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Summary

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European energy security and eastern suppliers. Between normative and geostrategic

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Foreword

The European Union's historic status as a normative power is being tested both internally, by internal tensions, and externally, by the greatest geopolitical shift since the Second World War – the invasion of Ukraine. In this context, energy security has become one of the factors balancing the global balance of power. This paper aims to analyse the normative and geopolitical aspects of the European Union's dialogue with Eastern suppliers through the lens of the new energy security paradigm.

A number of characteristics of the current geopolitical context have imposed limitations on this analytical framework. More specifically, the study aims to examine the normative and geostrategic aspects of European energy security in relation to Eastern suppliers, with a particular focus on the Russian Federation. The emphasis on Russia's role was chosen as a result of applying the selected theoretical framework.

Mackinder's Heartland theory[1] reveals the importance of the Eurasian region in the context of the global balance of power. From an energy security perspective, control over the Heartland – the area corresponding largely to the territory of Russia and its neighbouring countries – confers significant dominance in global politics. The Russian Federation has utilised the creation of power through control of energy resources and routes by strengthening its energy leverage in its relations with the European Union and Russia's neighbouring states. This approach is fundamental to understanding not only Russia's role as an energy supplier, but also the geopolitical implications associated with Europe's dependence on energy resources from the Russian Federation.

It is essential to note that this analysis will be limited to conventional energy. This focus allows for a deeper understanding of current challenges and the balance of power between hydrocarbon-supplying, transit and consumer states.

[1] Mackinder, H. J., (1962) *"The Geographical Pivot of* History" in Democratic Ideals and Reality. Norton and Company. New York, USA, 1962, p. 241.

Without diminishing the impact of renewable energy and the role of other energy types, but rather by highlighting the importance of renewable energy in strengthening the EU's energy resilience within the case study, we consider it necessary to further explore the inclusion of renewable energy and new technologies in subsequent scientific endeavours.

Abstract

Russia's war against Ukraine represents the most significant global geopolitical shift since the end of the Cold War. The return of power politics to the European continent, alongside Russia's revanchist actions, has repercussions across all strategic domains.

Energy security, a key area for the economy and security of the European Union (EU), is being affected by the unprecedented reshaping of global energy systems.

The war, triggered against a backdrop of existing and overlapping crises that began with the illegal annexation of Crimea, has generated a 'polycrisis', as described by the British historian Adam Tooze[2] and popularised by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker[3] , and has become, amongst other things, the catalyst for the transformation of the energy security paradigm.

The disruptions caused by the conflict have a global impact and highlight the vulnerability of supply chains and access to the critical raw materials needed for a secure energy transition in the European Union.

Global energy markets have experienced repeated shocks, which have had a devastating impact on Russia's relationship with its largest energy partner, the European Union.[4]

Heavily dependent on Russian hydrocarbons, the European Union, a normative power[5] , aims to strengthen its position as a geopolitical actor, including in the field of energy strategy. To address new challenges, the European Union's energy policies are designed to enhance the Union's autonomy as well as its global competitiveness. In this context, this thesis aims to analyse the extent to which the EU's normative power is

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[2] Helleiner, E. (2024) "Economic Globalisation's Polycrisis." *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 2, 14 Mar. 2024, academic.oup.com/isq/article/68/2/sqae024/7634048?searchresult=1, https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqae024. (Accessed 20 June 2024)

[3] "Press Corner." *European Commission - European Commission*, 2016, ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_16_2293. Accessed 10 March 2024)

[4] IEA. "The Impact of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine on Global Energy Markets - Spotlight." *IEA*, 2023,www.iea.org/spotlights/the-impact-of-russia-s-invasion-of-ukraine-on-global-energy-markets .(Accessed 15 July 2024)

[5] Manners, I. (2002) "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 235–258, www.princeton.edu/~amoravcs/library/mannersnormativepower.pdf, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5965.00353. (Accessed 12 September 2023)

capable of responding to current crises and how geostrategic priorities can be adjusted and utilised in light of the new realities.

This thesis aims to examine the regulatory and geostrategic aspects of the European Union's energy and ' ' policies in relation to its eastern suppliers from the former Soviet Union (USSR), primarily the Russian Federation, adopted following the invasion of Ukraine, within the context of the new energy security paradigm. A second contribution will be the analysis of the potential risks associated with new partnerships with 'petrostates' in the former Soviet space through the prism of two vectors: normative and geostrategic.

The study of the normative and geostrategic aspects of the European Union's energy policies in relation to Eastern suppliers, primarily the Russian Federation, within the context of the new energy security paradigm is timely and important from several theoretical and methodological perspectives.

