, "[i]t is a crisis so all-encompassing that all parts of the EU will have to face up to their deepest apprehensions". The text touches another recurrent topic: the challenges faced by European policymakers in addressing the crisis and the possible political fallout, including Eurosceptic

sentiments and grassroots discontent. "Grassroots grumpiness linked to energy prices" metaphorically suggests the presence of psychological and emotional disease experienced by the populace due to rising energy costs. The very title of paragraph 7 is "Pump scare", again a metaphor of FEAR and FRIGHT. The mentioning of "Room 101" is a reference to George Orwell's "1984", where prisoners are confronted with their worst fear. It metaphorically represents a place of extreme psychological distress. And fear provokes phobia: "Finding Europeans' prevailing phobia is trickier: what spooks voters in one bit of the continent (asylum-seekers! deficits! Russia!) may be of scant concern to those on the other end".

FEAR appears in E5 as well. Russia's decision to stop supplying gas exposes Europe's vulnerability to gas supply disruptions, as the quoted example suggests: "Already it [Europe] was entertaining the possibility of sanctions on Russian oil. But it fears that it has the weaker hand". While Europe can easily find alternative sources of oil, replacing Russian gas is more challenging. The possibility of imposing sanctions on Russian oil is being considered, but there are concerns about its potential economic impact, particularly on countries heavily dependent on Russian gas. Another illness-related metaphor is that of WEAKNESS, VULNERABILITY and PAIN: "The case for reducing the flow of cash into Mr Putin's coffers therefore stands. And it is sufficient to justify the economic pain involved".

Exploring the potential consequences of a complete shutdown of Russian gas pipelines to Europe, **E2** discusses a scenario once deemed unthinkable but now seen as a plausible Russian tactic that will hurt the West: "If Russia does wield the gas weapon, how much would it hurt the West?" The article also dwells on some possible anti-crisis measures, such as increased competition, the interconnectedness of gas networks, and surplus liquefied natural gas (LNG) capacity, which offer some reassurance. These measures will be discussed in detail in the next section of the paper. "Energy shock" describes the potential consequences of a gas embargo as it suggests a sudden and disruptive event resembling a physical shock to the body. The phrase "spectre now haunting Europe" alludes to Karl Marx's famous opening line in "The Communist Manifesto", symbolizing a looming threat or danger that is causing fear and uncertainty.

E11 explores why a harsh winter is expected to be marked by economic turmoil and social unrest. The crisis, exacerbated by glitches at gas fields and Russia's deliberate throttling of supply, threatens to plunge Europe into recession and inflation, with potentially devastating consequences for the single market

and geopolitical stability. FEAR re-emerges: "Gaps in the wholesale price of gas in different EU countries suggest that firms fear a breakdown in the single market. Governments' debts are higher than ever. A stagflationary shock could raise fears of defaults or even of an Italian debt crisis that would threaten the entire euro zone". Moreover, this is where other health-related metaphors – CHOKING and THROTTLING – appear: "[…] it [winter] promises to be brutal and divisive because of an energy crisis that is rapidly worsening as Vladimir Putin strangles supplies of Russian gas". This imagery also appears in "As sanctions and Russian blackmail threaten to cut Europe from its main supplier, gas is the choke-point". The article also employs the metaphorical blend "gastastrophe", likening the energy crisis to a NATURAL DISASTER or a widespread calamity.

The fragility of Europe's energy security in the face of geopolitical tensions is highlighted in **E3**, which discusses Europe's vulnerability to energy supply disruptions. Lexemes denoting the source concept of MENTAL ILLNESS appear here: "The EU has been schizophrenic about gas". The metaphor evokes BEING CONFLICTED about Europe's short-term measures (including increased LNG imports and tapping emergency reserves), while long-term solutions (e.g., investment in renewable energy and infrastructure) remain in the lurch.

E17 is focused on the EC President's proposed measures to counter Russian tactics, including smoothing peaks in electricity demand and imposing windfall-profit charges on power generators. European governments are struggling to balance relief for citizens and firms with discouraging energy use. Germany is conceptualized as not only a weak person but also exhausted. The WEAKNESS conceptualization is applied to Italy as well: "Yet Italy remains a weak point in Europe's alliance against Russia". Central and Eastern European countries, despite strong support for Ukraine, face challenges due to high energy prices, with some reconsidering sanctions. If adopted, the EC's proposals will be implemented differently across countries, leading to contentious discussions within the EU.

