

THE EU'S FUTURE UNDER SCRUTINY: FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE EU ENERGY DIPLOMACY IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Fatma Zeynep ÖZKURT DÖRDÜNCÜ*

Research Article

Abstract

This article aims to elucidate the foreign policy implications of the EU's energy diplomacy endeavors in the Eastern Mediterranean. Building on the conception of "energy diplomacy", it examines its internal energy policy (in)competences and the external dimension of the EU energy policy. It is argued that because of Russia's asymmetrical advantage over energy supplies and its geopolitical aggressiveness, the EU is forced to re-regulate its policy takes on energy security and promote diversification of energy supply which cause a gravitation towards new strategic environments such as the Eastern Mediterranean. Herein, this article assesses the effectiveness of the EU's energy diplomacy; and by applying energy diplomacy model, it evaluates the results of the EU's endeavors in diversifying external energy supplies and providing energy security.

Keywords: European Union, Energy Diplomacy, Energy Security, Foreign Policy, Eastern Mediterranean.

Avrupa Birliği'nin Geleceği Üzerine İnceleme: AB'nin Doğu Akdeniz'deki Enerji Diplomasisinin Dış Politika Çıkarımları

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı AB'nin Doğu Akdeniz'deki enerji diplomasisi girişimlerinin dış politika çıkarımlarını irdelemektir. Makalede, enerji diplomasisi kavramından yola çıkarak, önce AB'nin enerji politikasına ilişkin olarak içsel politika yetkinlikleri incelenecek, sonrasında enerji politikasının dış boyutları değerlendirilecektir. Bu çalışmada, Rusya'nın enerji kaynakları üzerindeki asimetrik avantajı ve jeopolitik saldırganlığı nedeniyle AB'nin enerji güvenliğine ilişkin

* Assistant Prof. Dr., İstanbul Nişantaşı University, E-mail: zeynep.ozkurt@nisantasi.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0003-1284-0210
Makalenin Gönderilme Tarihi: 27/04/2023 Kabul Edilme Tarihi: 27/09/2023

politikalarını yeniden düzenlediği ve enerji kaynağı teminini farklı alanlar ve kaynaklar bularak çeşitlendirmek zorunda kaldığı, dolayısıyla Doğu Akdeniz gibi yeni stratejik alanlara doğru yöneldiği argümanı savunulmaktadır. Bu bağlamda makale AB'nin enerji diplomasisine ilişkin etkili eylemlerde bulunup bulunmadığını incelemekte ve enerji diplomasisi modelini kullanarak enerji kaynağı temininin çeşitlendirilmesine ve enerji güvenliğinin sağlanmasına ilişkin Birliğin girişimlerinin doğurduğu sonuçları değerlendirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupa Birliği, Enerji Diplomasisi, Enerji Güvenliği, Dış Politika, Doğu Akdeniz.

Introduction

In today's world, energy – as an integral feature of economic and social development – has gained prominence on account of rapidly growing economic globalization. In this context, energy resources are considered as the primary driving forces in international politics and international economy, bringing the matter of “hard geopolitics of resources”¹ at the center of scholarly debates. Energy is also considered as a matter of national security, and it has “overlapping and interconnected elements” with foreign policy.² In geopolitical reality and diplomacy, this creates a recurring theme of invariable interconnection between energy, national security and foreign policy.

By extension, as prominent examples for geopolitics, energy policy and energy security generate systematic inquiry on political and diplomatic relations.³ This provides the contention that any social inquiry on energy and/or energy security cannot be detached from politics in general, and geopolitics in specific.⁴ In fact, since 2000s, the number of studies on global energy use geopolitics as a theoretical tool when analyzing energy politics

¹ Velichka Milina, “Energy Security and Geopolitics,” *Connections* 70, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 29.

² Ana Bovan, Tamara Vučenović, and Nenad Perić, “Negotiating Energy Diplomacy and its Relationship with Foreign Policy and National Security,” *International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy* 10, no. 2 (2020): 1-6, <https://doi.org/10.32479/ijeeep.8754>.

³ Getau Hu, Jun Yang, and Jun Li, “The Dynamic Evolution of Global Energy Security and Geopolitical Games: 1995-2019,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 21, 14584 (November 2022): 1-2, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192114584>.

⁴ Zhiding Hu and Yuejing Ge, “The Geopolitical Energy Security Evaluation Method and a China Case Application Based on Politics of Scale,” *Sustainability* 6, no.9 (2014): 5682-5696; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su6095682>.

and energy security.⁵ Concordantly, energy diplomacy has taken its place in the policy lexicon⁶ as a foreign policy tool pursued by nation states and international organizations such as the European Union (EU) to promote energy security and grant their access to new energy supplies through energy diversification.

Although the EU's external energy relations have been developing solidly since mid-2000s, there are certain factors which cause insecurity for the EU on energy matters. These include: i) increase of energy prices, ii) unclear state of energy reserves, iii) imbalance between energy supply and demand, iv) Russia's asymmetrical advantage over energy supplies, and iv) dependence on unstable energy suppliers.⁷ Adding Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War into the bargain, the EU is currently in the process of re-regulating its policy takes on external energy security and diversification, and accelerating its energy-related foreign policy initiatives by means of energy diplomacy. To that end, a significant gravitation is observed in the EU's external energy relations towards geostrategic regions such as the Eastern Mediterranean. The Eastern Mediterranean transpires visibly as a geopolitically complex and heterogeneous region because: i) it is located at the crossroads of European, African and Asian continents, ii) accommodates international sea routes essential for international trade; and, iii) contains substantial energy resources.⁸ Furthermore, the energy resource discoveries made in the late-2000s has turned this region into a new frontier for the EU striving for immediate energy supply and transit diversification, the significance of which has been recently re-emphasized in the EU's "Strategic Compass for Security and Defence" in March 2022.⁹

⁵ Ana Campos and Carla Patrício Fernandes, "The Geopolitics of Energy," in *Geopolitics of Energy and Energy Security*, ed. Carla Patrício Fernandes and Teresa Ferreira Rodrigues (Lisbon: Instituto da Defesa Nacional, 2017), 29.

⁶ Christian Downie, "Australian energy diplomacy," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 73, no. 2 (2019): 119, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2018.153494>.

⁷ Sami Andoura, "Security of Supply and the External Dimension of a European Energy Policy," *Studia Diplomatica* 60, no. 2 (2007): 67.

⁸ Emile Badarin and Tobias Schumacher, "The Eastern Mediterranean Energy Bonanza: A Piece in the Regional and Global Geopolitical Puzzle, and the Role of the European Union," *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 70, no. 3 (October 2022): 414-415, <https://doi.org/10.1515/soeu-2022-0036>.

⁹ "Strategic Compass for Security and Defence - For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and

By contextualizing the distinctive traits of geopolitics of energy in the EU's foreign policy, this article analyzes the foreign policy implications of the EU's energy diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean in relation to the EU's diplomatic endeavors in energy security and diversification. For this purpose, the first section, after presenting the conceptual framework on energy diplomacy and explaining how it is operationalized as a foreign policy tool, introduces the main characteristics of the EU model of energy diplomacy. The second section focuses on the EU's internal policymaking competences pertaining to the EU's external energy policy and energy security; and portrays the internal factors that impact on the effectiveness of the EU's foreign policy endeavors and its energy diplomacy practices. The third section evaluates the strategic geometry of the EU's energy diplomacy practices in the Eastern Mediterranean region with a threefold purpose: i) presenting a general overview of the geopolitics of energy involving the regional energy actors; ii) addressing the Union's efforts in developing sustainable relations with new energy actors in the region; and iii) assessing the foreign policy outcomes on the matters of energy security and diversification strategy in relation to the Union's energy-related political and diplomatic initiatives.

Towards the end, this article contends that even if the EU's external relations in the Eastern Mediterranean region have become a high-priority issue for the EU policymakers, the EU's energy diplomacy still has not reached its potential. Essentially, interest diversification and the lack of harmonization among the EU member states along with the geopolitical implications of external energy disputes can be identified as the main factors that limit the effectiveness of the EU's energy diplomacy and hence its foreign policy endeavors on energy-related matters in this region. The concluding section thus presents recommendations for the EU on constructing a viable energy diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean imperative for the future of the EU's foreign policy practices in the wider Mediterranean region.