The implications of the war on energy systems have required prompt and effective responses from the West. The European Union, bordering the conflict zone and heavily dependent on energy resources from Russia, has had to urgently adapt its energy policies. In the context of the energy transition and technological developments, Ukraine's importance as a holder of critical raw materials and a transit state amplifies the repercussions of the conflict on the future of the European Union's energy security. The development of new technological solutions, such as hydrogen for power generation or the use of modern nuclear energy solutions, can also be enhanced by connecting the EU's energy system and market with Ukraine.

The energy relationship between the EU and the Russian Federation is complex, both in terms of the type of energy resources imported by the Union and the approach taken to this relationship. Major events, such as the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), shaped the regulatory and institutional framework and accelerated the trend towards market liberalisation. Other events, such as the energy crises of 2006 and 2009, served as wake-up calls and necessitated, even if the results were modest, a geostrategic approach by the EU in the energy sector.

In the new context of war in Europe and the redefinition of energy security, whilst the EU aims to enhance its strategic autonomy, strengthen global e competitiveness and combat climate change, the Union's policies must ensure energy security, including increasing internal energy resilience and diversifying and securing energy supplies from external sources. All these objectives must be achieved in the spirit of the energy transition. The Union's challenge in the energy sector lies in regulatory revitalisation, alongside the adoption of a bolder and more proactive geopolitical stance designed to secure the EU's global role.

From the perspective of international security studies, energy security is a fundamental component, and the study of the EU's energy relationship with its eastern suppliers is relevant to ensuring the future stability, sustainable development and global consolidation of the EU. The study of both the geopolitical and normative aspects is important for security studies, as these combine national interests, international relations and the stability of global energy markets, and contribute to understanding how energy resources influence the balance of power and the security strategies of states.

In the context of war, but also in shaping post-war strategic perspectives to ensure access to resources—particularly those necessary for the energy transition—the analysis of geostrategic vectors becomes crucial in developing the European Union's strategic and security profile.

The subject matter of this paper, viewed through the lens of the juxtaposition of the two vectors—normative and geostrategic—offers the opportunity to deepen the study of the potential use of energy, including as a coercive instrument of foreign policy by new suppliers, and identifies potential mechanisms for mitigating such vulnerabilities.

From a liberal perspective, the study of the war's consequences on future energy policies, the energy market and the EU's energy diplomacy is essential.

From the institutionalist perspective, with the outbreak of war, the consolidation and coordination of institutional structures at EU level in the field of energy security, against a backdrop of rising energy nationalism, become essential. The harmonisation of legislation and infrastructure to address new threats and to create a much more integrated, resilient

energy security system adapted to the geopolitical context raises new dilemmas and research questions in the context of increasing state intervention in safeguarding energy interests.

From a methodological perspective, this paper employs the comparative method to highlight the specific features and context of the energy policies of the states analysed.

Document analysis is used to highlight the geostrategic vectors and normative aspects of energy policies.

The study of the impact of EU energy policies on energy security in Central and Eastern Europe is conducted through quantitative and qualitative analysis. It is important to note that the case study represents a modelling of the measurement of the new energy security paradigm. Without becoming a final concept, partly due to the lack of complete data for all relevant indicators, the proposed model for measuring energy security represents a first step towards developing a comprehensive concept. For the quantitative analysis, databases available for the years 2022 and 2023 were used. The validation of the results was tested through interviews with experts in the field of energy security.

In order to achieve the objectives of this paper, concepts that have established the EU as a normative power are subjected to analysis.

At the same time, the EU's chosen approach – that of consolidating a more ambitious geopolitical position through the instruments provided by energy policies – is being examined.

Global crises have often led to a strengthening of the geopolitical dimension of energy security. However, there have also been crises that have spurred the development of the international regulatory framework, the liberalisation of markets and a greater openness to cooperation. One such moment was the collapse of the USSR, an event that contributed to the convergence of energy markets and the advancement of the international regulatory framework for nearly two decades. The global crisis of climate change threats is another example where the need to reconfigure energy security within a climate context has promoted international regulatory mechanisms.

With the onset of the Covid-19 crisis and the systemic crises that culminated in the invasion of Ukraine, there has been a return to the original paradigm: a realist approach to energy security in which geopolitics dominates the agenda. Energy security, being a national responsibility, is perceived as a component of national security. Furthermore, energy security is becoming part of a broader concept of security that encompasses economic, technological and digital security. Access to value chains and critical raw materials in the context of renewable energy development is becoming a new key element of geopolitical tensions.

As a result, a realistic understanding of Russia's energy policies is gaining ground. Despite this trend, certain schools of thought emphasise that the evolution of EU-Russia energy relations continued to follow commercial logic and that Russia's use of energy as a weapon seemed, at the time, highly unlikely. This logic stems from the fact that the market and trade rules strengthened the case for a liberal understanding of the Russia–EU energy relationship.[6] Practice would show that the approach was naïve and characterised only the EU's position, whilst Russia did not cease to seek to maximise the strategic and geopolitical dividends resulting from the EU's energy dependence.

