

## FRAMING THE IMPACTS OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL: REFLECTIONS ON THE EU AS A “NORMATIVE POWER” AND BEYOND

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Research Article

### **Abstract**

*The growing use of fossil fuels and rising greenhouse gas emissions have become critical issues in world politics. The European Union (EU) Green Deal offers to make Europe “the first climate-neutral continent” by 2050. The Green Deal seeks to transform the EU into a resource-efficient, competitive, circular economy. As a normative power in international politics, the EU can influence other actors’ behaviours, which makes it an international norm diffuser. In this sense, the “normative power Europe” concept matches the role of the Green Deal. This article examines if and how the EU Green Deal is a successful tool to maintain the EU’s role as a normative power during carbon neutrality, addressing the opportunities and challenges of the EU Green Deal.*

**Keywords:** *European Union, European Green Deal, Climate Change, Normative Power Europe Approach, Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.*

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## ***Avrupa Yeşil Mutabakatının Etkilerinin Çerçeveselendirilmesi: “Normatif Güç” Olarak AB ve Ötesine Yansımaları***

### **Öz**

*Fosil yakıtların artan kullanımı ve sera gazı emisyonları dünya siyasetinde kritik konular haline gelmiştir. Avrupa Birliği (AB) Yeşil Mutabakatı, Avrupa'yı 2050 yılına kadar "ilk iklim nötr kıta" haline getirmeyi taahhüt etmektedir. Yeşil Mutabakat, AB'yi kaynak verimli, rekabetçi ve dögüsel bir ekonomiye dönüştürmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Uluslararası politikada normatif bir güç olarak AB, diğer aktörlerin davranışlarını etkileyebilmekte ve bu da AB'yi uluslararası bir norm yayıcı konumuna getirmektedir. Bu anlamda, "normatif güç Avrupa" kavramı Yeşil Mutabakatın rolüyle örtüşmektedir. Bu makale, AB Yeşil Mutabakatının karbon nötrlüğü sürecinde AB'nin normatif bir güç olarak rolünü sürdürmek için başarılı bir araç olup olmadığını incelemekte ve AB Yeşil Mutabakatının fırsatlarını ve zorluklarını ele almaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Avrupa Birliği, Avrupa Yeşil Mutabakatı, İklim Değişikliği, Normatif Güç Avrupa Yaklaşımı, Sınırdaki Karbon Düzenleme Mekanizması.*

### **Introduction**

Global warming and climate change have become critical issues in recent decades due to increasing climate concerns and natural disasters, making "mitigating and adapting to climate change" among the main challenges.<sup>1</sup> The energy issue is clearly at the centre of these challenges, with increasing energy consumption and security, dependence on fossil fuels, and rising greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.<sup>2</sup> In 2021, global energy consumption reached 595,15 exajoules, and the European Union (EU) consumed 13.8% of the global primary energy.<sup>3</sup>

Dependence on fossil fuels not only burdens the economy but also leads to the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Energy consumption is the leading cause of GHG emissions induced by global

<sup>1</sup> Amanda R. Carrico, Heather Barnes Truelove, Michael P. Vandenberg and David Dana, "Does learning about climate change adaptation change support for mitigation?" *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 41 (2015): 19-29.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammed Asif and Tariq Muneer, "Energy supply, its demand and security issues for developed and emerging economies", *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews* 11 no 7 (2007): 1388-1413.

<sup>3</sup> "Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022", *BP* (2022) [dataset].

human activities.<sup>4</sup> Global carbon emissions from energy were 33.884,1 million tons of carbon dioxide in 2021, while the EU generated 3793,7 million tons in the same year, accounting for 11.2% of global carbon emissions from energy.<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that almost two-thirds of global GHG emissions are associated with the "combustion of fossil fuels for heating, electricity generation, transportation, and industry."<sup>6</sup>

Global efforts to struggle with climate change peaked with the Paris Agreement 2015. As a result, 194 countries have adopted "the first universal and legally binding international climate agreement" in this framework.<sup>7</sup> In support of the universal climate agenda, the EU has embraced "binding climate and energy targets for 2020 and proposed targets for 2030" as part of its initiatives to "reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80-95% by 2050 and transformation into a low-carbon economy".<sup>8</sup> For 2020, the initial climate and energy targets include "lowering greenhouse gas emissions by 20% (compared to 1990 levels), increasing the share of renewable energy resources by 20%, and achieving a 20% improvement in energy efficiency" (20-20-20 targets)<sup>9</sup> The climate targets of 2020 were further followed by ambitious 2030 and 2050 targets and policies.<sup>10</sup>

One of the most significant of these policies, the EU Green Deal, is a framework by the European Union to prevent climate change and environmental problems, and to leave sustainable resources for future generations.<sup>11</sup> The European Commission has set out the core principles of

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<sup>4</sup> Piotr Golasa, Marcin Wysokiński, Wioletta Bieńkowska-Gołasa, Piotr Gradziuk, Magdalena Golonko, Barbara Gradziuk, Agnieszka Siedlecka and Arkadiusz Gromada, "Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Agriculture, with Particular Emphasis on Emissions from Energy Used", *Energies* 14, no 13 (2021): 3784.

<sup>5</sup> "Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022".

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "Climate Action", *United Nations*, 2023, Access Date: February 21, 2023, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/paris-agreement>

<sup>8</sup> "Climate strategies & targets", *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: March 3, 2023, [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets\\_en#:~:text=The%20EU%20aims%20to%20be,net%2Dzero%20greenhouse%20gas%20emissions](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets_en#:~:text=The%20EU%20aims%20to%20be,net%2Dzero%20greenhouse%20gas%20emissions)

<sup>9</sup> "Global Energy Review: CO2 Emissions in 2021", *International Energy Agency*, March 2022, Access Date: March 14, 2023, <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-co2-emissions-in-2021-2>

<sup>10</sup> "Climate strategies & targets".