I. EU Energy Diplomacy as a Foreign Policy Tool

In the face of globalization, the intensification of multi-level energy interactions between energy producing and energy consuming states brings forward energy security as one of the priorities of state and non-state actors' foreign policy agendas. Provided that, these actors resort to energy

security," Council of the European Union, last modified March 22, 2022, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf>.

diplomacy to maintain economic and energy security and reach out to new energy resources and markets by means of developing economic, financial and trade relations.¹⁰

Energy diplomacy is strictly associated with geopolitics since energy security – as one of its objectives – is deliberated as an important geopolitical matter.¹¹ Therefore, energy diplomacy is mainly used by energy producing and energy consuming actors with the reciprocated aim of securing their access to foreign energy supplies and/or sources, promoting inter-state/inter-organizational collaboration in the field of energy, and the preservation of reciprocated political trust. For instance, energy producing or exporting states (e.g., Russia, OPEC) use energy diplomacy to find their ways in new and global markets or reach out to new energy reserves; whereas energy consuming or importing states (e.g., the EU Member States, China) use it to secure and maintain the undisrupted inflow of energy supply and expand it by diplomatically engaging in new energy deals and contracts.¹² Towards that end, energy diplomacy acts as an influence mechanism that shapes the formation and implementation of policies and/or resolutions; and oversees extra-territorial relations through peaceful methods such as diplomatic dialogues, negotiations, advocacy and lobbying.¹³

¹⁰ Anna Herranz-Surrallés, “An emerging EU energy diplomacy? Discursive shifts, enduring practices,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 23, no. 9 (2016): 1389, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2015.1083044>; Marco Giuli, “Getting energy diplomacy right: A challenge starting at home,” European Policy Centre Commentary, accessed January 17, 2023, <https://www.epc.eu/en/Publications/Getting-energy-diplomacy-right~1d05b0>.

¹¹ Mirza Sadaqat Huda and Saleem H. Ali, “Energy diplomacy in South Asia: Beyond the security paradigm in accessing the TAPI pipeline Project,” *Energy Research & Social Science* 34 (December 2017): 202-213, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2017.07.013>; Michel Gueldry and Wei Liang, “China’s global energy diplomacy: Behavior normalization through economic interdependence or resource neo-mercantilism and power politics?,” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 21, no. 2 (2016): 217-240, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11366-016-9405-3>; Natalia Chaban and Michèle Knodt, “Energy diplomacy in the context of multistakeholder diplomacy: The EU and BICS,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 50, no. 4 (December 2015): 457-474, <https://doi.org/10.1177/001083671557354>.

¹² Andreas Goldthau, “Energy diplomacy in trade and investment of oil and gas,” in *Global Energy Governance: The New Rules of the Game*, eds. Andreas Goldthau and Jan Martin Witte (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), 25.

¹³ Bovan, Vučenović, and Nenad Perić, “Negotiating Energy,” 2.

In the context of the EU, energy has always been one of the most contradictory policy areas. Even though the European integration was initiated with this pivotal policy area, so far neither the EU's energy market regulations nor its energy policy practices have been fully transfigured into the supranational policymaking. Respectively, foreign policy coordination has always been the "most difficult" to achieve reciprocally by the EU member states owing to their tendency to retain national prerogatives and refusal on transferring national autonomy to supranational institutions of the EU.¹⁴ Nonetheless, as a national security matter alluding to international issues and extra-territorial factors, energy materialized a direct intersection between the Union's external energy relations and broader foreign policy goals; and necessitated the use of foreign policy instruments such as energy diplomacy.¹⁵

The EU utilizes energy diplomacy as a prominent foreign and energy policy instrument to increase its competences externally by engaging in acts of diplomacy on energy security and supply diversification that would be favorable for both energy producers and energy consumers. The EU's principal diplomatic service, the European External Action Service communicates this line of characterization of energy diplomacy by citing its primary goals as "energy transition", "energy security" and "geopolitics and global governance".¹⁶ In this direction, by formulating an EU model of energy diplomacy, the Union primarily strengthens its international role as a "norm- and standard-setter on energy transition" that would endorse technical and regulatory instruments for the promotion of transparent cooperation on energy.¹⁷

Considering its strengths and capabilities in multilateralism, the EU also intends to produce solid diplomatic outcomes on energy security by endorsing its "soft geopolitics" structured as collaborations in multilateral forums.¹⁸ On the matter of instruments used, the EU energy diplomacy

¹⁴ Alexandra Bosce, "EU Energy Diplomacy: Searching for New Suppliers in Azerbaijan and Iran," *Geopolitics* 24, no. 1 (2019): 145, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2018.1477755>.

¹⁵ Bovan, Vučenočić, and Nenad Perić, "Negotiating Energy," 2.

¹⁶ "Energy Diplomacy," European External Action Service, last modified December 12, 2021, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/energy-diplomacy_en.

¹⁷ Maria Pastukhova, Jacopo Pepe, and Kirsten Westphal, "Beyond the Green Deal: Upgrading the EU's Energy Diplomacy for a New Era," *SWP Comment* 31 (June 2020): 2-3.

¹⁸ Thomas Gehring, Sebastian Oberthür, and Marc Mühleck, "European Union Actorness in International Institutions: Why the EU is Recognized as an Actor in

exposes a “blended” model since it combines different modes and levels of political and diplomatic engagements.¹⁹ Problematizing energy (in)security as a geopolitical challenge embedded in the matters of over-dependency on external energy supplies and the lack of strategic vision to overcome this hindrance, energy diplomacy proposes the development of comprehensive energy projects to dissuade disputes and encourage collaboration among stakeholders;²⁰ and the resolution of conflicts through infrastructures of cooperation such as the pipelines.²¹

As a matter of course, the rising geopolitical challenges turn diplomatic initiatives into imperative factors within the external energy policy domain. The growing energy security problems such as “availability, reliability and affordability”²² along with environmental sustainability and green energy transition compel the EU to adopt a more unified approach underlying the global aspect of energy interdependence. Nonetheless, this constraint constructively increases the likelihood of the implementation of EU energy diplomacy at the supranational level; and brings the matter of energy cooperation on top of the EU foreign policy agenda. This in turn currently retains energy diplomacy as the most feasible foreign policy tool of the EU in the targeted pursuit of national and supranational interests.

Overall, the EU energy diplomacy comprises the foreign endeavors of its member states within an intergovernmental structure to ensure equally their individual and the Union's collective energy security; and align their national interests and develop diplomatic relations with external actors involved in the global energy system. Nonetheless, the full realization of the competence of energy governance and energy diplomacy remains to be dependent on a mixture of internal factors that impact upon the EU's capability to form a common external energy policy and engage in realistic external energy relations. Next section will delve into these internal policy dynamics that impact upon the modus operandi of the EU energy diplomacy.

Some International Institutions, but Not in Others,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no. 5 (September 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12030>.

¹⁹ Chaban and Knodt, “Energy diplomacy,” 457.

²⁰ Huda and Ali, “Energy diplomacy,” 205.

²¹ Saleem H. Ali, “Energizing peace: The role of pipelines in regional cooperation,” last modified July 14, 2010, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/energizing-peace-the-role-of-pipelines-in-regional-cooperation/>.

²² Jonathan Elkind, “Energy Security Call for a Broader Agenda,” in *Energy Security: Economics, Politics, Strategies and Implications*, ed. Carlos Pascual and Jonathan Elkind (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), 121.

II. Implications of Internal Dynamics on the EU's External Energy Relations and the EU Energy Diplomacy

In the post-Cold War period, through liberalization, global energy markets have intensified in favor of energy producing states consequently compelling energy consuming states to adopt a more prudent and politicized position.²³ The same period also witnessed a rising discomfort around Europe regarding energy security²⁴ and growing perception of Russia as an unreliable energy supplier.²⁵ Since then the EU's energy dependency vulnerabilities have been regularly stressed in the EU's official documents, urging the Union to call for preventive actions. In fact, it was in 2006 that the EU, for the first time in its history, has explicitly proposed a "coherent external energy policy"²⁶ which would be centered upon full internal policymaking competences and policy coherence at the supranational level.

Equally, to address profusely the new drivers of the global market in relation to policy agendas, geopolitics, security concerns and actors involved, the EU has further taken solid steps in strengthening its internal policymaking competences and setting the building blocks of a common energy policy that would fortify Europe's energy security both at internal and external levels.²⁷ Firstly, with the inclusion of "solidarity" clause in the "Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union" (TFEU) in 2007, the EU has crafted a political basis confirming the supremacy of the policy competences at the supranational level when taking preventive measures to

²³ Frank Umbach, "Global energy security and the implications for the EU," *Energy Policy* 38, no. 3 (March 2010): 1229, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2009.01.010>.