The EU's new strategy adopted in March 2022, RePowerEU, was proposed in response to Moscow's military escalation and aims to reduce dependence on Russian hydrocarbons, manage the economic emergency created by the war, and accelerate the energy transition.[7]

The strategy expands the framework for promoting ambitious energy and climate policies and reforms within the Energy Community (the association between EU Member States and those in South-East Europe). By extending the geographical scope of the new measures, the EU is bringing the member states of the Energy Community on board with its efforts, actions intended, among other things, to support Ukraine in ensuring energy

[6] Siddi, M. (2017) "EU-Russia Energy Relations: From a Liberal to a Realist Paradigm?" *Russian Politics*, vol. 2, no. 3, 19 Aug. 2017, pp. 364–381, https://doi.org/10.1163/2451-8921-00203005, (Accessed 17 April 2023)

[7] European Commission. "REPowerEU: Affordable, Secure and Sustainable Energy for Europe." *European Commission*, 2022, commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowereu-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_en. (Accessed 10 January 2024)

security.[8] This represents a first important step in implementing the adoption of a firmer geopolitical stance by the EU in the area covered by this analysis.

The concept of EU Strategic Autonomy has evolved from the initial concept, which encompassed security and defence, to a broader vision that includes the economy, technology, energy and trade. The war in Ukraine, as well as the competition between the US and China, has accelerated Europe's need to act as an independent and resilient global actor.

Russia's war against Ukraine has also decisively influenced the way in which the major Western economies, aligned with the decoupling from Russian fossil fuels, perceive energy security. Both regional and global dynamics have been profoundly influenced by the effects of the war.

The redefinition of the concept of energy security, triggered by pre-war developments, was amplified by the outbreak of the war and the decoupling from energy sources and routes controlled by the Kremlin. Furthermore, the need to renew and expand both the concept and the term (in the sense of public policy) has been driven by the green transition and climate change. Thus, international institutions, led by the International Energy Agency, as well as major global players and the academic community, have begun the process of redefining the concept of energy security.

The European Union has activated its legal and public policy frameworks aimed at increasing autonomy based on renewable energy technology. These initiatives reflect a broader strategy to combat both anticipated and sudden disruptions or breakdowns in value chains caused by geopolitical tensions. At the same time, the EU is putting forward new proposals for global partnerships with suppliers of energy or raw materials necessary for energy production, in line with EU priorities.

The theory of the balance of power, through which we aim to conduct this research, is examined from multiple perspectives. The historical evolution of thinking on the balance of power within the Western tradition and that of Russia reveals the impact of various

[8] "EU External Energy Strategy defines Energy Community as instrument for ambitious energy and climate policies and market reforms", *Energy Community,* 2022. Available at https://www.energy-community.org/news/Energy-Community-News/2022/05/18.html. (Accessed 20 July 2023).

formative experiences. Thus, the origin and impact of these experiences are important for highlighting the particularities reflected in the energy strategies and policies of the two poles under analysis.

The broader context of the European continent provides us with the initial characteristics necessary for applying the chosen theoretical framework. This paper includes an analysis of considerations regarding energy power as understood by Russia and by the EU. Although both traditions recognise the fundamental role of the distribution of power in international stability, they diverge significantly in terms of theoretical foundations, strategic applications and the assumptions underpinning state behaviour. Distinct historical experiences, philosophical orientations and geopolitical contexts have shaped contrasting approaches even to the dynamics of power in contemporary international relations.

Given these differing conceptual perspectives between Russia and the European Union, the applicability of various realist theories and the balance of power in analysing energy relations between the European Union and its eastern partners requires a deeper examination of how geopolitical competition, economic levers and the pursuit of national interests have shaped the energy policies of the states under consideration.

In this context, characterised by geopolitical manoeuvring and the EU's role as a normative power, the Black Sea plays a crucial role – it is one of the most important geostrategic areas in terms of contemporary European energy security. The geostrategic and geoeconomic relevance of the Black Sea stems primarily from the fact that the region connects Asia and Europe, such that maritime routes and access to terminals allow for the disruption or redirection of critical energy exports and imports. Russia's overriding interest in the Black Sea reflects its understanding of this strategic function, as evidenced by its efforts to maintain maritime and coastal control in order to influence export routes.[9]

The Black Sea region is thus the subject of a major power play in which global and regional powers compete for influence, leverage and access to resources and ports. As Dubien and Vaquer I Fanes (2010: 4) highlighted: "The race for control over Europe's

[9] Dumitru, I. R. (2021). Russia's geopolitical determinations in the Black Sea. Strategic Impact, 78(1), 31–42. https://doi.org/10.53477/2284-9378-21-03 (Accessed 20 May 2025)

south-eastern natural gas supply routes" is indeed one of the "main drivers of change in the Black Sea security environment".[10] n Moscow, the EU, and other regional powers such as Turkey have all launched and supported initiatives for the construction of energy transport infrastructure and have competed to control energy transit routes.