Metaphors of WEAKNESS and VULNERABILITY appear also in **E22**, which highlights the critical importance of Western support for Ukraine in repelling Russia's invasion, particularly through arms shipments and intelligence-sharing. However, the article underscores a growing threat to this support stemming from Europe's mishandling of the energy crisis. While Europe's gas-storage facilities are well stocked and prices have decreased, complacency abounds. The text states that the current situation, despite its challenges, is "fuelling complacency". COMPLACENCY is compared to a FUEL

that exacerbates the problem and could lead to necessary actions being neglected. Governments have primarily focused on subsidizing energy prices rather than curbing demand or boosting supply, with some countries failing to cut consumption at all: "The alternative to cutting demand is boosting supply, but governments have been dragging their feet here, too". This metaphor implies countries' EXHAUSTION. What is more, plans to increase energy efficiency are piecemeal and unlikely to meet EU targets, while opportunities to tap into Europe's own gas reserves remain largely underutilized. The article criticizes Europe's failure to take advantage of its own gas reserves as "short-sighted", thus implying that European policymakers are failing to see the broader implications and consequences of their decisions.

As mentioned earlier in the paper, apart from WEAKNESS and VULNERABILITY, there is an abundance of lexemes evoking MENTAL ILLNESS, as in the following example: "With wholesale gas futures for early 2023 still climbing – up to more than €300 ($299) per mwh, from less than €30 last summer – and Europe's economic indicators blinking red, more will follow suit. That prospect is enough to drive economists to despair" (**E14**).

E14 examines the impact of rising energy prices on consumer behaviour and the efficacy of various government policies in mitigating the effects. As energy prices soar across Europe, politicians are under pressure to protect consumers while also reducing energy consumption to curb Russia's oil and gas revenues. Traditionally, economists have argued that price caps have minimal impact on fuel consumption, yet policies aimed at helping households cope with high prices, such as cash transfers unrelated to consumption, have proven more effective than price caps, which can actually lead to increased consumption.

The feeling of despair easily leads to MADNESS, FRENZY and ultimately to PANIC, as in the examples from the following articles. **E18** discusses Europe's energy crisis resulting from Russia's decision to shut down the Nord Stream pipeline amid Western sanctions. This action caused a surge in gas prices, leading to an electricity shock and economic turmoil. "It would be madness to make long-term decisions about redesigning power systems in the midst of chaos". Moreover, "governments are reacting with a mad scramble of handouts and interventions". Governments' responses are compared to a chaotic and frenzied scramble, much like a panicked reaction, whereby a sense of urgency and desperation is implied, suggesting a disorganized attempt to address the crisis and mitigate its impact.

E19 examines the recent surge in electricity prices in Europe due to factors such as loss of generating capacity, closure of plants, and drought conditions. As a result, electricity prices have skyrocketed, creating public outrage and concerns about the current pricing mechanism in European electricity markets. The challenges of designing an effective electricity market are analysed, including the need for investment in power plants, the integration of renewable energy, and the inability to store electricity at scale and states. Lexemes evoking MENTAL ILLNESS are yet again observed: "The recent frenzy about interventions in European electricity markets is an especially brutal example of this age-old dynamic".

E27 attempts to explain how "the West's price cap on Russian oil could roil energy markets", as its headline suggests. The text discusses America's complex energy policy regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which aims to balance keeping oil supply stable to maintain public support for sanctions while hurting Russia's war efforts by cutting off oil revenue. The phrase "asphyxiate Vladimir Putin's war machine" suggests that the oil revenue is essential for sustaining Russia's military operations, and cutting it off would effectively cripple Russia's ability to sustain the war. Moreover, "punched in the face" compares facing setbacks in energy policy to being physically assaulted. Thereby, the idea is conveyed of unexpected and forceful challenges or obstacles that disrupt the planned course of action. Apart from mental illnesses, instantiations of CMs of PHYSICAL PAIN are also rife in this article. Cutting off the remaining gas supply route to Europe would "wreak havoc", causing widespread destruction or chaos, resembling how a disease outbreak can wreak havoc on a population.