²⁴ David Buchan, *Energy and Climate Change: Europe at the Crossroads* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 38, 79.

²⁵ Jan Osička and Filip Černoč, "European energy politics after Ukraine: The road ahead," *Energy Research & Social Science* 91, 102757 (September 2022): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2022.102757>; Valentina Feklyunina, "Russia's International Images and its Energy Policy. An Unreliable Supplier?," *Europe-Asia Studies* 64, no. 3 (2012): 449, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2012.661923>.

²⁶ "Green Paper: A European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy," European Union, last modified July 5, 2006, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/green-paper-a-european-strategy-for-sustainable-competitive-and-secure-energy.html>.

²⁷ Gawdat Bahgat, "Europe's Energy Security: Challenges and Opportunities," *International Affairs* 82, no. 5 (September 2006): 961-975.

circumvent [energy] security threats.²⁸ Secondly, it has reinforced the “shared ownership”²⁹ of the common energy policy, connoting the supremacy of EU institutions over the national autonomy of the EU member states.³⁰

Furthermore, an information exchange mechanism was formed in 2012 with the aim of deferring the responsibility of all existing international energy agreements to the European Commission to assess and command a certain level of information exchange on behalf of the EU member states.³¹ By doing so, the European Commission has become the highest authority in the external energy policymaking vis-à-vis the transferring of internal energy market rules to third countries,³² allowing the EU to sustain better policy coordination in this policy area. Equally in 2014, the EU has called for “more coherent external action” in the foreign policy domain,³³ and emphasized the benefits of forming a common energy policy that would develop (supranational) prerogatives on its external energy relations.³⁴ To that end, as a “control mechanism”, the European Commission has been merited with a capacity to wield influence and hold bargaining power when diplomatically engaging with external actors within the context of its foreign policy initiatives.³⁵

²⁸ Sami Andoura, Leigh Hancher, and Marc Van der Woude, “Towards a European Energy Community: A Policy Proposal,” *Notre Europe Studies & Research* 76 (March 2010), 79.

²⁹ Braun, “EU Energy,” 2.

³⁰ Andoura, Hancher, and Van der Woude, “Towards,” 12.

³¹ “Energy policy: general principles,” European Parliament, last modified September 2022, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/68/energy-policy-general-principles>.

³² Heiko Prange-Gstöhl, “Enlarging the EU’s internal energy market: why would third countries accept EU rule export?,” *Energy Policy* 37, no. 12 (December 2009): 5298, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2009.07.070>.

³³ “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: European Energy Security Strategy,” European Commission, accessed January 10, 2023, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0330&from=EN>.

³⁴ “Energy Union package: A framework strategy for a resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy,” European Commission, last modified February 25, 2015, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:1bd46c90-bdd4-11e4-bbe101aa75ed71a1.0001.03/DOC_1&format=PDF.

³⁵ Alexandra-Maria Bosce, *International Networks, Advocacy and EU Energy Policy-Making* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 43-44.

Nonetheless, the EU still struggles to maintain the effective functioning of its diplomatic actions on energy within the domain of its foreign policy. Albeit the TFEU stresses that energy is a shared responsibility between EU Member States and the EU,³⁶ energy policy and thus the matter of energy security remains to be distinctive matters of member state responsibility.³⁷ Thus and so, EU member states retain their core national competences rather than pursuing supranational integration on energy security issue;³⁸ and sustain their long-established political relations with their respective foreign energy suppliers, bounded by degrees of their external energy dependence.³⁹ The lack of supranational approach⁴⁰ and sequential misalignment of member state preferences for external energy relations not only restrain the effectiveness of the EU competences on energy diplomacy,⁴¹ but also hold back the EU diplomatic actions on energy issues to be “well-orchestrated”.⁴²

³⁶ “Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,” European Union, accessed February 11, 2023, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>.

³⁷ Jørgen Wettstad, Per Ove Eikeland, and Måns Nilsson, “EU climate and energy policy: A hesitant supranational turn. Global Environmental Politics,” *Global Environmental Politics* 12, no. 2 (2021):67-86, https://doi.org/10.1162/GLEP_a_00109; Anna Herranz-Surrallés, “European External Energy Policy: Governance, Diplomacy and Sustainability,” in *The SAGE Handbook of European Foreign Policy: Two Volume Set*, eds. Knud Erik Jørgensen, Aasne Kalland Aarstad, Edith Drieskens, Katie Laatikainen, and Ben Tonra (London: Sage Publications, 2015), 914.

³⁸ Philipp Thaler and Vija Pakalkaite, “Governance through real-time compliance: the supranationalisation of European external energy policy,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 28, no. 2 (2020): 208, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2020.1712462>; David Buchan, “Energy policy: Sharp challenges and rising ambitions,” in *Policy-making in the European Union*, eds. Helen Wallace, Mark A. Pollack, and Alasdair R. Young (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 344-366.

³⁹ Jan Frederik Braun, “EU Energy Policy Under the Treaty of Lisbon Rules: Between A New Policy and Business as Usual,” *EPIN Working Paper*, no. 31 (2011): 2.

⁴⁰ Gonzalo Escribano, Ramón Mahia, and Rafael de Arce, “The Europeanization of EU member states’ energy security policies: convergence patterns,” in *Energy Security for the EU in the 21st Century: Markets, Geopolitics and Corridors*, eds. José María Marín Quemada, Javier García-Verdugo and Gonzalo Escribano (London: Routledge, 2011), 213.

⁴¹ Giuli, “Getting energy.”

⁴² Michèle Knodt, Franziska Müller, and Nadine Piefer, “Explaining European Union External Energy Governance with Emerging Powers,” in *Challenges of*

On the other hand, given the new geopolitical challenges and systemic shifts in the world, the EU has taken the notice of the substance of geopolitics and strategic thinking in foreign policy;⁴³ and has strived to develop important means to achieve energy system stability and energy supply security.⁴⁴ With the Green Paper⁴⁵ released in 2000, wherein energy supply security was featured as an integral part of an effective functioning economy, the EU enhanced the powers of high representative in a bid for conducting diplomatic negotiations and representing the EU collectively its external actions on energy security. These advancements resulted in the adoption of a new strategic review in 2008 that includes supplementary measures and policy instruments for energy security. In fact, the notion of “safe, secure, sustainable and affordable energy” as an indispensable part of the [effective] functioning of [the European] society was reiterated in the “Energy 2020”⁴⁶ in 2010 and the “Energy Roadmap 2050”⁴⁷ in 2011, prioritizing energy security as a policy issue just before the launch of the European Energy Union.

Shortly after Russia’s annexation of Crimea, the EU’s first “Energy Security Strategy” was adopted in 2014 in response to growing concerns about the Union’s energy dependence and disruptions on its energy supplies.⁴⁸ In this conjuncture, the EU’s energy diplomacy endeavors have progressed even further with the adoption of the “Energy Diplomacy Action Plan” by the Council of the European Union in 2015. In fact, the Plan

European External Energy Governance with Emerging Powers, eds. Michèle Knodt, Nadine Piefer, and Franziska Müller (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 57-74.

⁴³ Cristian Nitoiu and Monika Sus, “Introduction: The Rise of Geopolitics in the EU’s Approach in Eastern Neighbourhood,” *Geopolitics* 24, no.1 (2019): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2019.1544396>.

⁴⁴ Pastukhova, Pepe, and Westphal, “Beyond the Green Deal,” 2-3.

⁴⁵ “Green Paper: Towards a European Strategy for the Security of Energy Supply,” European Commission, last modified November 29, 2000, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52000DC0769>, 769.

⁴⁶ “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Energy 2020: A strategy for competitive, sustainable and secure energy,” European Commission, last modified November 10, 2010, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52010DC0639>, 2.

⁴⁷ “Energy Roadmap 2050”, European Commission, last modified December 15, 2011, https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2014-10/roadmap2050_ia_20120430_en_0.pdf, 2.