<sup>11</sup> "A European Green Deal", *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: March 5, 2023, [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-green-deal\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-green-deal_en)

the European Green Deal as follows: (1) To become "the first climate-neutral continent by 2050" through zero net greenhouse gas emissions, (2) To ensure "decoupled economic growth from resource use," and (3) To leave no one behind for a just and inclusive green transformation.<sup>12</sup> These fundamental principles also highlight the Green Deal as "a new-generation growth strategy for the European Union." On the other hand, implementing this transformation project and growth strategy requires updating the legal infrastructure, preparing action plans in many areas, and developing new policies accordingly.<sup>13</sup>

The European Green Deal does not only impact the existing EU system and its member states. It will also significantly impact the EU's trading partners through different mechanisms, such as aiming to push these partners to issue carbon pricing, reduce their carbon footprint and initiate the green transformation of their industrial policies. Therefore, it also emerges as an essential tool that brings new norms and values to the international system. In this sense, it creates an opportunity for the EU to influence other actors' norms and values with its value and norm system in the broader geography via climate and energy-related policies and regulations as a normative power, allowing it to make the EU an international norm diffuser.<sup>14</sup> To this end, this study aims to analyse the climate targets of the European Green Deal from the perspective of the Normative Power Europe (NPE) concept. In doing so, it examines if and how the EU Green Deal is a successful tool to maintain the EU's role as a normative power during carbon neutrality, addressing the opportunities and challenges of the EU Green Deal.

## I. Research Framework

This study follows a research framework consisting of three subsequent steps, as illustrated in Figure 1. First, the study applies a state-of-the-art literature review to examine the EU Green Deal, a series of policy initiatives that have an essential place among the world's sustainable energy trends and aim to make Europe a climate-neutral continent by 2050. Second, a

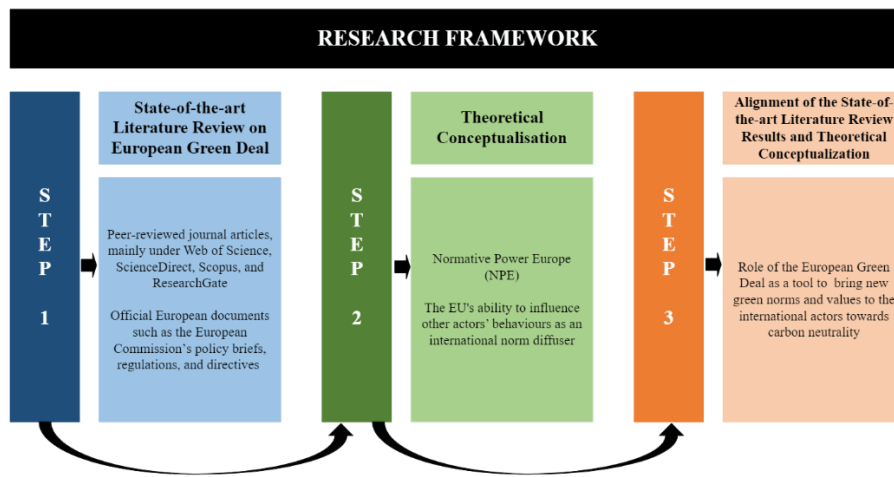
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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> "EU Cohesion Policy: Leaving no one behind in the green transition", *The European Security and Defence Union*, 2023, Access Date: March 6, 2023, <https://magazine-the-european.com/2021/05/09/eu-cohesion-policy-leaving-no-one-behind-in-the-green-transition/>

<sup>14</sup> Ian Manners, "Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?" *JCMS: Journal of common market studies* 40, no. 2 (2002):239.

theoretical conceptualisation, which is the “normative power Europe” concept, is utilised to assess if and how the European Green Deal is a successful tool to maintain the EU’s role of normative power during the carbon neutrality process. Third, the study aligns the results of the state-of-the-art literature review and the theoretical conceptualisation, revealing the challenges and opportunities of the European Green Deal.



**Figure 1.** Research framework

### A. State-of-the-art Literature Review regarding European Green Deal

The state-of-the-art literature review in this study has systematic phases to map the existing studies and official European documents regarding the European Green Deal. First, the peer-reviewed journal articles were listed, mainly under Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Scopus, and ResearchGate, and official European documents such as the European Commission’s policy briefs, regulations, and directives. Consequently, 1180 sources were identified in the initial examination. Subsequently, a discipline-wise filtration was implemented, and the studies under the Social Sciences and Humanities discipline were listed. As a result, 631 studies were found, and in the final step, 117 sources were considered relevant for the analysis. The criterion for relevancy was matching with keywords. A set of keywords were utilised to limit the scope of the research, including “European Green Deal”, “Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism”, “Emission Trading System”, “European climate targets”, “European normative power”, “Normative

Power Europe”, “normative Green Deal”, “European norms”, “carbon-neutral Europe”, “climate neutrality”, and “zero emission Europe”.

Sections IV and V of this paper present the results of the state-of-the-art literature review, identifying the dynamics, targets, and implementation mechanisms of the European Green Deal.

### **B. Theoretical Conceptualization: Normative Power Europe**

The European Union’s actorness and power have been subjects of several controversies in the literature for a decade.<sup>15</sup> The Community’s power has always been conceptualised as a “civilian power” based on “the civilian forms of influence and action”.<sup>16</sup> The EU’s civilian power’s main elements have included non-military means such as “economic,” “diplomatic” and “cultural policy” tools.<sup>17</sup> However, there were also criticisms of the term “civilian power” in Europe. According to Bull, Europe should obtain “military power” by becoming “more self-sufficient in the defence or security”. Hence, various debates have revolved around whether the EU should persist in its civilian power or transform it into a military power.<sup>18</sup>

The emergence of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) has brought a new dimension to the debate above.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, the EU’s

<sup>15</sup> Hedley Bull, “Civilian Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 21, no 2 (1982): 149-164; Nils Hoffmann and Arne Niemann, “EU actorness and the European Neighbourhood Policy”, In *The Routledge Handbook on the European Neighbourhood Policy*, eds. Tobias Schumacher et al. (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2017), 28-38; Kateřina Čmakalová and Jan Martin Rolenc, "Actorness and legitimacy of the European Union.", *Cooperation and conflict*, 47, no 2 (2012): 260-270.

<sup>16</sup> François Duchêne, “The European Community and the uncertainties of interdependence” In *A Nation Writ Large?*, ed. Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1973), 1–21.

<sup>17</sup> Karen E. Smith, “Beyond the civilian power EU debate”, *Politique européenne* 3 (2005): 63-82.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Sertan Akbaba "Measuring EU actorness through CFSP and ESDP: civilian power EU", *Ankara Avrupa Çalışmaları Dergisi* 8, no. 2 (2009): 1-28.