Often being an area where energy has been used as a geopolitical weapon, the Black Sea region has frequently been exposed to supply disruptions, price disputes and threats from Russia against infrastructure that have served as instruments of foreign policy.

As Waltz describes, the balance of power between states becomes a balance of all capabilities—including physical force—that states choose to employ in pursuit of their objectives.[11] In addition to conventional force, Russia utilises all strategic domains and sources of power, including economic pressure, to project power with cascading effects across many sectors.[12]

Moscow has effectively recreated a new reality in the Black Sea, thereby hindering potential investment in the region. As the Black Sea serves as a vital transit hub channelling, in addition to trade flows from China, energy flows from the Caspian Sea and Russia to European markets via ports, the pipeline network and maritime infrastructure, the security of broader geostrategic calculations intersects with energy security.[13]

The states of Central and Eastern Europe are characterised by systemic peculiarities from an energy security perspective. These peculiarities are, in turn, uneven across the region. Consequently, the delicate balance between the EU's collective objectives and the individual realities of the states in the region becomes even more important as the EU seeks to mitigate external vulnerabilities through internal consolidation and strategic diversification.

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[10] Dubien, A. and Vaquer J. I Fanés, (2010). "Security and Energy Security in the Black Sea Region", DG for External Policies of the Union – Standard Briefing, European Parliament, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/studies.do?language=EN, (Accessed 12/05/2025)

[11] Waltz, K. N. (1959). *"Man, the State, and War. A Theoretical* Analysis", 1959, Columbia University Press, p.204

[12] Nate, S. & Leca, L. (2020). Cybersecurity and hybrid warfare challenges in the Black Sea region. *International Journal of Cyber Diplomacy*, *1*(1). https://ijcd.ici.ro/documents/26/2020_article_6.pdf (Accessed 03/04/2025)

[13] Grishin, O., Todorova, R., & Tolochko, A. (2020*). "Energy Security of the Black Sea Region: Geostrategy and Geoenergy Measurement*". *Przegląd Strategiczny*, 13, 415–432. https://pressto.amu.edu.pl/index.php/ps/article/view/26098 (Accessed 02/04/2025)

The economic resilience of EU member states, particularly the most recent accessions from the former Soviet bloc, is closely linked to the stability of energy supply chains and their insulation from global price volatility. Industries in Central and Eastern Europe have traditionally relied on conventional energy sources and now face the dual challenge, much more acute than in Western Europe, of diversifying energy security and decarbonisation.

The energy market in Central and Eastern Europe is influenced by geopolitical, economic and technological factors. The lack of uniformity in relations with Moscow, as well as in the energy mix, access to gas transport corridors and liquefied natural gas terminals, and insufficient interconnectivity, means that the process of decoupling from Russian hydrocarbons presents greater risks and vulnerabilities compared to Western Europe. At the same time, European policies promoting the energy transition and the consolidation of the European single market require continuous adaptation, with a view to liberalisation and increased competitiveness in the sector.

At the same time, the vulnerabilities outlined also present opportunities offered by the EU framework. Legislative and regulatory conditions, alongside EU objectives on carbon emission reduction, are successfully shaping these markets, driving an accelerated pace of innovation and adaptation with geopolitical implications. This research aims to examine these aspects.

The EU has established itself as a distinct normative power within the international system, recognised for its ability to project norms, values and standards beyond its borders through specific instruments. These transcend traditional military or economic power, and in a world increasingly dominated by realism, the question arises as to whether the EU can achieve its objectives of global consolidation whilst remaining a normative power.

As an instrument of normative projection, the role of energy diplomacy is growing, and recent crises have accelerated the consolidation of this normative framework, particularly in the context of the objective of European strategic autonomy in energy. This paper aims to deepen the study of energy diplomacy instruments and to establish their profile in accordance with the proposed variables – normative and geostrategic.

A distinctive feature of the wave of sanctions following 2022 is also the refinement from an institutional perspective. Over the last two decades, the EU has become an active 'issuer' of sanctions, now comparable to the US, the leading sanctioning state. We propose a comprehensive analysis of this normative instrument and an assessment of the impact of sanctions on energy cooperation.

As energy security becomes increasingly complex, this paper aims to develop a model for measuring energy security in the Central and Eastern European region. The model, based on the 'energy trilemma' developed by the International Energy Agency, allows for the future incorporation of new dimensions and variables to better assess the overall level of energy security in different countries.

Introduction

Russia's war against Ukraine represents the most significant geopolitical shift since the end of the Cold War. The return of power politics to the European continent, brought about by Russia's revanchist actions, is having repercussions across all strategic domains.

Energy security, a key area for the economy and security of the European Union (EU), is being affected by the unprecedented reconfiguration of global energy systems.