⁴⁸ European Commission, “European Energy Security Strategy”.

proclaimed that the EU should engage in collective action on energy-related matters in its external relations by employing foreign policy tools that would postulate its policy priorities and strengthen its shared stance on how to confront intricacies relating to its energy diplomacy.⁴⁹ Also in the wake of this Plan, the 2016 EU Global Strategy reiterated the expediency of energy diplomacy in establishing strong relations between energy producer, consumer and transit countries, and in the inflow of diversified energy supplies to European markets”.⁵⁰

In the shadow of the course of events enflamed by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the EU’s concerns over energy security have intensified. In May 2022, the EU has launched its latest trajectory, the International Energy Strategy as part of the REPowerEU Plan. REPowerEU Plan presents how the EU energy diplomacy and external energy management should be framed; and mainly sets forward an action plan to strengthen energy security, phase out dependency on Russian energy supplies, and support for inclusive global energy transition.⁵¹ The vision of the this Plan is therefore considered as a major step in changing the EU’s strategic projection in the field of energy as it envisages the complete phase out of Russian gas supplies before 2030.⁵² Its effective implementation will be dependent on the EU’s approach on energy diplomacy relying on supranational policy competences in support of sustainable energy security.⁵³

Nonetheless, even if the EU intends to gain access to new energy resources and hence diversify its energy supplies through enhancing

⁴⁹ “Council Conclusions on Energy Diplomacy and EU Energy Diplomacy Action Plan,” Council of the European Union, last modified July 20, 2015, <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10995-2015-INIT/en/pdf>.

⁵⁰ “A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy,” European External Action Service, last modified November 14, 2016, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_implementation_plan_st14392.en16_0.pdf, 22.

⁵¹ “REPowerEU: affordable, secure and sustainable energy for Europe,” European Commission, accessed December 15, 2022, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowereu-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_en.

⁵² Jacopo Maria Pepe, “Geopolitics and Energy Security in Europe: How Do We Move Forward?,” *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, (2023): 9.

⁵³ Susi Dennison, “Diplomatic power: The EU’s ambitious new energy strategy,” European Council on Foreign Relations Commentary, last modified May 22, 2022, <https://ecfr.eu/article/diplomatic-power-the-eus-ambitious-new-energy-strategy/>.

multilateral cooperation by using energy diplomacy as a foreign policy tool,⁵⁴ the Union's strategic autonomy as a foreign policy actor and its capability to maintain its normative power as a diplomatic actor the field of energy seems unconvincing given its over-dependency on external energy sources.⁵⁵ In fact, in 2021, the EU as the world's biggest "primary energy importer" has covered 40% of its natural gas, 30% of its crude oil, and 30% of its hard coal demands by Russian exports.⁵⁶ Given its dependency on Russia as its primary energy supplier, the EU commits itself to: i) address the matter of energy dependency as a foreign policy problem;⁵⁷ ii) strengthen its leverage on energy security matters at the supranational level; and iii) put energy diplomacy in action based on the mutual effort of the EU member states for the achievement of solidarity⁵⁸ and a common approach on foreign policy concerning the Union's external energy relations.

Overall, it can be deduced that the inclusion of new clauses on energy policy, energy security and external energy relations have enhanced the EU's internal policy competences; and signified the importance of adopting a common approach to make energy policy and security feasible.⁵⁹ Although these changes refute the claim that the EU has no common external energy policy,⁶⁰ the current state of policymaking, nonconformity in policy integration, and diverging national interests create a challenge for the EU to effectively employ its energy diplomacy in general. With reference to its foreign policy goals on energy, the next section scrutinizes the EU's energy diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean bounded by internal dynamics and external regional developments.

⁵⁴ Goldthau, "Energy diplomacy," 22.

⁵⁵ Eloïse Ryon, "European strategic autonomy: Energy at the heart of European security?," *European View* 19, no. 2 (2020): 241, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1781685820968302>.

⁵⁶ Simone Tagliapietra, "The geopolitics of energy in Europe: Short-term and long-term issues," *Funcas Papeles de Energía* 17 (2022): 84.

⁵⁷ Tomas Maltby, "European Union energy policy integration: A case of European Commission policy entrepreneurship and increasing supranationalism," *Energy Policy* 55 (April 2013): 441, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2012.12.031>.

⁵⁸ Richard Youngs, *Energy Security: Europe's New Foreign Policy Priority* (London: Routledge, 2009), 26.

⁵⁹ Emil Kirchner and Can Berk, "European Energy Security Co-operation: Between Amity and Enmity," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48, no. 4 (2010): 877, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02077.x>.

⁶⁰ Richard Youngs, "The EU's global climate and energy policies: gathering or losing momentum?," in *The Handbook of Global Energy Policy*, ed. Andreas Goldthau (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013): 432.

III. The EU Energy Diplomacy Towards the Eastern Mediterranean

Within the scope of the European energy security strategy, the EU's foreign policy goals are set as the providing of uninterrupted energy supply, maintaining energy security, and reducing dependency through diversification. Along the same line, the "3Ds" of European energy security are identified as: i) "diversification of energy sources", "diversification of routes of supply", and ii) "diversification of suppliers."⁶¹ To attain these goals, the EU has been following a more geopolitical stance on its foreign policy and energy diplomacy accommodating political, economic, military, technological and cultural traits in different regions such as the Mediterranean;⁶² which also forms a basis for the EU's foreign policy motive vis-à-vis its energy diplomacy endeavors in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Formerly, the "Mediterranean spécificité" was remarked on for the first time in the foreign policy domain of the EU in the post-Cold War period.⁶³ However, the EU's actual conception of the Mediterranean space started with the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership⁶⁴, and was later emphasized in the EU's European Neighborhood Policy in 2004.⁶⁵ However, it was only after the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008 that it realistically felt into place in the foreign policy domain of the EU. Taken as a whole, these initiatives substantiated the formation of a structural basis for the EU's

⁶¹ Igor Taranic, "European Energy Policies and Their Relevance to the Eastern Mediterranean," in *Energy Cooperation and Security in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Seismic Shift towards Peace or Conflict?*, ed. Angelos Giannaopoulos (Ramat Aviv: The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, Tel Aviv University, 2016), 115.

⁶² Katrin Bastian, "The EU in the Eastern Mediterranean – a "Geopolitical" Actor?," *Orbis* 65, no. 3 (Summer 2021): 483, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2021.06.010>.

⁶³ Ester Barbé, "Balancing Europe's Eastern and Southern Dimensions," *EUI Working Papers* 97, no. 71 (December 1997): 2-4.

⁶⁴ Richard Edis, "Does the Barcelona Process matter?," *Mediterranean Politics* 3, no. 3 (1998): 93-105, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629399808414668>.

⁶⁵ Paul James Cardwell, "EuroMed, European Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean: Overlapping Policy Frames in the EU's Governance of the Mediterranean," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49, no. 2 (2011): 219-241, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02119.x>.

energy diplomacy which would generate “more secure and sustainable energy models”⁶⁶ in the long run.

Seeing as international politics is progressively reigned by geopolitical considerations, the EU has continuously re-assessed its strategic thinking in foreign policy and adopted a more politicized and pragmatic stance on its external energy relations since late 2000s.⁶⁷ Particularly, the Russian-Ukrainian disputes over gas supplies that took place in 2006 and 2009 respectively had caused major interruptions in the EU's external energy supply.⁶⁸ This geopolitical development brought forward energy security as the most critical problem of European security;⁶⁹ and set the legitimate ground for the EU to take external actions through energy diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The geostrategic importance of the Eastern Mediterranean for the EU's energy security and energy diversification strategy has increased even further as an after-effect of the major spiraling of diplomatic tension in the wake of Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014; followed by the recent natural gas discoveries off the coasts of Israel, the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) and Egypt.⁷⁰ Given that energy diplomacy comprises diplomatic activities that enhance access to new and diverse energy resources, the natural gas discoveries surely unveiled the Eastern Mediterranean's potential for the EU as a region harboring energy supply alternative to Russia along with interwoven opportunities for the economic development of energy producers in the region.⁷¹ This in turn has raised the EU's foreign policy anticipation that this particular region could potentially meet the EU's energy need, and allow the EU to achieve its goals on energy security, diversification and

⁶⁶ “Energy & Climate Action,” Union for the Mediterranean, accessed June 10, 2023, <https://ufmsecretariat.org/what-we-do/energy-and-climate-action/>.

⁶⁷ Nitoiu and Sus, “Introduction: The Rise,” 10.