There are other examples in the narrative under investigation that contain the noun *pain*, the verb *hurt*, and verbs which presuppose PAIN, such as *squeeze*. **E10** considers Germany's prospect of soaring energy bills and potential economic meltdown. Gazprom, Russia's state-controlled gas company, has significantly reduced gas exports to Europe, exacerbating the crisis. "Gazprom, Russia's state-controlled gas Goliath, has been squeezing the Europeans for months". Another condition related to physical pain is that of CHOKING: "Russia is throttling Europe's supplies in revenge for its support for Ukraine". "Throttling" metaphorically describes the deliberate restriction or suppression of Europe's energy supplies, implying a forceful and aggressive action, which conveys the severity and hostile nature of Russia's actions.

E15 highlights the severe disruptions in Europe's energy markets due to disruptions in Russian gas, French nuclear power, and Norwegian hydroelectricity. Prices have surged dramatically, and the crisis is expected to persist, leading to significant economic strain as households and businesses face skyrocketing energy costs. "The pain will be savage and will spread as households' and firms' existing energy contracts expire and new ones are struck".

While the EC has proposed measures like capping gas prices for electricity generation, some economists warn that such policies could be counterproductive, exacerbating demand for scarce energy resources and potentially leading to rationing in winter. Describing a limit or restriction placed on the price of gas, "cap" implies a containment or control measure aimed at mitigating the negative effects of high energy prices, suggesting an attempt to regulate or manage the crisis to prevent further escalation.

Overall, the attitudes of Europe's citizens to the energy crunch are illustrated and summarized in one paragraph in **E24**: "Yet at the same time, two-thirds of Europeans thought the health of their country's economy was bad – and notably worse than before the war". This text reflects on Europe's energy crisis, which has evolved from a state of panic to an improved situation of almost full gas storage and decreased wholesale energy. However, despite these improvements, Europe's energy crisis is far from over, with political rifts widening and economic challenges mounting. The continent's heavy spending on energy subsidies to secure alternative supplies and shield consumers from high prices is exacerbating fiscal problems and diverting attention from other pressing issues. Overall, the text underscores the enduring challenges and complexities which continue to unfold amid shifting political and economic landscapes. The notion of Fear is recurrent throughout the text: "As a result, the feared economic meltdown has not materialized" and "The problem is that many European governments are determined to shield consumers from the full effects of the gas shortage, for fear of the economic and political consequences". "That is too high for some countries such as France and Spain, which fear the cap may never actually kick in". Furthermore, the text refers to the "baleful consequences of the energy crunch", suggesting the energy shortage is causing harmful or ominous effects, much like the devastating consequences of a disease or disaster. It emphasizes the negative impact of the energy crisis on various aspects of European society and underscores the urgency of finding solutions to address the situation. PANIC reemerges, which conveys the urgency and severity of the situation: "Just five panicked months ago, with flows of natural gas from Russia plummeting and

rationing and economic devastation looming, the European Union approved an edict ordering members to ensure that their gas-storage facilities were at least 80% full by November 1st".

The articles discussed so far can be generalized to expose one specific element of the same metaphorical scenario, namely DISEASE SYMPTOMS. The serious implications that the DISEASE (i.e., ENERGY CRISIS) has in the economic sphere, as well as political, geopolitical and humanitarian ones, are addressed in the next section.

SCENARIO ELEMENT 2: NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF A DISEASE

The very headline of **E8** reads that Europe's economy "grapples with an acute energy shock" and, as is stated in the article, "A moderation in demand only adds to a heap of woes for the manufacturing sector, where confidence is already in steep decline". The article discusses the European Central Bank's (ECB) challenge of addressing surging inflation while contending with gloomier growth prospects in the euro zone. This energy shock has led to higher consumer prices, impacting household incomes and purchasing power. Europe is yet again conceptualized as weak: "With every increase in inflation on the back of food and energy prices, the European economy is getting weaker". Metaphors of PAIN are identified: "Supply disruptions as a result of China's recent lockdowns and high energy prices are hurting businesses, with Germany and eastern Europe looking most vulnerable to an industrial slowdown". Overall, the energy shock is expected to dampen economic growth, presenting a dilemma for the ECB in navigating inflation and economic stability. In "the root cause of both developments is a severe energy-price crunch", the surge in energy prices is compared to a crunch or squeeze, implying a situation of tightness, pressure, or strain.

