

# Wealthy countries less concerned about energy security, study suggests

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People in wealthy countries are less concerned about the reliability, vulnerability and affordability of their energy supplies, a new study has shown.

An international team led by researchers from Cardiff University has revealed that across Europe, national social and economic factors play a key role in how people feel about the security of their [energy sources](#).

Countries such as Iceland, Sweden, Austria and Switzerland have been shown to have generally lower [energy security](#) concerns, whereas Portugal, Spain, Russia, France and Belgium have [higher levels](#) of concern.

It is believed that the lower levels of concern could be associated with better access to affordable energy, therefore reducing concern about energy security.

The new findings appear to mirror previous studies showing that wealthy countries are less concerned about climate change than poorer countries.

The study, which has been published today in *Nature Energy*, used data from the European Social Survey, a nationally-representative survey of over 44,000 people from 23 countries in Europe and Israel.

Respondents were asked about their feelings of worry towards five aspects of energy supply—reliability, [affordability](#), vulnerability, import dependency and fossil fuel dependency.

The highest level of concern among respondents from the 23 countries was around the affordability of energy, followed by fossil fuel dependency, import dependency, vulnerability and finally reliability.

In the UK, people were the most concerned about being too dependent on energy imports, and the least about interruptions to [energy supplies](#).

The researchers found that an individual's level of concern could not solely be explained by their social-demographic data such as age, gender and household income, but also correlated to national issues in their country—for example, individuals living in countries with high household electricity prices showed higher concerns about affordability.

Dr. Christina Demski from the School of Psychology, who led the research, said: "What we have found is that when it comes to energy security, the public are concerned about the issues most relevant to the country in which they reside."

"Furthermore, our results show that people feel more secure in countries with higher levels of wellbeing. This suggests that people's sense of energy [security](#) is tied up with how well a country is doing in terms of meeting people's basic needs and ensuring a fair and equal society."

Professor Wouter Poortinga, who co-authored the research, said that there is a clear need to include

the public in discussions about how to generate energy now and in the future:

"The public can help to shape the planning and construction of climate-friendly technologies of the future, so that we do not only achieve emission targets as set out in international agreements, but also ensure reliable access to clean and affordable [energy](#) for all."

**More information:** Christina Demski et al, National context is a key determinant of energy security concerns across Europe, *Nature Energy* (2018). [DOI: 10.1038/s41560-018-0235-8](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41560-018-0235-8)

Provided by Cardiff University

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