<sup>19</sup> Stephanie Anderson, “The EU: From Civilian Power to Military Power?”, *International Studies Review* 6, no.3 (2004): 505-507; Helene Sjursen, “What kind of power? “In *Civilian or Military Power? European Foreign Policy in Perspective* ed. Helene Sjursen, (Oxon, Routledge, 2007), 2; Wolfgang Wagner, “The Democratic Control of Military Power Europe” In *Civilian or Military*

ambitious military missions in several humanitarian crises in the last decades and the transformation of ESDP into Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) will likely increase the EU's military actorness.<sup>20</sup> However, the EU's military power has never been "complementary" to NATO to ensure the security of its members.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, the EU's economic strength makes it one of the three primary actors in international trade, constituting almost 14% of global trade in products.<sup>22</sup> The EU's single voice in the economic sphere has also made it a primary actor in the world economy.<sup>23</sup>

Despite all these controversies, Europe has exercised its power worldwide through its norms rather than its military or economic capacity. Accordingly, Ian Manner's "normative power Europe" (NPE) concept has brought different power conceptualisations to the EU.<sup>24</sup> In this conceptualisation, the EU is acknowledged as a "normative power", exceeding the dichotomy between military and civilian power.<sup>25</sup> While the "normative power" is not a substitute for military or civilian power, the ability to influence other actors' behaviours has allowed the EU to be an international norm diffuser.<sup>26</sup>

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*Power? European Foreign Policy in Perspective* ed. Helene Sjursen, (Oxon, Routledge, 2007), 32; Marijn Hoijtink and Hanna L. Muehlenhoff. "The European Union as a masculine military power: European Union security and defence policy in 'times of crisis'" *Political studies review* 18, no. 3 (2020): 362-377.

<sup>20</sup> "Common Security and Defence Policy: The shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy", *The European Union External Action*, August 10, 2021, Access Date: July 13, 2023, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/shaping-common-security-and-defence-policy\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/shaping-common-security-and-defence-policy_en)

<sup>21</sup> A Strategic Compass approved by the European Council aims to "make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider" by 2030. "A Strategic Compass for a stronger EU security and defence in the next decade", *European Council*, March 21 2022, Access Date: July 13, 2023, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/>

<sup>22</sup> "Facts and figures on the European Union economy", *European Union*, 2023, Access Date: July 13, 2023, [https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/key-facts-and-figures/economy\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/key-facts-and-figures/economy_en)

<sup>23</sup> "EU Position in World Trade", *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: July 14, 2023, [https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/eu-position-world-trade\\_en](https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/eu-position-world-trade_en)

<sup>24</sup> Manners, "Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?", 236.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

According to Ian Manners, NPE is “the ability to define what passes for ‘normal’ in world politics”.<sup>27</sup> In this conceptualisation, the EU can change others' norms and values in line with its system of norms.<sup>28</sup> In this sense, this term is related to Nye’s “soft power”,<sup>29</sup> Carr’s “power of opinion”,<sup>30</sup> and Galtung’s “power of ideas”.<sup>31</sup> The European “core norms” have been shaped over the last 70 years with several policies, treaties, declarations and criteria. Manner underlined five primary EU norms, which are "fundamental freedoms", "human rights", "rule of law", "liberty", "democracy", and "peace".<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the EU's treaty and practices accept four "minor norms", which are "social solidarity", "anti-discrimination", "sustainable development", and "good governance".<sup>33</sup> Accordingly, the EU represents itself internationally via these “core” and “minor” norms and “legitimate itself as being more than the sum of its parts”.<sup>34</sup> In doing so, the EU could change from an economic organisation to a legitimate union for European citizens.

However, to consolidate the EU’s normative power, these norms are disseminated to other actors in international politics through a range of instruments, including “contagion”, “informational diffusion”, “procedural diffusion”, “transference”, “overt diffusion”, and “cultural filter”.<sup>35</sup> Apart from the “contagion”, the EU intentionally seeks to diffuse its norms to the third parties via disseminating information about the EU norms and maintaining communication with the third parties (informational diffusion);

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Joseph S. Nye, “Soft power”, *Foreign policy*, 80 (1990): 153-171.

<sup>30</sup> Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1962).

<sup>31</sup> Johan Galtung, *The European Community: A Superpower in the Making* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973).

<sup>32</sup> Manners, “Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?” 242.

<sup>33</sup> As a consequence of its global economic power, the EU declares its responsibility” to promote “sustainable development” and “environmental protection” through its economic partnership. “Sustainable Development”, *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: July 14, 2023, [https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/development-and-sustainability/sustainable-development\\_en](https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/development-and-sustainability/sustainable-development_en); Manners, “Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?”, 242.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 244.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 244-245.



signing cooperation agreements with third parties, and accepting new members to the EU (procedural diffusion); delivering the EU products, support, and technical help to the third parties as well as maintaining trade relations (transference); being “physically” present of EU representatives in third parties (overt diffusion); constituting new identity and way of knowledge in third parties (cultural filter).<sup>36</sup> As a significant peculiarity of these tools, the EU does not resort to any “physical force in the imposition of norms” to third parties.<sup>37</sup>

The EU’s “norm diffusion” is significant for maintaining its “normative power” in world politics. The EU creates a self-identity by influencing other actors’ behaviours and policies.<sup>38</sup> In this understanding, the EU identity is constructed vis-à-vis “an image of others in the ‘outside world’”.<sup>39</sup> It is also closely related to the concept of Europeanization, which has many definitions but can simply refer to the “emergence and the development of European level of governance that changes the political, legal and social institutions in the domestic sphere according to norms and policies of Europe”.<sup>40</sup> In this sense, the Europeanization process of the EU members, candidates, and applicant states encourages them to change their policies, strategies, and visions in line with the EU system of norms and values.<sup>41</sup> One of the most-known tools for Europeanization and the EU’s norm diffusion capability is the “Copenhagen (accession) criteria”, adopted in

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>37</sup> Ian Manners, “Normative power Europe reconsidered: beyond the crossroads.” *Journal of European public policy*, 13(2) (2006): 84.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Diez, “Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering Normative Power Europe”, *Millennium* 33 (3) (2005): 614.

<sup>39</sup> This argument is also associated with social constructivism, which regards agents and structures as “codetermined” or “mutually constituted” existences. Diez, “Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering Normative Power Europe”, 613-636; Alexander E. Wendt, “The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory”, *International Organization*, 41(3) (1987): 335-370; Jeffrey T. Checkel, “The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory”, *World Politics*, 50 (1998): 324-248.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Risse, Maria Green Cowles and James Caporaso, “Europeanization and domestic change: Introduction”. In *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change*, ed. Maria Green Cowles et al. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 3.