The war, which broke out against the backdrop of existing and overlapping crises that began with the illegal annexation of Crimea, has given rise to a 'poly-crisis', as described by the British historian Adam Tooze[14] and popularised by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker[15] , and has, amongst other things, become the catalyst for a paradigm shift in energy security.

The disruptions caused by the conflict have a global impact and highlight the vulnerability of supply chains and access to the critical raw materials needed for a secure energy transition in the European Union.

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[14] Helleiner, E. (2024). "Economic Globalisation's Polycrisis." *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 2, 14 Mar. 2024, academic.oup.com/isq/article/68/2/sqae024/7634048?searchresult=1, https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqae024. (Accessed 14 March 2025)

[15] "Press Corner." *European Commission - European Commission*, 2016, ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_16_2293. (Accessed 14 March 2025)

Global energy markets have experienced significant shocks, which have had devastating effects on Russia's relationship with its largest energy partner, the European Union.[16]

Heavily dependent on Russian hydrocarbons, the European Union—a normative power[17] —aims to strengthen its position as a geopolitical actor, including in the realm of energy strategy. To address new challenges, the European Union's energy policies are designed to enhance both the Union's autonomy and its global competitiveness. In this context, this thesis aims to analyse the extent to which the EU's normative power is capable of responding to current crises and how geostrategic priorities can be adjusted and utilised in light of the new realities.

In the face of these new risks, policymakers and the academic community have rallied and sparked an academic debate highlighting the need to broaden and conceptually renew the concept of energy security.

At the same time, many schools of thought emphasise the need for a broader geostrategic commitment that would also enable the EU to maintain its role as a normative power. Since the outbreak of the war, the EU has managed to forge a united front by almost entirely phasing out Russian energy resources and redirecting energy flows. Post-war scenarios are still unfolding; the resumption, even partial, of hydrocarbon supplies from Russia remains uncertain; therefore, the nature and effectiveness of the EU's future energy strategy are essential for the bloc's economic security and global competitiveness.

This thesis aims to examine the regulatory and geostrategic aspects of the European Union's energy policies in relation to its eastern suppliers from the former Soviet Union (USSR), primarily the Russian Federation, adopted following the invasion of Ukraine, within the context of the new energy security paradigm. A second contribution will be the analysis of potential risks associated with new partnerships with 'petrostates' in the former Soviet space through the prism of two vectors: normative and geostrategic.

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[16] IEA. "The Impact of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine on Global Energy Markets - Spotlight." *IEA*, 2023,www.iea.org/spotlights/the-impact-of-russia-s-invasion-of-ukraine-on-global-energy-markets . (Accessed 15 March 2025)

[17] Manners, I. (2002). "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40, no. 2, June 2002, pp. 235–258, www.princeton.edu/~amoravcs/library/mannersnormativepower.pdf, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5965.00353. (Accessed 20 January 2024)

This paper aims to develop a set of energy policy solutions and recommendations focusing on energy diplomacy, and thus on the energy dimension of the EU's foreign policy in its relations with Eastern suppliers.

This research chapter aims to conduct a quantitative and qualitative study of the impact of the war in Ukraine on the energy security of Central and Eastern European states by analysing the energy security of eight states in the region through the superimposition of the geopolitical vector onto elements of the 'Energy Trilemma'[18] , a model proposed by the International Energy Agency (IEA).

The scope of this thesis with regard to Eastern suppliers will be limited to the following energy-producing, transit and/or consumer states: the Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and, to a lesser extent, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

The analysis proposed in the research chapter will be limited to eight countries in Central and Eastern Europe – Slovenia, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Conclusions

The war, triggered against a backdrop of existing and overlapping crises that began with the illegal annexation of Crimea, has generated a 'polycrisis', as formulated by the British historian Adam Tooze[19] and popularised by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker[20] , and has become, amongst other things, the catalyst for the transformation of the energy security paradigm.

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[18] Overcoming the Energy Trilemma: Secure and Inclusive Transitions, IEA Report to G7 Leaders. 2023, https://www.iea.org/reports/overcoming-the-energy-trilemma-secure-and-inclusive-transitions (Accessed 30 June 2024)

[19] Helleiner, E., (2024). Economic Globalisation's Polycrisis, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 2, academic.oup.com/isq/article/68/2/sqae024/7634048?searchresult=1, https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqae024.

[20] "Press Corner." *European Commission - European Commission*, 2016, ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_16_2293.

The disruptions caused by the conflict have a global impact and highlight the vulnerability of supply chains and access to the critical raw materials needed for a secure energy transition in the European Union.

Global energy markets have experienced significant shocks, which have had devastating effects on Russia's relationship with its largest energy partner, the European Union.[21]

Heavily dependent on hydrocarbons from Russia, the European Union, a normative power[22] , is seeking to strengthen its position as a geopolitical actor, including in the realm of energy strategy. To respond to new challenges, the European Union's energy policies are designed to enhance the Union's autonomy as well as its global competitiveness. In this context, this thesis aims to analyse the extent to which the EU's normative power is capable of responding to current crises and how geostrategic priorities can be adjusted and utilised in light of the new realities.

