

# *It's cold in the dark*

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**In Spain, the price per MWH was ?380 and it is estimated that the last bill in 2021 for an average family will amount to ?134.4. Photo: El País**

By Guillermo Alvarado

This winter will be very harsh in Western Europe, not so much because of the drop in temperatures, which is usually very marked, but because of the dizzying rise in electricity and gas prices that will put bills for these services out of reach for many households.

The fact is that we are experiencing a deep energy crisis derived from several factors, among them the decrease in gas imports from Russia, the increase in the price of electricity production and the voracity of the companies that distribute the fluid to families and factories.

This week, for example, the price per megawatt hour, MWH, exceeded 400 euros in the wholesale market in more than a dozen countries, which will have an impact on industry and people's quality of life.

Yesterday, Wednesday, in Spain the price per MWH was 380 euros and it is estimated that the last bill in 2021 for an average family will amount to 134.4 euros, which means 94.1 percent more than what it paid in December last year.

Analysts estimate that these prices, unimaginable just six months ago, will remain so throughout the winter and will begin to fall in April, but without reaching previous levels.

On the other hand, the Russian government began to reduce gas shipments to its European customers a few days ago, because an imminent cold wave with maximum temperatures of minus 17 degrees Celsius is forecast, and the authorities decided to guarantee the welfare of its population.

In another important fuel supplier, Libya, a paramilitary group, one of those that proliferated after the NATO aggression to depose leader Muammar Al Gaddafi, cut off supplies in the northern ports.

After that war, the African country can produce 1.2 million barrels of oil per day, most of which is sold to Europe, but now this flow has been reduced to 100,000 units.

To make matters worse, France had to close four of its main nuclear reactors for safety reasons, and now 14 of the 56 existing in that nation will be shut down until January 23.

All these factors have caused the energy market in the Old Continent to spiral out of control and now millions of families are at risk of facing the cold season with prohibitive prices.

If weather conditions worsen, it will be a very cold and very dark winter for the poor, who are becoming more and more numerous in this region of the planet.

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