<sup>41</sup> Johan P. Olsen, “The many faces of Europeanization.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40(5) (2002): 921-952.

1993. These criteria have obliged candidate countries to fulfill the EU's predetermined economic, political, legal, and normative standards.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), launched in 2004, has served the normative power of the EU by changing partner countries' domestic and foreign policies in line with the "promotion of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and social cohesion".<sup>43</sup>

Normative Power Europe is also closely associated with Michel Foucault's concept of discursive power and Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony. According to Foucault, "discourse", "power", "culture", and "language" are interconnected and mutually influence each other. In other words, discourses and practices become parts of power dynamics and are affected by power itself.<sup>44</sup> Hence, the EU's normative discourses and its exercise of soft power in world politics mutually reinforce each other. Similarly, both Gramscian and neo-Gramscian conceptions of hegemony rely on the consent of societies and states through cultural, normative, and ethical values.<sup>45</sup> According to Gramscian understanding of politics, "the political [...] is force and consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civiltà".<sup>46</sup> In this sense, it can be said that the hegemonic power of the EU is based on the normative values and willingness of non-European countries to align their policies with these norms. Hence, NPE is a robust analytical tool with close conceptual links with the theories above. It provides an insight into the EU's international identity, which is mainly based on its normative power and capacity of "norm diffusion". As stated, the EU's ability to

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<sup>42</sup> "Accession criteria (Copenhagen criteria)", *European Union*, 2023, Access Date: March 19, 2023, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/accession-criteria-copenhagen-criteria.html>

<sup>43</sup> "European Neighbourhood Policy", *European Union External Action*, July 29 2021, Access Date: March 20, 2023, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-neighbourhood-policy\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-neighbourhood-policy_en)

<sup>44</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977). Victor Pitsoe and Moeketsi Letseka. "Foucault's discourse and power: Implications for instructionist classroom management." *Open Journal of philosophy* 3, no. 01 (2013), p.25

<sup>45</sup> Thomas R. Bates, "Gramsci and Theory of Hegemony" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 2 (1975): 351-366. Antonio Gramsci, *The Gramsci reader: selected writings, 1916-1935*, ed. David Forgacs, (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

<sup>46</sup> Anne Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

determine the "normal" in international politics has revealed itself in various spheres, such as the "sustainable growth", and the "fight against climate change". In this sense, as one of the recent tools of the NPE, the European Green Deal brings new green norms and values to the international actors to reduce their GHG emissions. The existing studies in the literature also address the "Normative Power Europe" concept to examine the European Green Deal since it brings new green norms and values to the international community.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the Green Deal will be a significant test for the concept of NPE with its objectives to change the EU's partners' policies with various mechanisms, including CBAM and ETS.

### **C. Alignment of the State-of-the-art Literature Review Results and Theoretical Conceptualization**

The climate diplomacy of the European countries implies that European norms and values shape the climate targets and the way these targets are implemented. Hence, the "normative power Europe" concept matches the role of the Green Deal as a tool for both the EU members and neighboring countries for a successful transition towards climate neutrality. In this sense, European Green Deal might be a supportive tool to the normative power of the EU, which creates many opportunities for the European countries to expand their values and norms. Such normative power of Europe also makes the EU a "climate leader" for a green transition. However, it also brings several challenges in the "climate-neutrality process". To this end, Section V of this paper aligns the results of the state-of-the-art literature review on the existing studies and official European documents regarding the European Green Deal and the theoretical conceptualisation of the normative power, referring to the opportunities and challenges of the European Green Deal both the Member States and trading partners of the EU.

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<sup>47</sup> Sophia Kalantzakos, Indra Overland, and Roman Vakulchuk. "Decarbonisation and Critical Materials in the Context of Fraught Geopolitics: Europe's Distinctive Approach to a Net Zero Future", *The International Spectator* 58, no. 1 (2023): 3-22; Sandra Eckert, "The European Green Deal and the EU's Regulatory Power in Times of Crisis", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 59, (2021): 81-91; Dawid Aristotelis Fusiek, "EU as a green normative power: How could the European Green Deal become a normative tool in EU's climate diplomacy?", *Institute of European Democrats*, (2021): 1-23; Ionuț-Mircea Marcu, "How can the European Union act as a normative power in the green transition?", *Institute of European Democrats* (2021):1-16.

## II. The Footsteps of the European Green Deal: The Changes in European Energy Profile

The EU has already made significant efforts to change its energy profile in line with the European Green Deal. This change in its energy profile has also been intended to serve Europe's normative power in the global climate agenda. Accordingly, energy consumption in European countries decreased dramatically compared to 10 years ago. This is mainly due to steps taken in energy efficiency. In addition, thanks to energy savings and fast renewable energy production, Europe is also becoming less dependent on fossil fuels.<sup>48</sup> As a result, primary energy consumption in Europe was 82,38 exajoules in 2021, corresponding to a 0.6% decrease between 2011 and 2021.<sup>49</sup> In 2020, a selective reduction in primary energy consumption was experienced in Europe due to the slowdown of economic activities and the decline in energy demand caused by Covid-19. In this sense, the primary energy consumption decreased to 78,93 exajoules in 2020.<sup>50</sup> Figure 2 shows Europe's primary energy consumption change between 1965 and 2021. Primary energy consumption reached its highest point in 2007 with 92,10 exajoules in Europe, while this consumption amount decreased by 10.55% in 2021 within 14 years.<sup>51</sup>

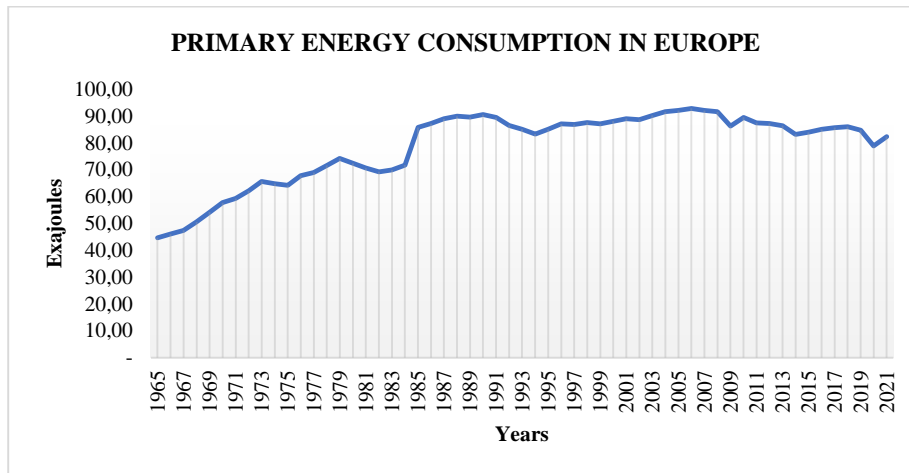
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<sup>48</sup> “Energy in Europe: State of Play”, *European Energy Agency*, May 11, 2021, Access Date: March 13, 2023, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/signals/signals-2017/articles/energy-in-europe-2014-state-1>

<sup>49</sup> “Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022”.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> “Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022”.