In the new context of war in Europe and the redefinition of energy security, whilst the EU aims to enhance strategic autonomy, strengthen global competitiveness and combat climate change, the Union's policies are geared towards ensuring energy security, which includes increasing internal energy resilience and diversifying and securing energy supplies from external sources. All these objectives must be achieved in the spirit of the energy transition. The Union's challenge in the energy sector lies in regulatory revitalisation alongside the adoption of a bolder and more proactive geopolitical stance designed to secure the EU's global role.

Through the lens of the interplay between these two vectors—regulatory and geostrategic—we have analysed the relevance of the new energy security paradigm, which broadens the understanding of security beyond military concerns and includes energy as a vital component of national and international stability. This paradigm shift represents the

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[21] IEA. "The Impact of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine on Global Energy Markets - Spotlight." *IEA*, 2023, www.iea.org/spotlights/the-impact-of-russia-s-invasion-of-ukraine-on-global-energy-markets.

[22] Manners, I., (2002). Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?, *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40, no. 2, June 2002, pp. 235–258, www.princeton.edu/~amoravcs/library/mannersnormativepower.pdf, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5965.00353.

recognition of energy security as a dynamic process influenced by various actors and geopolitical factors, integrating the latter into the broader framework of security—an approach we have sought to achieve in this research.

The new paradigm of the concept of energy security, in the sense of public policy, must be contextualised and analysed through the prism of the energy transition. This adjustment, which seems obvious, requires concerted efforts at EU level, where national decision-making on the energy mix and energy security remains predominantly national. Consequently, continued efforts are needed to promote a political consensus around a concerted vision for the future of the EU's energy security.

The primary objective of this thesis is to establish the profile of the EU's new energy security policies adopted in response to the overlapping crises and Russia's war in Ukraine, and the implications of this profile for Central and Eastern Europe.

Despite the narratives promoted at the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which claimed that Russia was winning the energy war, the global energy crisis is a crisis of clean energy and the green transition within the new geopolitical context, not a crisis of oil and gas. The current crisis has moved beyond the paradigm of energy security as traditionally understood. Consequently, policy-making in the energy sector has also emerged in response to urgent needs, whilst simultaneously accelerating the energy transition that has already begun.

Through an analysis of the policies adopted in 2022, through which Brussels seeks the EU's energy independence and *the promotion of the Union as a global player in the energy sector*, we have concluded that a first necessary step is to understand that the energy policies of a more geopolitically anchored European Union must be synchronised and complemented by policies relating to the energy transition. To transcend the regulatory framework and have a geopolitical impact, the objectives and activities of the EU's Energy Diplomacy must be consistently adapted.

This realisation reinforces the conviction that accelerating the energy transition is the best way to simultaneously enhance energy security and advance the EU's green objectives. As demonstrated in this study, the EU has achieved ambitious results through

the export of renewable energy instruments. s a major importer of fossil fuels, it has become clear that the EU would be in a far more advantageous geopolitical position in a clean energy order than in a hydrocarbon-based energy system.

New technologies, such as hydrogen, offer opportunities for the development of new regulatory frameworks, technologies, standards and financing mechanisms that can be designed with the aim of strengthening the European Union geopolitically. Initiatives such as the Austria-Slovakia-Hungary-Ukraine hydrogen corridor or the undersea cable that will connect Azerbaijan and Romania are examples where the EU is demonstrating strategic autonomy. Such approaches must be even more ambitious in the Eastern dimension and in the Balkans. In the context of cooperation with Central Asia and Ukraine on critical raw materials, the EU can leverage geopolitical consolidation in the region, maintaining its status as a global exporter of standards.

Whilst in 2019 it was anticipated that decarbonisation plans would unfold over the coming decades, and while advocates of the green transition promoted the idea that geopolitical factors would no longer have such a significant influence on the dynamics of states' energy policies, the impact of the crises in recent years, culminating in Russia's war against Ukraine, has definitively contradicted this thesis. The determination, particularly on the part of the EU, to break free from dependence on fossil fuels has been accelerated by Russia's actions. The West has demonstrated not only solidarity but also an extraordinary mobilisation in shaping and adapting green policies to the geopolitical context. Energy decoupling from Russia was not only achieved on a massive scale in record time and despite the difficulties and scepticism of the majority, but has become a catalyst for the energy transition within the EU.

However, in a context where, externally, geopolitical risks in the energy sector have become evident and have shaped domestic energy policies, the process is hampered by numerous factors. Domestic markets are facing a lack of investment, heightened inflation, and shortages of critical raw materials and components, whilst the increasingly evident trend is towards greater government involvement in the energy market. Energy and climate remain subjects of political controversy, and ambitious and creative thinking is needed to

bridge divisions and keep states aligned with decarbonisation and economic development goals.