E12 explores the varied impacts of Europe's energy-price SHOCK on different households across the continent. While the average increase in household spending on energy is estimated at around 10%, the burden disproportionately falls on poorer households, particularly in the former-communist eastern countries, where energy spending constitutes a larger portion of household budgets, and these countries are conceptualized as vulnerable: "Europe's poorer former-communist east is more vulnerable to higher prices than its rich Nordic north".

E25 yet again focuses on the relevant negative economic effects that the energy crisis is likely to have. The text highlights Europe's commendable unity and resilience in the face of challenges like the Ukrainian conflict, but it also warns

of looming economic threats. The energy crisis, exacerbated by geopolitical tensions, poses risks not only to Europe's prosperity but also to its transatlantic alliance with the US: "That fear has been amplified by America's economic nationalism, which threatens to draw activity across the Atlantic in a whirlwind of subsidies and protectionism". Again, the emotion of fear is observed.

Apart from experiencing fear of an energy crunch, Europe is conceptualized as a WEAK and VULNERABLE person, as "the war is also creating financial vulnerabilities. Furthermore, even as the energy crisis rages, the war has exposed a vulnerability in Europe's business model".

In "Europe needs to protect its economy against the energy squeeze", the economic pressure faced by Europe is metaphorized as a PHYSICAL ASSAULT, suggesting that it is severe and relentless. The intensity and harshness of the economic challenges confronting Europe are emphasized, implying that they are causing significant PAIN and hardship.

The analysis of article **E26** also exposes a wealth of metaphors pertaining to UNHEALTHY PRESSURE, as in "Fuel prices surged, squeezing the economies of Ukraine's allies". There are yet again lexemes evoking MENTAL ILLNESS: "So far, Europe has weathered this shock well". Warning that "Russia is using energy as a weapon", the article sets out to analyse "how deadly will it be", as the headline and subheading read. Russia and its leaders aim to leverage the country's control over energy resources to pressure the West and support their war efforts in Ukraine. The disruption of gas supplies to Europe has led to a surge in energy prices, impacting consumers and potentially increasing winter mortality rates. Cold temperatures exacerbate health risks, particularly for the elderly, leading to higher death tolls. The impact of rising energy costs on mortality is uncertain but could be substantial, especially in countries with soaring electricity prices, like Italy. Despite efforts to mitigate the effects through subsidies and price ceilings, the potential for increased deaths due to energy price hikes in Europe surpasses the casualties in the Ukraine conflict. As winter approaches, the toll of Russia's tactics will be measured not only in aid and arms but also in lives lost.

SCENARIO ELEMENT 3: TREATMENT OF THE DISEASE

Most articles here address the various measures that need to be taken at the national and supranational levels to ward off the crisis. The demand-side measures pertain to curbing demand for gas, oil and electricity in general

across the EU. As the analysis of the Economist's articles suggests, the supply-side measures are more varied, including the construction of a web of gas interconnectors that now link previously isolated countries; LNG supplies from China, the United States and elsewhere; mandatory gas storage; a possible shift to coal; and a dramatic expansion of renewable energy and clean technologies.

A demand-side a measure is envisaged in **E4**. It gives an account of the call of the International Energy Agency (IEA) on Europeans to turn down the thermostat by just one degree centigrade, which would actually cut the yearly consumption of natural gas by one month's worth of Russian imports. Other measures include reducing motorway speed limits by 10kph, which is expected to trim fuel use by 15 percent across the rich world, or a ban on car use in cities on Sundays. Furthermore, governments are called upon to introduce subsidies to boost the use of public transport, and citizens are encouraged to work from home one day a week.