**Figure 2.** Primary energy consumption in Europe between 1965 and 2021

Considering primary energy consumption by fuel type, as illustrated in Figure 3, oil had the largest share in 2021 with 34% (27,57 exajoules), followed by natural gas with 25% (20,56 exajoules).<sup>52</sup> The share of renewable energy resources in energy consumption rapidly increased to almost 22% in 2021, which is only a 0.1% increase from 2020.<sup>53</sup> However, it should be noted that with the rapid drop in energy demand during the Covid-19 pandemic, non-renewable energy consumption has been drastically reduced. This has increased the share of renewable energy sources. In 2021, the consumption of non-renewable energy sources recovered, while the growth in renewable energy sources remained stable.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, renewable energy consumption increased by over 13 million tons of oil equivalent (Mtoe) in 2021, constituting the maximum annual growth since 2012.<sup>55</sup> One of the essential strategies of Europe to increase the share of renewable energy resources in consumption stems from Europe's efforts for

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> “Share of energy consumption from renewable sources in Europe”, *European Energy Agency*, October 26, 2022, Access Date: March 12, 2023, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/ims/share-of-energy-consumption-from>

<sup>54</sup> “Renewable Energy Market Update - May 2022”, *International Energy Agency*, May 2022, Access Date: March 12, 2023, <https://www.iea.org/reports/renewable-energy-market-update-may-2022>

<sup>55</sup> “Share of energy consumption from renewable sources in Europe”.

climate change mitigation, carbon dioxide emissions, and ensuring energy security via decreasing energy dependence.<sup>56</sup>

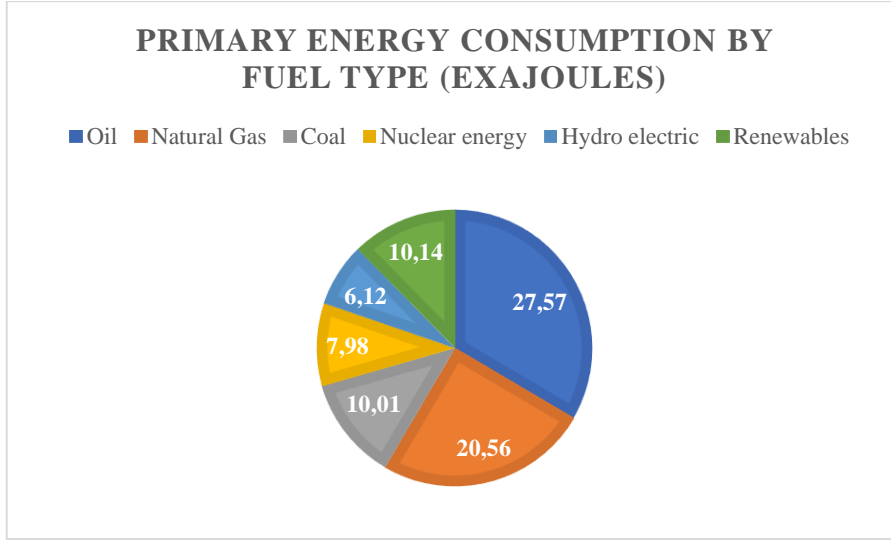


Figure 3. Primary Energy Consumption by Fuel Type in Europe in 2021

As far as electricity generation by fuel type is considered, it is seen that renewable resources had the largest share with 23% (946,5 TWh) in 2021, followed by nuclear energy and natural gas with 22% (882,8 TWh) and 20% (799,3 TWh), respectively.<sup>57</sup> Figure 4 shows the share of different fuel types in electricity generation in 2021.

<sup>56</sup> “REPowerEU: affordable, secure and sustainable energy for Europe”, *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: March 12, 2023, [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowerEU-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowerEU-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_en)

<sup>57</sup> “Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022”.

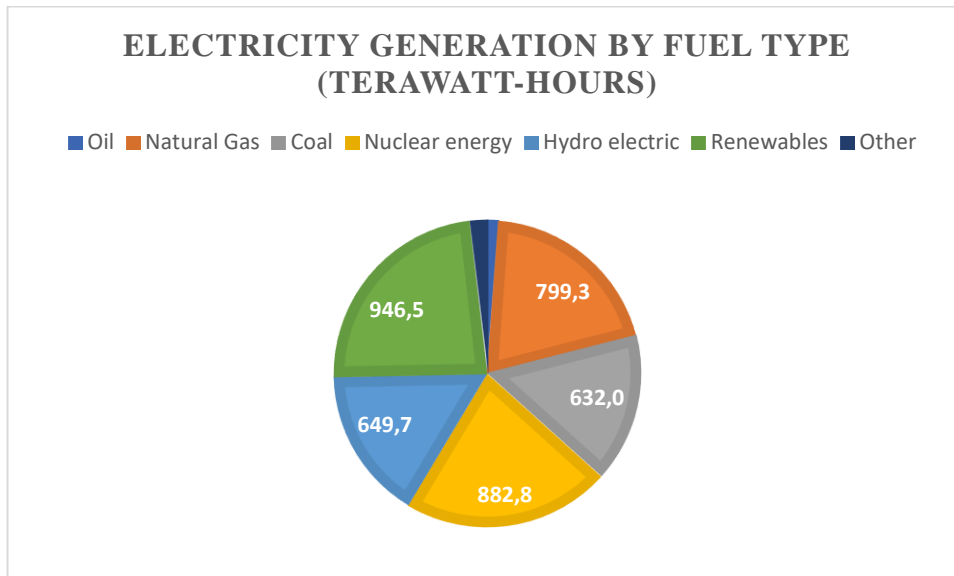


Figure 4. Electricity Generation by Fuel Type in Europe in 2021

Pertaining to the EU's energy consumption by resource type, it is seen that renewable energy consumption has been gradually increasing since 1999. In contrast, fossil fuel consumption, particularly coal consumption, tends to decrease, as inferred from Figure 5. For example, renewable energy consumption reached 10,14 exajoules in 2021, constituting a 2.6% annual growth rate and an 8.3% growth rate from 2011.<sup>58</sup> In contrast, coal consumption has been dramatically reduced and decreased from 11,02 exajoules in 2019 to 9,48 exajoules in 2020, mainly because of Covid-19 measures. However, coal consumption increased to 10,01 exajoules in 2021 once more with the impact of economic rebound and accelerating industrial activities.