⁶⁸ Sijbren De Jong, Jan Wouters, and Steven Sterkx, “The 2009 Russian-Ukrainian gas dispute: lessons for European energy crisis management after Lisbon,” *European Foreign Affairs Review* 15, no. 4 (2010): 511-538, <https://doi.org/10.54648/eerr2010037>.

⁶⁹ Milina, “Energy Security,” 32.

⁷⁰ Andrea Prontera and Mariusz Ruszel, “Energy Security in the Eastern Mediterranean,” *Middle East Policy* 24, no. 3 (2017): 145, <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12296>.

⁷¹ Andreas Stergiou, “Energy Security in the Eastern Mediterranean,” *International Journal of Global Energy Issues* 40, no. 5 (2017): 321, <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJGEI.2017.086842>.

resilience – as a central goal of its Energy Union strategy⁷² through diplomatic measures involving the diversification of main energy supplies and energy routes.

In this light, it can be claimed that within a time span of more than ten years, the EU has strongly undertaken solid steps in enhancing its energy diplomacy by promoting a series of geopolitical flagship projects⁷³ such as the (failed) Nabucco Pipeline that aimed to diversify energy supplies and routes for Europe from Turkey to Austria; and the Southern Gas Corridor that brings natural gas resources from the Caspian Sea to the heart of Europe. However, it must be noted that the Eastern Mediterranean remains under the influence of several inconsistencies generated by regional disputes and conflicts. In fact, the recent natural gas discoveries have triggered intricate political, economic and security-related debates; generated interest-wise diverging bilateral agreements between central state actors in the region; and caused maritime disputes concerning the “overlapping and undelimited Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) where the offshore natural energy resources and transportation routes exist”.⁷⁴ These multilayered geopolitical challenges thus have obscured “the full exploitation of the gas reserves”;⁷⁵ and left the matter of the transfer these resources from the Eastern Mediterranean to other markets at the extra-regional level unresolved.

Provided that, as a method of the EU energy diplomacy, the facilitation of economic cooperation among the states in the region transpired as auspicious means for achieving stability and diminishing political volatility

⁷² Tareq Baoni, “Pipelines and Pipedreams: How the EU Can Support a Regional Gas Hub in the Eastern Mediterranean,” *European Council on Foreign Policy Brief* 211 (April 2017): 1.

⁷³ Pavel K. Baev and Indira Øverland, “The South Stream versus Nabucco pipeline race: geopolitical and economic (ir)rationalities and political stakes in megaprojects,” *International Affairs* 86, no. 5 (2010): 1075-1090, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2010.00929.x>; Richard Youngs, “Foreign Policy and Energy Security: Markets, Pipelines and Politics,” in *Toward a Common European Union Energy Policy: Problems, Progress, and Prospects*, eds. Vicki L. Birchfield and John S. Duffield (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 55.

⁷⁴ Badarin and Schumacher, “The Eastern Mediterranean,” 415.

⁷⁵ Ana Stanič and Sohbet Karbuz, “The Challenges Facing Eastern Mediterranean Gas and How International Law Can Help Overcome Them,” *Journal of Energy & Natural Resources Law* 39, no. 2 (2021): 213-47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02646811.2020.1816739>.

in the region;⁷⁶ and for the realization of internal cohesion and energy integration in its neighborhood. In that direction, in year 2021, a new agenda for the Mediterranean has been presented in the EU with the aim of renewing and strengthening the Union's strategic partnership with its Southern Neighborhood. The main objective of the Agenda is stated in the Joint Communication as to tackle the common challenges, benefit from opportunities, and unfold the region's economic potential through collective action.⁷⁷

The Eastern Mediterranean since then has been considered as one of the regions that the EU has contended with a higher-level diplomatic priority⁷⁸ equally so for the capacity it offers the EU to improve its regional cooperation with the Middle Eastern countries.⁷⁹ The diplomatic agenda of the EU in the Eastern Mediterranean hence has revolved around supporting rapprochement ideas that would for instance settle the bi- and tri-lateral disputes such as the ones between Israel-Turkey, and Turkey-RoC-Greece, and integrate Israel economically with its neighbors;⁸⁰ presumably making it possible for the EU to gain access to wealth of energy resources with profitable economic implications for the EU energy market.⁸¹ It is also probable that these disputes and conflicts might urge the EU to take more proactive and assertive steps and boost its "strategic autonomy" in the region.⁸²

⁷⁶ Michael Emerson, "Fishing for Gas and More in Cypriot Waters," *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 1 (2013): 165-181; Filippou Proedrou, "Re-conceptualising the Energy and Security Complex in the Eastern Mediterranean," *The Cyprus Review* 24, no. 2 (2012): 15-28.

⁷⁷ "Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood: A new Agenda for the Mediterranean," European Commission, last modified February 9, 2021, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021JC0002>.

⁷⁸ Moritz Rau, Günter Seufert, and Kirsten Westphal, "The Eastern Mediterranean as a Focus for the EU's Energy Transition," *SWP Comment* 8 (February 2022): 2.

⁷⁹ Baconi, "Pipelines," 1.

⁸⁰ Prontera and Ruszel, "Energy Security," 145-154.

⁸¹ Ayla Gürel and Laura Le Cornu, "Can Gas Catalyse Peace in the Eastern Mediterranean?," *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs* 49, no. 2 (June 2014): 11-33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2014.906799>.

⁸² Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "The European Union in the Eastern Mediterranean in 2020: Whither Strategic Autonomy," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 61, no. 4 (September 2021): 1-11, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13247>.

On a positive note, it is predicted that the discoveries made in the late 2000s in the Eastern Mediterranean may result in further economic profits and incentives reinforcing closer relations between the states in the region. Therefore, it becomes highly crucial for the EU to strengthen its energy diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean and take energy-related matters to task in order to explore the uncharted regional prospects. In this line of reasoning, the EU's energy diplomacy enforces the development of projects of common interests, the resolution of deep-rooted conflicts (e.g., Turkish-Cypriot dispute), and the incentive-based support for reforms in Egypt;⁸³ least for the positive effects they could have for European energy security.

For the EU, the benchmarks of a “project of common interest” involve: i) having a direct impact on energy markets in minimum two EU member states, ii) enhancing the EU market competition, iii) promoting internal energy integration, iv) diversifying energy resources, v) contributing to the renewable energy transition.⁸⁴ Herein, as an integral part of the EU energy diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean, any project of common interest or initiative touching on economy, trade, development, energy security is deemed crucial for the enhancement of the regional export of the discovered energy reserves in the region.

For instance, the EastMed pipeline project, which was presented by the European Commission in 2015 as a “project of common interest”,⁸⁵ was considered as the “most strategic project” in the Eastern Mediterranean region until 2021 when it became financially unfeasible for the EU and the US openly negated the project proclaiming that it was not viable in economic terms. If ever the project was implemented, the Israeli gas would be imported into the European markets through RoC and Greece, lapsing in Italy; meaning that it would pass through the disputed EEZs between Turkey, Greece and RoC, which extensively stands as a source of an open-ended conflict in the region.⁸⁶ Also, the exclusion of Turkey from the project would certainly exacerbate the already complicated dispute over the energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, and hence the EU's energy diplomacy would turn out to be a failed endeavor considering that the project

⁸³ Baconi, “Pipelines,” 1-2.

⁸⁴ Baconi, “Pipelines,” 4.

⁸⁵ “Eastern Mediterranean Natural Gas Pipeline – Pre-FEED Studies,” European Commission, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/printpdf/11763>.

⁸⁶ Mustafa Aydın and Kostas Infantis, *Turkish-Greek Relations: The Security Dilemma in the Aegean* (London: Routledge, 2004).

was reflecting on a conflicting rather than a common interest among the concerning regional actors.