Yet the article expresses scepticism about the implementation of these measures, as national governments are not heeding the calls, which reflects three factors. Firstly, not every member state is "truly committed to weaning itself off Russian hydrocarbons". Second, energy is a "politically toxic topic", as politicians fear protests, which are already a fact in France and Spain. Hence, they do not want "to sacrifice their electorate" in the wake of the pandemic restrictions. The absence of widespread measures reflects political sensitivities, a reluctance to wean off Russian hydrocarbons, and a belief that citizens are unwilling to make sacrifices.

E6 discusses the surprising resurgence of coal demand globally, despite previous trends suggesting its decline. While efforts were made to phase out coal usage, coal consumption reached record levels and contributed to global greenhouse gas emissions. Utility firms have turned to coal as a cheaper alternative. Again, the emotion of fear appears: "Fears that Vladimir Putin could cut off gas to Europe sent the cost of the rival fuel soaring still higher".

E9 discusses the ban on Russian oil imports and the possible ways of capping the price of Russian gas debated by leaders of the G7. However, some events, including a fire at a gas liquefaction facility in Texas and reduced supply through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline, have exacerbated the situation. "There is even a fear that Nord Stream, which is due for regular servicing in July, will not restart once the maintenance ends". Hence, the concern or apprehension about the potential outcome of Nord Stream's maintenance is likened to a state of emotional distress or anxiety. Yet again, a sense of uncertainty and fore-

boding is implied regarding the reliability of Nord Stream as a crucial energy source for Europe. Thus, metaphors of PAIN are numerous, e.g., "Populations are being prepared for pain".

E13 discusses the challenges facing Europe as it struggles with the ongoing war in Ukraine and its repercussions. While Ukraine has demonstrated resilience in defending itself, Europe is beginning to feel the war's side-effects more acutely, particularly as winter approaches. The economic damage from Russian retaliation is substantial, leading to soaring energy prices and potential recessionary pressures. The phrase "the strain on public finances" metaphorically depicts the PRESSURE or BURDEN placed on public finances.

Headlined "Europe scrambles to protect consumers against dizzying energy prices" with the subheading of "Taxpayers are about to be hit by an enormous bill", **E16** contends that "Brussels reckons they have allocated €280bn to cushioning the shock over the past year". The article discusses the escalating energy WAR in Europe, with the EU planning to boycott most Russian oil. Wholesale gas prices have skyrocketed, causing concerns about significant bills hitting firms and individuals, especially during the winter. The focus is on European governments' efforts to implement various DEFENSIVE MEASURES, including slashing taxes on fuel, VAT cuts, and customer subsidies. While these measures can provide short-term RELIEF, they also create undesirable incentives. However, achieving unified action among European nations remains a challenge. "Cushioning the shock" metaphorically describes the protective measures implemented by European governments, implying a strategy to minimize the harm or TRAUMA caused by the crisis. "Shielding tactics" also implies a WAR- or FIGHT-based strategy to mitigate the impact of the crisis, suggesting an effort to provide SECURITY.

E20 sets out to explain how the EU intends "to collect 'windfall profits' from energy firms". The article discusses the EC's response to the energy crisis, proposing a scheme to address excessive profits made by energy companies, which aim to skim off €140bn in excess profits. The scheme targets fossil-fuel businesses and electricity generators, setting benchmarks and caps to limit profits. The "patchwork of national measures" metaphorically compares the diverse responses of European governments to lowering prices, saving energy, and supporting incomes to a patchwork quilt composed of different pieces stitched together. Hence, the implemented measures are seen as fragmented and disparate, lacking cohesion or uniformity, and the responses to the energy crisis vary in their effectiveness and coverage.

In turn "skim off" implies the extraction or removal of profits considered excessive or unjustified.

E21 continues the narrative on how Europe has been grappling with skyrocketing energy prices. The EC president has proposed reforms to the EU's electricity market and introduced plans for a windfall tax on energy companies. The article again accentuates the lack of coordination among European governments in responding to high energy prices. Some have opted for measures like retail price caps, fuel subsidies, or tax cuts on energy bills to protect consumers, while others have focused on direct assistance to low-income individuals. Although such support may be politically expedient, it risks undermining incentives to limit energy consumption long-term.