Instead, natural gas is seen as a substitute for coal since there has been no dramatic change in natural gas consumption over the years. Like coal consumption, oil consumption decreased from 30,28 exajoules in 2019 to 26,25 exajoules in 2020 since mobility was restricted due to Covid-19 precautions. Nevertheless, again, it rapidly increased to 27,57 exajoules one year later, accounting for a 5.3% growth rate per annum when the mobility

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

restrictions were removed.<sup>59</sup> However, the oil consumption growth rate was negative during 2011-2021, with a -1.1% growth rate.<sup>60</sup>

Regarding renewable energy consumption, the EU's efforts for 20-20-20 targets were influential in increasing the share of renewable energy resources. As a result, renewable energy consumption reached its maximum level with 10,14 exajoules in 2021, which caused renewables to have a 25.4% share in total energy consumption.<sup>61</sup> Last but not least, considering nuclear energy, the consumption was 7,98 exajoules in 2021, implying a 5.8% annual growth rate.<sup>62</sup> According to data from the Nuclear Energy Institute, there are 443 reactors in the world with a total capacity of 393,226 megawatts.<sup>63</sup> Approximately 105 thousand megawatts of this capacity are in EU countries. Thus, EU countries account for 26.7% of the global nuclear energy capacity.<sup>64</sup> Among the countries petitioning the European Commission to recognise nuclear energy as a green resource, France has the highest capacity with 61,400 megawatts. With 56 nuclear reactors, France generates 70.6% of its electricity from nuclear power plants.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> “Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022”.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

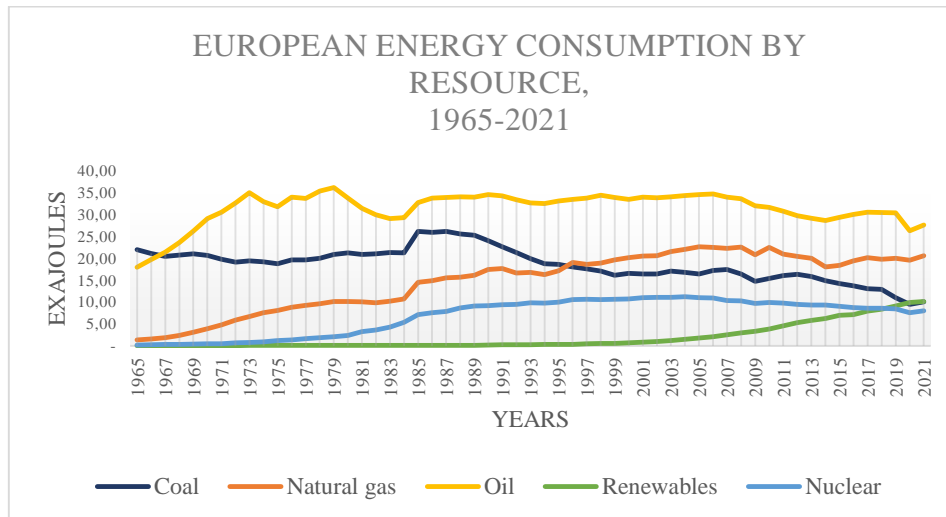
<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> “Nuclear Energy”, *NEI*, 2023, Access Date: March 12, 2023, <https://www.nei.org/home>

<sup>64</sup> “Enerji krizi yaşayan Avrupa'da Fransa'nın nükleer çıkışı yeni kutuplaşmalar yaratabilir”, *Anadolu Ajansı*, October 16 2021, Access Date: March 12, 2023, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/ekonomi/enerji-krizi-yasayan-avrupada-fransanin-nukleer-cikisi-yeni-kutuplasmalar-yaratabilir/2392873>

<sup>65</sup> “Nuclear Power in France”, *World Nuclear Association*, February 2023, Access Date: March 13, 2023, <https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-a-f/france.aspx>





**Figure 5.** European Energy Consumption by Resource between 1965 and 2021

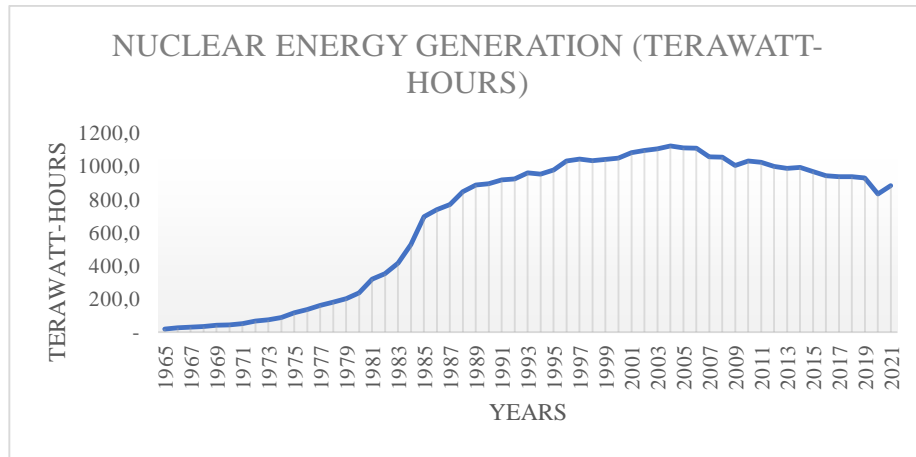
After the Covid-19 pandemic, European countries were in a difficult situation as the energy supply in Europe could not keep up with consumer demand, and energy prices reached record levels.<sup>66</sup> European countries, which meet 90% of their natural gas and 97% of their oil needs through imports, aim to decrease energy dependence.<sup>67</sup> However, unseasonably cold temperatures and the decline in EU natural gas reserves last winter complicated the situation. The fact that the amount of gas supplied to Europe through pipelines has yet to meet expectations and technical and capacity limitations, coupled with high prices for liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies, have put Europe in a bottleneck.<sup>68</sup> To this end, nuclear energy generation seems prominent in European countries. The statistics