As the results of the case study clearly demonstrated that the energy resilience of Central and Eastern European states has been strengthened by the institutional and regulatory framework and has withstood major geopolitical shocks, the regulatory elements within EU policies have proven their effectiveness. At the same time, there is a need to strengthen these frameworks in relation to non-EU states. As the level of cooperation declines, the impact of these policies is diminished, even in the case of states with strong energy trade relations. Such strengthening would generate geostrategic and geopolitical benefits.

It is important to emphasise that the EU's geopolitical toolkit is limited to the supranational institutional framework, a fact which, on the one hand, diminishes the geopolitical impact of initiatives and, on the other, offers limited opportunities for states such as those in Central and Eastern Europe.

The analysis of relations with new suppliers of energy, critical raw materials and rare earths, which is a second objective of this paper, has highlighted the fact that new policies must integrate the EU's complex interests, transcending the strictly energy-related framework. In this regard, new strategic partnerships must be defined by taking into account new risks, assessing the impact of these risks, the instruments to counter them, as well as the design of a new security framework to guide public policy decisions in the energy sector.

With regard to the EU's energy diplomacy, the analysis of which constituted the third objective of this paper, it has the potential to become one of the most important regulatory instruments in the energy sector. However, the numerous geopolitical and geo-economic challenges have highlighted the key role that energy plays in the security, industrial competitiveness and economic stability of Europe and its international partners. The EU's energy systems are undergoing rapid transformation towards more flexible and interconnected energy markets, further electrification and a sustainable reduction in demand.

This offers an opportunity to reduce the EU's dependence on volatile fossil fuel markets, as well as to reduce exposure to undue dependencies on foreign suppliers. The EU has a major interest in sharing its domestic experience and technologies with other countries to support their energy transition and strengthen its alliances in the context of geopolitical changes. The EU's energy diplomacy can serve its broader policies on security, foreign affairs, trade and climate.

Now is the time to improve and accelerate the EU's energy diplomacy to ensure that it is both a strong global actor and a reliable partner.

The EU's foreign policy strategy must focus on mutually beneficial partnerships and move beyond the supplier-buyer logic to facilitate local value creation. The EU would use these new partnerships to establish more diversified supply and value chains for energy raw materials, CRMs and clean technologies. The energy transition would be driven both locally and globally, whilst reducing risks associated with geopolitical rivals and strengthening the EU's political alliances.

The EU should also develop tailored approaches for key regions, guided by technical and geopolitical considerations. In this regard, the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, as part of the EU accession process, have significant potential as suppliers of green energy and CRMs, as well as centres for resilient energy systems.

The EU must refocus its communication on energy diplomacy with emerging economies towards the shared benefits of an accelerated transition to renewable energy, emphasising local value creation, sustainable growth, and industrial and commercial cooperation between equals. It is necessary to avoid a (neo-imperialist) narrative centred on the role of third countries as resource suppliers to the EU. Instead, the EU must position itself as a reliable, efficient and trustworthy alternative.

The EU should engage in mutually beneficial partnerships with non-EU countries, based not only on resource extraction but also on building sustainable industrial value chains and creating local added value.

A separate focus should be on supporting the green and decentralised reconstruction of Ukraine. Ensuring that Ukraine can become an integral part of the increasingly

decarbonised European energy system and contributing to the EU's industrial competitiveness through its vast potential in renewable energy and CRM, industry and the workforce. Immediate reconstruction efforts are also necessary, as Ukraine's energy infrastructure is a constant target of Russian attacks. The EU could step up cooperation with the reorganised Energy Community and international financial institutions.

In strengthening its role as a normative power, the EU has the opportunity to support a just and secure transition for vulnerable fossil fuel-producing countries, which represent the largest—but rapidly shrinking—market for oil and gas imports. The EU must ensure ongoing dialogue with vulnerable producers to achieve the transition away from fossil fuel revenues. Dialogues on the energy transition with other countries dependent on fossil fuel revenues could also help secure the future of the EU's trade and energy relations.

Another important element is the alignment of the EU's energy diplomacy and trade-related external measures. The Global Gateway must be aligned with the EU's broader instruments (trade and diplomacy). More investment in clean infrastructure is needed to facilitate the transition in key geographical areas, particularly those affected by the CBAM and other EU regulations, as well as in the case of vulnerable fossil fuel producers. These investments must be aligned with other EU diplomatic and trade instruments and expanded through deeper engagement with private sector stakeholders.

In parallel with the process of redefining the concept of energy security, access to critical raw materials and rare earths, as well as the inclusion of a sustainability component, are becoming paramount in the EU's energy transition objectives.

The European Union, but especially Central and Eastern Europe, must accelerate the decarbonisation of their economies. Energy and climate policies must be synchronised and complemented by the consistent adaptation of energy diplomacy.