Conclusion

In its narrative on the 2022 energy crisis in Europe, *the Economist* constructs the EU's image through various ILLNESS-related metaphoric scenarios. The EU is represented as ILL, SUFFERING FROM A DISEASE, SUFFERING NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF A DISEASE, and REQUIRING TREATMENT. Hence three elements of the metaphorical DISEASE scenario have been identified here: SYMPTOMS – EFFECTS – TREATMENT.

The narrative in the analysed article samples avoids evoking FUTURE RECOVERY, despite the presence of thorough analysis of the EU measures taken to secure such. Moreover, the long-term negative effects of the ILLNESS, or the implications of the ENERGY CRISIS, are perceived as grave. It can therefore be argued that, overall, *The Economist* puts forward a Eurosceptic or a heavily Eurocritical message on the issue.

Concerning the question about a possible difference in the newspaper's attitude to Eastern and Western EU member states, few such differences have been identified, therefore we cannot speak of a trend. Overall, *The Economist* represents the EU as a single BODY and suggests it is equally difficult for all EU countries to RECOVER from the energy crisis.

In sum, given the gravity of the energy crisis that afflicted Europe, *The Economist* chose to express deep concern, be strictly analytical, and rather critical. The outlet views the crisis as a significant challenge for Europe that requires urgent attention and strategic planning. The identified DISEASE-related

metaphorical scenarios help the writers to express the urgency of the state of affairs, highlighting the widespread impact and the need for immediate action to mitigate the effects of the grave economic, political and social crisis. The DISEASE scenario also helps the authors to convey a sense of uncertainty about the future of Europe's economy and society.

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APPENDIX 1

Table headlines of the Economist's articles coded E1-E27

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Gdy wschodnioeuropejski problem staje się problemem całej Europy. Metaforyczna konstrukcja kryzysu energetycznego Europy w 2022 roku

Artykuł analizuje narrację magazynu „The Economist" na temat kryzysu energetycznego w Europie w 2022 roku. Przeprowadzona w ramach teoretycznych założeń krytycznej analizy metafor (Critical Metaphor Analysis, CMA) analiza wykazuje, że „The Economist" konstruuje wizerunek Unii Europejskiej poprzez scenariusz oparty na metaforze CHOROBY. Unia Europejska jest przedstawiana jako CHORA, CIERPIĄCA NA CHOROBĘ, DOŚWIADCZAJĄCA NEGATYWNYCH SKUTKÓW CHOROBY oraz WYMAGAJĄCA LECZENIA. W związku z tym wyróżniono trzy elementy scenariusza metaforycznego: OBJAWY – SKUTKI – LECZENIE. Co więcej, w analizowanych fragmentach autorzy unikają odwołań do PRZYSZŁEGO POWROTU DO ZDROWIA UE, mimo że szczegółowo analizują działania podjęte przez Unię w celu jego zapewnienia. Można zatem stwierdzić, że „The Economist" prezentuje w tej kwestii przekaz eurosceptyczny lub silnie eurokrytyczny.

Słowa kluczowe: The Economist; kryzys energetyczny; Unia Europejska; Rosja; metafora konceptualna; scenariusz metaforyczny; krytyczna analiza metafor

When an Eastern-European problem becomes a Pan-European one: The metaphorical construction of Europe's 2022 energy crisis

The paper analyses *The Economist*'s narrative of the 2022 energy crisis in Europe. Conducted within the theoretical framework of Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), the analysis establishes that *The Economist* constructs the EU's image through a DISEASE-centred metaphoric scenario. The EU is represented as ILL, SUFFERING FROM A DISEASE, SUFFERING NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF A DISEASE, and REQUIRING TREATMENT. Hence three elements of the metaphorical scenario are identified here: SYMPTOMS – EFFECTS – TREATMENT. Furthermore, in the samples analysed, the writers avoid evoking EU's FUTURE RECOVERY, despite the presence of their thorough analysis of the EU measures taken to secure such. It can therefore be argued that, overall, *The Economist* puts forward a Eurosceptic or a heavily Eurocritical message on the issue.

Keywords: *The Economist*; energy crisis; European Union; Russia; conceptual metaphors; metaphorical scenario; Critical Metaphor Analysis

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