Apart from the EU's own project initiatives, the strategic geometry of the EU energy diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean is also directly influenced and shaped by the actions of the energy actors in the region, causing the EU energy diplomacy endeavors to lose leverage and stand in reactive instead of proactive state. For instance, the geopolitical equation in the Eastern Mediterranean has changed momentarily after Turkey and Libya signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2019. With the MoU, Turkey has effectively made a bilateral EEZ agreement reflecting upon its own understanding of "maritime rights" extending its EEZ beyond Greek islands of Crete and Rhodes which in turn resulted in the worsening of the already aggravated conflicts between the two parties and further obscured the regional dynamics.⁸⁷

Likewise, the energy actors that are actively present in the region happened to become highly crucial for the EU's diplomatic attempts in general. For instance, in year 2018, Egypt introduced the "East Mediterranean Gas Forum" to support and coordinate policy discourses of energy producer, consumer and transit countries on energy resources, and to set up a "sustainable regional gas market" in the Eastern Mediterranean that would release its potential as new a hub for energy resources.⁸⁸ It was in this context that the first step was taken for initiatives that aim to: i) involve an energy partnership between Egypt and Israel proposed to export of Israeli gas to Egypt and beyond; ii) bring Cypriot gas to Egypt; and iii) advance Egypt's already established infrastructure for the gas exports from the Eastern Mediterranean region to global markets. Since then, Egypt not only has grown to be a new and reliable regional energy hub in the Eastern Mediterranean,⁸⁹ but also shown its potential as a reliable energy collaborator for the EU.

Notwithstanding, the initial conflict in Ukraine in 2022 caused a sudden disruption to global and European energy markets; and the EU's energy diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean took a major turn. In the shadow of

⁸⁷ Badarin and Schumacher, "The Eastern Mediterranean," 428.

⁸⁸ "Overview," East Mediterranean Gas Forum, accessed March 7, 2023, <https://emgf.org/about-us/overview/>.

⁸⁹ Karim Haggag and Nadine El Nashar, "The Eastern Mediterranean Could Strengthen Europe's Energy Security," last modified August 2, 2022, <https://www.brinknews.com/the-eastern-mediterranean-could-strengthen-europes-energy-security/>.

this occurrence, the EU energy diplomacy was successfully executed in the form of multilateral collaboration between energy producing and consuming states. In fact, in June 2022, the EU signed a MoU with Egypt and Israel, the strategic trait of which encompasses the delivery of Egyptian and Israeli energy resources (LNG) to the European market through Egypt. It also has foreseen renewable energy transition, alternative use of hydrogen, rising energy efficiency and the development of interconnected electricity networks across the Mediterranean region.⁹⁰ Therefore, it can be argued that the trilateral MoU has introduced a new dimension to the EU's energy diplomacy and filled a void in the Union's energy strategy since it holds a "potential to leverage on going regional cooperation schemes around natural gas to transform region's energy geopolitics and weave the Eastern Mediterranean more tightly into the EU's emerging energy diplomacy".⁹¹

As of today, the key supposition of the EU energy diplomacy strategy regarding energy diversification in the Eastern Mediterranean is based on Egypt's trustworthiness, as it remains to be the "most reliable route" for exporting gas from the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe. In this context, the EU, by developing a more proactive approach on its energy diplomacy, should focus on creating an incentive-based cooperation framework with a specific motivation for accelerating the formation of a secure, sustainable regional energy hub in the Eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, it is crucial for the EU to adopt and implement economic instruments for the development of energy reserves and form a "regulatory framework" that facilitates political and legal foundations of a regional energy market.⁹²

Supported by the EU's energy diplomacy, the progression in energy transition in the Eastern Mediterranean region might create new economic incentives necessary for a greater political cooperation and stability in the future. It seems plausible that the EU's demand for natural gas will significantly drop in the medium- to long-term period since the energy transformation for renewable and greener energy has already started in the EU member states' energy markets. Given that the EU member states are currently bounded by different degrees of external energy dependence, the probable fall in the demand for natural gas resources in parallel with a transition to renewable and greener energy might increase conformity in

⁹⁰ Mithat Çelikpala, "Energy and the Potential for Cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean," last modified December 17, 2022, <https://www.uikpanorama.com/blog/2022/12/17/mc-2/>.

⁹¹ Haggag and El Nashar, "The Eastern Mediterranean."

⁹² Baconi, "Pipelines," 13-14.

policy integration and coherence in policymaking. If ever this projection turns into reality, the likelihood of the EU engaging in collective action would increase and positively contribute to its energy diplomacy endeavors.

Nonetheless, seeing that the green transformation will most certainly transfigure energy markets and market requirements at local, regional and extra-regional levels in the long run,⁹³ the EU is likely to evaluate the financing of the future infrastructure and pipeline projects with comprehensive political and economic reasoning.⁹⁴ Under these conditions, this transformation might have two opposing outcomes specifically for the Eastern Mediterranean region: i) it might replace fossil fuels and reduce the demand and hence the relevance of natural gas imports from the Eastern Mediterranean; and ii) the region might grow to be a hub for green energy.

Consistent with the EU's goal on reducing its reliance on natural gas resources and transitioning to green energy as stated in its RePowerEU Plan, the trilateral MoU of 2018 between the EU, Egypt and Israel envisages the starting of energy transition for renewable energy, strengthening of energy efficiency and the development of electricity networks throughout the Mediterranean. Consistent with the EU's Green Deal policies, a recommended course of action for the EU energy diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean would start with the adoption of a future-oriented approach on the formation of a more sustainable form of energy economy based on the "expansion of renewable energies", the "production of green electricity", the "expansion of power interconnections" and "prospects for producing and transporting renewable hydrogen".⁹⁵

Conclusion

Energy has become a center piece in diplomacy and foreign policy on account of its intensifying impact on national security. Stationed within the strategic geometry of foreign policy and national security, energy diplomacy is identified as an important foreign policy instrument intended for energy security and diversification. By reviewing the existing literature on energy diplomacy, this article shed light on the EU's energy diplomacy endeavors

⁹³ Steven Griffiths, "Energy diplomacy in a time of energy transition," *Energy Strategy Reviews* 26 (November 2019): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esr.2019.100386>.

⁹⁴ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Energy Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean: Conflict or Cooperation?" *Middle East Policy* 21, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 130, <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12087>.

⁹⁵ Rau, Seufert, and Westphal, "The Eastern Mediterranean," 6.

and its internal competences in adopting and implementing external energy policies; and assessed the performance of the EU's energy diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The analysis manifests conflicting outcomes on the functioning of the EU's energy diplomacy in connection with its internal policy competences and its external diplomatic endeavors concerning energy security and energy diversification in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Regarding its internal competences, it is observed that since 1990s, the EU has considerably advanced its internal policymaking for effective external energy relations within the domain of its foreign policy. The new clauses on energy policymaking reasonably enhanced the role of the EU institutions and brought policy competences to the supranational level. Nonetheless, the strategic sphere of the EU's energy has not been re-allocated away from the EU member states' national competences completely, ultimately limiting the effectiveness of the EU's energy diplomacy actions.

Second, while being an early and therefore hypothetical assessment of the EU's practices of energy diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean, in the current political climate, it seems plausible that the region might turn into a counsel of perfection for the EU's foreign policy goal on energy security and energy diversification due to two anticipated reasons: i) the endemic problem of intergovernmental prerogatives in the energy policymaking process; and ii) deep-rooted political distrust and enmities along with the interest-wise conflicting bilateral agreements among the major actors located in the region. That is to say, that the division among the EU member states and the EU's reactive rather than proactive actions will likely jeopardize its capability in operationalizing energy diplomacy in general. The existing disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean region might also stand as another great obstacle for any collaborative initiative on energy security and diversification, which might limit the impact and effectiveness of the EU energy diplomacy.

On the other side of the coin, the development of new modes of cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean can be mutually beneficial for the EU and the energy actors located in this region. If the competences of the EU member states can be harmonized and the intergovernmental prerogatives can be transferred to supranational level, this potential can be realized successfully through the instruments of the EU energy diplomacy. Whether the focus is on energy diversification (of supply routes and/or suppliers) or energy transition, the Eastern Mediterranean still transpires as a strategic region for the EU's energy security. Nonetheless, at present, the findings showed that irrespective of the regional context, the EU's degree of

accomplishment in the field of energy has remained rather limited relative to other policy issues that partake in foreign policy making; and revealed that the EU has so far failed to effectively exercise its energy diplomacy instruments to build sustainable external energy relations, and provide energy security.

Last but not least, it can be concluded that the political setting of global energy is rapidly changing with respect to policy paradigm and the existing international energy architecture misses the mark on sustaining long-established traits of external energy relations of states and non-state actors. Following the emergence of new set of actors and their respective policy goals along with transition to greener and renewable energy, there are indeed new political and economic dynamics in global energy. These changes will naturally shift the nexus of geopolitics, foreign policy, national security strategy and geography of energy resources; ultimately dictating alterations in the policy toolboxes of these actors and their energy diplomacy strategies. Against all odds, through collective action in its internal policymaking, foreign policy and energy diplomacy, the EU might turn the high hopes into reality on building the sustainable green and secure energy and forming an economic model of the future only if all the internal and external factors holistically fall into their right place. Therefore, this study recommends for further research on the relation between energy diplomacy and energy transition with particular emphasis on the impact of energy transition on the decisiveness of geopolitics, and of the factors (internal/external) on the effectiveness of energy diplomacy.