<sup>66</sup> “Global Energy Crisis”, *International Energy Agency*, 2023, Access Date: March 14, 2023, <https://www.iea.org/topics/global-energy-crisis>

<sup>67</sup> “EU energy mix and import dependency”, *Eurostat*, May 31, 2023, Access Date: March 14, 2023, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU\\_energy\\_mix\\_and\\_import\\_dependency](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_energy_mix_and_import_dependency); “In focus: Reducing the EU’s dependence on imported fossil fuels”, *European Commission*, April 20, 2022, Access Date: March 14, 2023, [https://commission.europa.eu/news/focus-reducing-eus-dependence-imported-fossil-fuels-2022-04-20\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/news/focus-reducing-eus-dependence-imported-fossil-fuels-2022-04-20_en)

<sup>68</sup> “Natural Gas in Europe: The Potential Impact of Disruptions to Supply”, *IMF eLibrary*, July 19, 2022, Access Date: March 14, 2023, <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/001/2022/145/article-A001-en.xml>

demonstrate that nuclear energy generation in the EU increased to 882,8 TWh in 2021, which made an annual 6.2% growth rate, as depicted in Figure 6.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the Russia-Ukraine war has recently challenged the energy security of the EU countries vis-à-vis cuts in Russia's natural gas supply. Therefore, the disruption of Russian gas pushed European countries to revitalise their coal-fired and nuclear power plants to remedy the energy supply crisis.<sup>70</sup>



**Figure 6.** Nuclear Energy Generation in Europe between 1965 and 2021

However, despite the current crises, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, the EU's goal to decrease GHG emissions across the continent remains valid. Since 2007, the GHG emissions in Europe have been gradually decreasing from 5016,4 MtCO<sub>2</sub> to 3793,7 MtCO<sub>2</sub> in 2021.<sup>71</sup> Figure 7 shows the change in GHG emissions from 1965 to 2021 in Europe. According to the European Environment Agency's 2020 trends and projections report, emissions have been gradually decreasing in the EU and were 24% lower in 2019 compared to 1990 levels.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> "Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022".

<sup>70</sup> Rosie Frost, "All the European countries returning to 'dirty' coal as Russia threatens to turn off the gas tap", *Euronews*, June 24 2022, Access Date: March 10, 2023, <https://www.euronews.com/green/2022/06/24/all-the-european-countries-returning-to-dirty-coal-as-russia-threatens-to-turn-off-the-gas>

<sup>71</sup> "Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022".

<sup>72</sup> "Trends and projections in Europe 2020 Tracking progress towards Europe's climate and energy targets", *European Environment Agency*, November 30 2020,

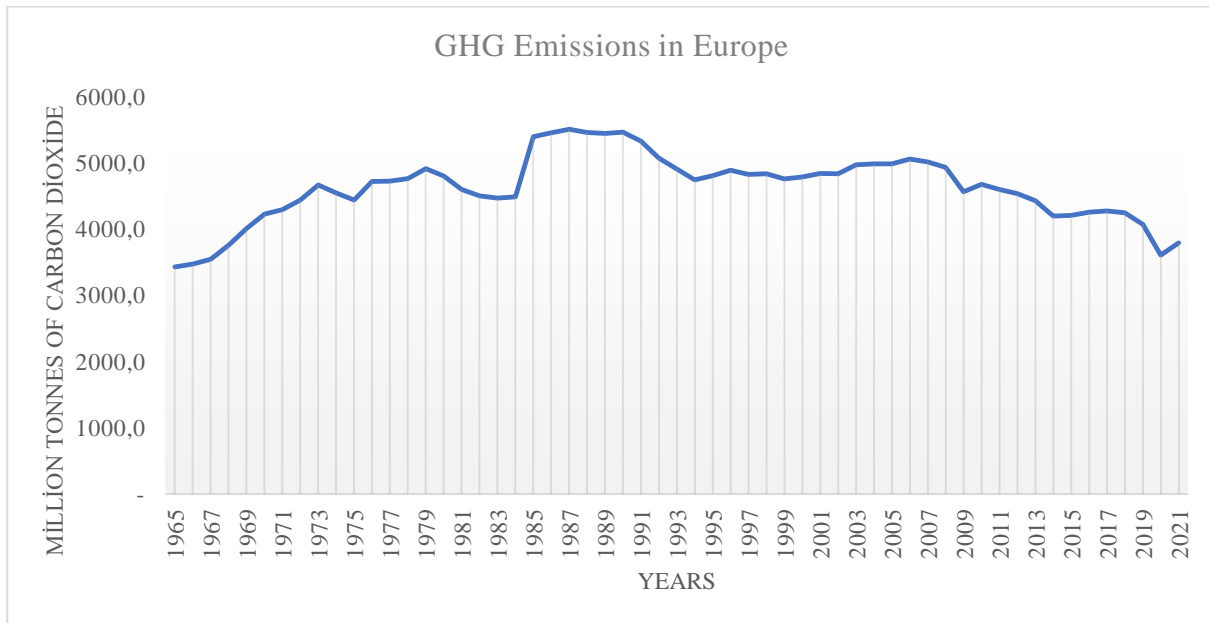


Figure 7. GHG Emissions in Europe between 1965 and 2021

Overall, the EU's energy policy has three main objectives, including (1) to contribute to the competitiveness of the Community, (2) the ensure the security of the energy supply, and (3) to contribute to environmental protection based on sustainable development.<sup>73</sup> Regarding 20-20-20 targets, European Environment Agency (EEA) announced that 21 Member States of the EU achieved national climate targets in 2020, while six other European countries, including Germany, Finland, Bulgaria, Ireland, Malta, and Cyprus, needed to buy emission quotas to realise their national targets as part of legal requirements.<sup>74</sup> To increase the share of renewable energy resources by 20% and decrease carbon emissions by 20%, the EU has already achieved a

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Access Date: March 14, 2023, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/trends-and-projections-in-europe-2020>