The growing global competition to engage the Global South is becoming a factor that will play a key role in ensuring competitiveness in a world where multipolarity is becoming increasingly pronounced. The implementation of the ambitious plans for decarbonising economies and revitalising manufacturing sectors announced on both sides

of the Atlantic will lay the foundations for the future global configuration of energy systems and determine the ability of major players to access new markets.

The European Union's new strategy on international engagement in the energy sector links multidimensional industrial policy with diplomatic tools to steer energy partnerships towards sustainability. However, short- and medium-term objectives to reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels prevail, which includes investments in gas pipeline infrastructure as well as new gas and oil supply contracts. These types of investments compete with the need for investment in the green transition and must be assessed with long-term strategies in mind.

The measures taken by the EU to engage third countries in the process of decarbonising their economies are rather modest, self-referential in nature and not aligned with the scale of the EU's ambitions as a 'green' leader. At the same time, the global energy transition offers the European Union the opportunity to become a champion of change within the context of the new concept of energy security. By developing long-term strategies and engaging third countries, as well as transitioning from the fossil fuel paradigm to clean energy, the EU can use its foreign policy tools to become an exporter of technological models, regulations and standards for the new concept of energy security.

We have addressed the fourth objective—identifying the type of approach required by Central and Eastern Europe in its relations with eastern suppliers—through quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The analysis provided a better understanding of developments in the region and offered an overview of the impact of the geopolitical realignment and, as a result of this realignment, the adoption of new European policies on the region's energy security. Although only two years were analysed, the qualitative analysis in the second part of the case study provided a clearer correlation between the type of orientation of the governments analysed towards policy or the economy and the results of such an approach.

It is therefore important to highlight the improved overall resilience of the region's energy systems. This is due to the strengthened institutional and regulatory framework. Diversification efforts have been successful, at least in the short term. However, there are

shortcomings in the implementation of new policies, particularly those relating to the energy transition. As the energy transition and reducing dependence on fossil fuels are crucial elements in strengthening energy security , states must prioritise this aspect.

The limited options currently available also restrict states' ability to export energy standards and values, as their participation in multilateral frameworks lacks solid experience. Opportunities in this regard are offered by the proximity to the Eastern Neighbourhood, the Western Balkans, as well as the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

The export of the regulatory framework also involves contributing to the strengthening of the EU's geopolitical position – an objective that was set even before the war. The experience of states in the region in bilateral or multilateral cooperation with the Eastern Neighbourhood, the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus and Central Asia represents an advantage that can be capitalised upon. Existing corridors, as well as those under development, represent geostrategic dimensions that can generate benefits in both directions. With the waning of pro-European sentiment in Georgia, as well as Azerbaijan's distancing from Russia, there are vulnerabilities, but also sectoral opportunities to strengthen cooperation in the Black Sea and in the Central and Eastern European region, and Romania can play a key role in this regard.

The analysis in this paper has shown that Slovakia is one of the most vulnerable countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) from an energy security perspective. Lacking conventional energy resources and heavily dependent on imports, the country is dominated by the Hungarian company MOL, which holds a monopoly-like position. This limits Bratislava's options, regardless of the country's political context. Bordering Ukraine, Hungary and Austria, Slovakia, through Hungary's involvement, represents the Achilles' heel of regional energy security.

Multilateral regional cooperation frameworks in the energy sector, particularly in relation to the energy transition, would enable Romania to strengthen its intra-regional geopolitical position.

Bulgaria's consolidation from an energy perspective should represent elements of commercial and geopolitical attractiveness for Romania. The experience and geographical

importance, as well as the NATO membership of Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, allow for an analysis of regional energy security through the lens of the development of infrastructure projects involving new technologies.

Both modular nuclear reactors and potential innovative regional projects can strengthen regional cooperation and, as a result, contribute to enhancing security and geopolitical presence.

Access to critical raw materials, as well as to rare metals in Ukraine and Central Asia, also presents opportunities for establishing new regional multilateral partnerships. Cooperation should be viewed through the lens of exporting standards and technology, which is of interest to Central Asia.

The elements analysed in this paper confirm that, in the European Union's geopolitical rebalancing in the field of energy security, the Union's normative power plays an extremely important role. Both internally, with the aim of enhancing energy resilience and autonomy, and externally, with a view to consolidating its role as a global player in the energy sector and achieving geostrategic objectives through the export of values, norms and technology, the European Union relies primarily on its normative power. This aspect, which is not without its challenges, is crucial to the EU's stated ambition of strengthening the Union's geopolitical position on the global stage.

Despite challenges such as the rise of energy nationalism and the prevalence of national decisions in the energy sector, the EU has demonstrated its ability to withstand global geopolitical shocks affecting energy systems. This fact should serve as an argument for continuing efforts to ensure a visionary, resilient response, with an ever-greater role for energy diplomacy and renewable energy in addressing the challenges of the new concept of energy security.

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