Bibliography

- Ali, Saleem H. "Energizing peace: The role of pipelines in regional cooperation." Last modified July 14, 2010. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/energizing-peace-the-role-of-pipelines-in-regional-cooperation/>.
- Andoura, Sami. "Security of Supply and the External Dimension of a European Energy Policy." *Studia Diplomatica* 60, no. 2 (2007): 67-109.
- Andoura, Sami, Leigh Hancher, and Marc Van der Woude. "Towards a European Energy Community: A Policy Proposal." *Notre Europe Studies & Research* 76 (March 2010): 1-126.
- Aydin, Mustafa and Kostas Infantis. *Turkish-Greek Relations: The Security Dilemma in the Aegean*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Baconi, Tareq. "Pipelines and Pipedreams: How the EU Can Support a Regional Gas Hub in the Eastern Mediterranean." *European Council on Foreign Policy Brief* 211 (April 2017): 1-17.

- Badarin, Emile and Tobias Schumacher. "The Eastern Mediterranean Energy Bonanza: A Piece in the Regional and Global Geopolitical Puzzle, and the Role of the European Union." *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 70, no. 3 (October 2022): 414-438. <https://doi.org/10.1515/soeu-2022-0036>.
- Baev, Pavel K. and Indira Øverland. "The South Stream versus Nabucco pipeline race: geopolitical and economic (ir)rationalities and political stakes in megaprojects." *International Affairs* 86, no. 5 (2010): 1075-1090. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2010.00929.x>.
- Bahgat, Gawdat. "Europe's Energy Security: Challenges and Opportunities." *International Affairs* 82, no. 5 (September 2006): 961-975.
- Barbé, Ester. "Balancing Europe's Eastern and Southern Dimensions," *EUI Working Papers* 97, no. 71 (December 1997): 1-17.
- Bastian, Katrin. "The EU in the Eastern Mediterranean – a "Geopolitical" Actor?." *Orbis* 65, no. 3 (Summer 2021): 483-489. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2021.06.010>.
- Bosce, Alexandra. "EU Energy Diplomacy: Searching for New Suppliers in Azerbaijan and Iran." *Geopolitics* 24, no. 1 (2019): 145-173. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2018.1477755>.
- Bosce, Alexandra-Maria. *International Networks, Advocacy and EU Energy Policy-Making*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.
- Bovan, Ana, Tamara Vučenović, and Nenad Perić. "Negotiating Energy Diplomacy and its Relationship with Foreign Policy and National Security." *International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy* 10, no. 2 (2020): 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.32479/ijeep.8754>.
- Braun, Jan Frederik. "EU Energy Policy Under the Treaty of Lisbon Rules: Between A New Policy and Business as Usual." *EPIN Working Paper*, no. 31 (2011): 1-11.
- Buchan, David. *Energy and Climate Change: Europe at the Crossroads*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Buchan, David. "Energy policy: Sharp challenges and rising ambitions." In *Policy-making in the European Union*, edited by Helen Wallace, Mark A. Pollack, and Alasdair R. Young, 344-366. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Campos, Ana and Carla, Patrício Fernandes. "The Geopolitics of Energy." In *Geopolitics of Energy and Energy Security*, edited by Carla Patrício Fernandes and Teresa Ferreira Rodrigues, 23-48. Lisbon: Instituto da Defesa Nacional, 2017.

- Cardwell, Paul James. "EuroMed, European Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean: Overlapping Policy Frames in the EU's Governance of the Mediterranean." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49, no. 2 (2011): 219-241. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02119.x>.
- Chaban, Natalia and Michèle Knodt. "Energy diplomacy in the context of multistakeholder diplomacy: The EU and BICS." *Cooperation and Conflict* 50, no. 4 (December 2015): 457-474. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001083671557354>.
- Council of the European Union. "Council Conclusions on Energy Diplomacy and EU Energy Diplomacy Action Plan." Last modified July 20, 2015. <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10995-2015-INIT/en/pdf>.
- Council of the European Union. "Strategic Compass for Security and Defence - For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security." Last modified March 22, 2022. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf>.
- Çelikpala, Mithat. "Energy and the Potential for Cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean." Last modified December 17, 2022. <https://www.uikpanorama.com/blog/2022/12/17/mc-2/>.
- De Jong, Sijbren, Jan Wouters, and Steven Sterkx. "The 2009 Russian-Ukrainian gas dispute: lessons for European energy crisis management after Lisbon." *European Foreign Affairs Review* 15, no. 4 (2010): 511-538. <https://doi.org/10.54648/eerr2010037>.
- Dennison, Susi. "Diplomatic power: The EU's ambitious new energy strategy." *European Council on Foreign Relations Commentary*. Last modified May 22, 2022. <https://ecfr.eu/article/diplomatic-power-the-eus-ambitious-new-energy-strategy/>.
- Downie, Christian. "Australian energy diplomacy." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 73, no. 2 (2019): 119-125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2018.153494>.
- Edis, Richard. "Does the Barcelona Process matter?." *Mediterranean Politics* 3, no. 3 (1998): 93-105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629399808414668>.
- Elkind, Jonathan. "Energy Security Call for a Broader Agenda." In *Energy Security: Economics, Politics, Strategies and Implications*, edited by Carlos Pascual and Jonathan Elkind, 119-148. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2010.
- Emerson, Michael. "Fishing for Gas and More in Cypriot Waters." *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 1 (2013): 165-181.
- Escribano, Gonzalo, Ramón Mahia, and Rafael de Arce. "The Europeanization of EU member states' energy security policies: convergence patterns." In *Energy Security for the EU in the 21st Century: Markets, Geopolitics and Corridors*,

edited by José María Marín Quemada, Javier García-Verdugo and Gonzalo Escribano, 210-232. London: Routledge, 2011.

East Mediterranean Gas Forum. “Overview.” Accessed March 7, 2023. <https://emgf.org/about-us/overview/>.

European Commission. “Green Paper: Towards a European Strategy for the Security of Energy Supply.” Last modified November 29, 2000. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52000DC0769>.

European Commission. “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Energy 2020: A strategy for competitive, sustainable and secure energy.” Last modified November 10, 2010. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52010DC0639>.

European Commission. “Energy Roadmap 2050.” Last modified December 15, 2011. https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2014-10/roadmap2050_ia_20120430_en_0.pdf.

European Commission. “Energy Union package: A framework strategy for a resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy.” Last modified February 25, 2015. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:1bd46c90-bdd4-11e4-bbe101aa75ed71a1.0001.03/DOC_1&format=PDF.

European Commission. “Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood: A new Agenda for the Mediterranean.” Last modified February 9, 2021. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021JC0002>.

European Commission. “REPowerEU: affordable, secure and sustainable energy for Europe.” Accessed December 15, 2022. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowereu-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_en.

European Commission. “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: European Energy Security Strategy.” Accessed January 10, 2023. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0330&from=EN>.

European Commission. “Eastern Mediterranean Natural Gas Pipeline – Pre-FEED Studies. Accessed March 11, 2023. <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/printpdf/11763>.

European External Action Service. “A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy.” Last modified November 14, 2016. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_implementation_plan_st14392.en16_0.pdf

- European External Action Service. "Energy Diplomacy." Last modified December 12, 2021. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/energy-diplomacy_en.
- European Parliament. "European Parliament resolution of 17 September 2009 on external aspects of energy security." Last modified September 17, 2009. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-7-2009-0021_EN.html?redirect.
- European Parliament. "Energy policy: general principles." Last modified September 2022. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/68/energy-policy-general-principles>.
- European Union. "Green Paper: A European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy." Last modified July 5, 2006. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/green-paper-a-european-strategy-for-sustainable-competitive-and-secure-energy.html>.
- European Union. "Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union." Accessed February 11, 2023. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>.
- Feklyunina, Valentina. "Russia's International Images and its Energy Policy. An Unreliable Supplier?." *Europe-Asia Studies* 64, no. 3 (2012): 449-469. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2012.661923>.
- Gehring, Thomas, Sebastian Oberthür, and Marc Mühleck. "European Union Actorness in International Institutions: Why the EU is Recognized as an Actor in Some International Institutions, but Not in Others." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no. 5 (September 2013): 849-865. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12030>.
- Gillespie, Richard. "A 'Union for the Mediterranean' ... or for the EU?." *Mediterranean Politics* 13, no. 2 (July 2008): 277-286. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629390802127679>.
- Goldthau, Andreas. "Energy diplomacy in trade and investment of oil and gas." In *Global Energy Governance: The New Rules of the Game*, edited by Andreas Goldthau and Jan Martin Witte, 25-47. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010.
- Giuli, Marco. "Getting energy diplomacy right: A challenge starting at home." *European Policy Centre Commentary*. Accessed January 17, 2023. <https://www.epc.eu/en/Publications/Getting-energy-diplomacy-right~1d05b0>.
- Griffiths, Steven. "Energy diplomacy in a time of energy transition." *Energy Strategy Reviews* 26 (November 2019): 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esr.2019.100386>.

- Grigoriadis, Ioannis N. "Energy Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean: Conflict or Cooperation?." *Middle East Policy* 21, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 124-133. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12087>.
- Grigoriadis, Ioannis N. "The European Union in the Eastern Mediterranean in 2020: Whither Strategic Autonomy." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 61, no. 4 (September 2021): 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13247>.
- Guedry, Michel and Wei Liang. "China's global energy diplomacy: Behavior normalization through economic interdependence or resource neo-mercantilism and power politics?." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 21, no. 2 (2016): 217-240. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11366-016-9405-3>.
- Gürel, Ayla and Laura Le Cornu. "Can Gas Catalyse Peace in the Eastern Mediterranean?." *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs* 49, no. 2 (June 2014): 11-33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2014.906799>.
- Haggag, Karim and Nadine El Nashar. "The Eastern Mediterranean Could Strengthen Europe's Energy Security." Last modified August 2, 2022. <https://www.brinknews.com/the-eastern-mediterranean-could-strengthen-europes-energy-security/>.
- Herranz-Surrallés, Anna. "An emerging EU energy diplomacy? Discursive shifts, enduring practices." *Journal of European Public Policy* 23, no. 9 (2016): 1386-1405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2015.1083044>
- Herranz-Surrallés, Anna. "European External Energy Policy: Governance, Diplomacy and Sustainability." In *The SAGE Handbook of European Foreign Policy: Two Volume Set*, edited by Knud Erik Jørgensen, Aasne Kalland Aarstad, Edith Drieskens, Katie Laatikainen, and Ben Tonra, 911-925. London: Sage Publications, 2015.
- Hu, Geato, Jun Yang and Jun Li. "The Dynamic Evolution of Global Energy Security and Geopolitical Games: 1995-2019." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 21, 14584 (November 2022): 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192114584>.
- Hu, Zhiding and Yuejing Ge. "The Geopolitical Energy Security Evaluation Method and a China Case Application Based on Politics of Scale." *Sustainability* 6, no. 9 (2014): 5682-5696. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su6095682>.
- Huda, Mirza Sadaqat and Saleem H. Ali. "Energy diplomacy in South Asia: Beyond the security paradigm in accessing the TAPI pipeline Project." *Energy Research & Social Science* 34 (December 2017): 202-213. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2017.07.013>.
- Kanellakis, Marinos, Georgios Martinopoulos, and Theodoros Zachariadis. "European Energy Policy – A Review." *Energy Policy* 62 (November 2013): 1020-1030. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2013.08.008>.

- Kirchner, Emil and Can Berk. "European Energy Security Co-operation: Between Amity and Enmity." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48, no. 4 (2010): 859-880. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02077.x>.
- Knodt, Michèle, Franziska Müller, and Nadine Piefer. "Explaining European Union External Energy Governance with Emerging Powers." In *Challenges of European External Energy Governance with Emerging Powers*, edited by Michèle Knodt, Nadine Piefer, and Franziska Müller, 57-74. London and New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Lesage, Dries, Thijs Van de Graaf, and Kirsten Westphal. *Global Energy Governance in a Multipolar World*. London and New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Maltby, Tomas. "European Union energy policy integration: A case of European Commission policy entrepreneurship and increasing supranationalism." *Energy Policy* 55 (April 2013): 435-444. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2012.12.031>.
- Milina, Velichka. "Energy Security and Geopolitics," *Connections* 70, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 25-44.
- Nitoiu, Christian and Monika Sus. "Introduction: The Rise of Geopolitics in the EU's Approach in Eastern Neighbourhood." *Geopolitics* 24, no.1 (2019): 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2019.1544396>.
- Osička, Jan and Filip Černoch. "European energy politics after Ukraine: The road ahead." *Energy Research & Social Science* 91, 102757 (September 2022): 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2022.102757>.
- Pastukhova, Maria, Jacopo Pepe, and Kirsten Westphal. "Beyond the Green Deal: Upgrading the EU's Energy Diplomacy for a New Era." *SWP Comment* 31 (June 2020): 1-8.
- Pepe, Jacopo Maria. "Geopolitics and Energy Security in Europe: How Do We Move Forward?." *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung* (2023): 1-17.
- Prange-Gstöhl, Heiko. "Enlarging the EU's internal energy market: why would third countries accept EU rule export?." *Energy Policy* 37, no.12 (December 2009): 5296-5303. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2009.07.070>.
- Proedrou, Filippou. "Re-conceptualising the Energy and Security Complex in the Eastern Mediterranean." *The Cyprus Review* 24, no. 2 (2012): 15-28.
- Prontera, Andrea and Mariusz Ruszel. "Energy Security in the Eastern Mediterranean." *Middle East Policy* 24, no. 3 (2017): 145-162. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12296>.
- Rau, Moritz, Günter Seufert, and Kirsten Westphal. "The Eastern Mediterranean as a Focus for the EU's Energy Transition." *SWP Comment* 8 (February 2022): 1-7.
- Ryon, Eloïse. "European strategic autonomy: Energy at the heart of European security?." *European View* 19, no. 2 (2020): 228-244. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1781685820968302>.

- Stanič, Ana and Sohbet Karbuz. "The Challenges Facing Eastern Mediterranean Gas and How International Law Can Help Overcome Them." *Journal of Energy & Natural Resources Law* 39, no. 2 (2021): 213-47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02646811.2020.1816739>.
- Stergiou, Andreas. "Energy Security in the Eastern Mediterranean." *International Journal of Global Energy Issues* 40, no. 5 (2017): 320-334. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJGEI.2017.086842>.
- Tagliapietra, Simone. "The geopolitics of energy in Europe: Short-term and long-term issues." *Funcas Papeles de Energía* 17 (2022): 83-102.
- Taranic, Igor. "European Energy Policies and Their Relevance to the Eastern Mediterranean." In *Energy Cooperation and Security in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Seismic Shift towards Peace or Conflict?*, edited by Angelos Giannaopoulos, 109-123. Ramat Aviv: The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, Tel Aviv University, 2016.
- Thaler, Philipp and Vija Pakalkaite. "Governance through real-time compliance: the supranationalisation of European external energy policy." *Journal of European Public Policy* 28, no. 2 (2020): 208-228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2020.1712462>.
- Umbach, Frank. "Global energy security and the implications for the EU." *Energy Policy* 38, no. 3 (March 2010): 1229-1240. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2009.01.010>.
- Union for the Mediterranean. "Energy & Climate Action." Accessed June 10, 2023. <https://ufmsecretariat.org/what-we-do/energy-and-climate-action/>.
- Wettestad, Jørgen, Per Ove Eikeland, and Måns Nilsson. "EU climate and energy policy: A hesitant supranational turn. *Global Environmental Politics*." *Global Environmental Politics* 12, no. 2 (2021): 67-86. https://doi.org/10.1162/GLEP_a_00109.
- Youngs, Richard. *Energy Security: Europe's New Foreign Policy Priority*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Youngs, Richard. "Foreign Policy and Energy Security: Markets, Pipelines and Politics." In *Toward a Common European Union Energy Policy: Problems, Progress, and Prospects*, edited by Vicki L. Birchfield and John S. Duffield, 41-60. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Youngs, Richard. "The EU's global climate and energy policies: gathering or losing momentum?." In *The Handbook of Global Energy Policy*, edited by Andreas Goldthau, 421-234. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.