<sup>73</sup> "Energy policy: general principles", *European Parliament*, 2023, Access Date: March 14, 2023, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/68/energy-policy-general-principles>

<sup>74</sup> "EU achieves 20-20-20 climate targets, 55 % emissions cut by 2030 reachable with more efforts and policies", *European Environment Agency*, October 26, 2021, Access Date: March 13, 2023, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/eu-achieves-20-20-20>

21.3% share in energy consumption and a 24% reduction in emissions.<sup>75</sup> However, reducing energy consumption by 20% seemed unlikely, although Covid-19 measures and lockdowns enabled EU countries to decrease their consumption levels to a certain extent.<sup>76</sup>

"The EU Long-Term Vision for a Climate-Neutral Europe by 2050" has identified seven strategic procedures on which Member States should take action together towards "a net zero greenhouse gas economy in Europe".<sup>77</sup> These include "energy efficiency, use of renewable resources, clean, safe and connected transport (mobility), modernisation of the economy through competitive industry and circular economy, infrastructure and interconnections, bio-economy and natural carbon absorbers, and carbon capture and storage technologies". Moreover, The EU aims to reduce emissions from transportation by at least 60% by 2050.<sup>78</sup> The 24% reduction in emissions is significantly above the 20% target determined by the EU for 2020. This implies the efficient outputs of climate policies put into force in the EU and demonstrates that achieving more ambitious reduction targets by 2030 is feasible, as reckoned above, leading to "a climate-neutral EU by 2050".

### III. The European Green Deal Targeting the New ‘Normal’ in the World Politics

Due to the devastating effects of global warming, the objective of “decarbonisation” has already become the new norm worldwide with the United Nations (UN) Global Green New Deal proposal.<sup>79</sup> As a normative power in international politics, the EU sought to be the first actor to take an ambitious step towards realising this objective and approved the European

<sup>75</sup> “EU gas consumption decreased by 19%”, *Eurostat*, February 21 2023, Access Date: March 12, 2023, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20230221-1> ;

“Renewable energy statistics, *Eurostat*, January 2023, Access Date: March 14, 2023, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Renewable\\_energy\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Renewable_energy_statistics)

<sup>76</sup> “EU achieves 20-20-20 climate targets, 55 % emissions cut by 2030 reachable with more efforts and policies”.

<sup>77</sup> “2050 long-term strategy”, *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: March 15, 2023, [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/2050-long-term-strategy\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/2050-long-term-strategy_en)

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Injy Johnstone, “The Global Green New Deal: The New Norm?”, *Environmental Sciences Proceedings* 15, no 1, (2022): 6.

Green Deal in 2020. The EU aims to make Europe “the world's first climate-neutral continent” by 2050 with "no net emissions greenhouse gas".<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, it seeks to transform the EU's economy into "a clean and circular economy" where economic growth is disassociated from using resources.<sup>81</sup>

Within the framework of the Green Deal, 27 EU members committed to decreasing GHG emissions by a minimum of 55% by 2030 vis-à-vis the 1990 levels.<sup>82</sup> To this end, the EU Commission has allocated one-third of the Next Generation EU Recovery Plan's investments and the EU's seven-year budget for the European Green Deal.<sup>83</sup> In addition, the Green Deal also aims to create a more sustainable economy and a "globally competitive and resilient industry".<sup>84</sup> Hence, the EU envisions its economic future as independent from energy resources, less vulnerable to external fluctuations, and environmentally and human friendly.<sup>85</sup>

The "Fit for 55" package is another effective tool for the EU to reach its 55% target. Accordingly, it aims to guarantee that EU legislation and

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<sup>80</sup> “A European Green Deal”; Ruven C. Fleming and Romain Mauger. "Green and just? An update on the ‘European Green Deal’", *Journal for European Environmental & Planning Law* 18, no. 1 (2021):164-180; Susanna Paleari, "The Impact of the European Green Deal on EU Environmental Policy", *The Journal of Environment & Development* 31, no. 2 (2022):196-220. Marinus Ossewaarde and Roshnee Ossewaarde-Lowtoo. "The EU's green deal: a third alternative to green growth and degrowth?", *Sustainability* 12, no. 23 (2020):1-15.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> “A European Green Deal”.

<sup>83</sup> “A European Deal: Highlights”, *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: March 6, 2023, [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> “Green Deal: New proposals to make sustainable products the norm and boost Europe's resource independence”, *European Commission*, March 30, 2022, Access Date: March 6, 2023; [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_22\\_2013](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_2013); Juan Antonio Samper, Amanda Schockling, and Mine Islar, "Climate politics in green deals: Exposing the political frontiers of the European Green Deal", *Politics and Governance* 9, no. 2 (2021): 8-16. Simona Andreea Apostu, Iza Gigauri, Mirela Panait, and Pedro A. Martín-Cervantes, "Is Europe on the Way to Sustainable Development? Compatibility of Green Environment, Economic Growth, and Circular Economy Issues", *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 20, no. 2 (2023):1-17.

policies suit the 2030 climate targets approved by the European Parliament and the Council.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, it involves several significant themes, including "energy efficiency", "renewable energy", "energy taxation", "EU emissions trading system", and "carbon border adjustment mechanism".<sup>87</sup> EU emissions trading system (ETS) is particularly significant as it has been the biggest carbon market in the world since it was formed in 2005.<sup>88</sup> The 'cap and trade' is the main rule of the ETS. Accordingly, emission permits are restricted by a 'cap' within which companies obtain or buy "emission allowances" for their trade. The cap is reduced every year to reduce total emissions.<sup>89</sup> The EU ETS involves gases of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and their related sectors, including energy and aviation sectors.<sup>90</sup> The Commission also extended the scope of the ETS to "fuel used in road transport and buildings".<sup>91</sup> The ETS is implemented in all EU member states along with Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein (EEA-EFTA states). It restricts emissions of the above gases from approximately 10,000 installments of the energy and manufacturing sectors as well as 'aircraft operators' among ETS countries, which includes almost 40% of the GHG emissions of the EU.<sup>92</sup>

As a tool for diffusing the norms of the Green Deal to third parties, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), part of the "Fit for 55" package, was initiated to operate in parallel with the ETS. The CBAM aims to balance "the carbon price between domestic and foreign goods to restrict carbon leakage", which can push trading partner countries to embrace carbon

<sup>86</sup> "Fit for 55", *European Council*, 2023, Access Date: March 6,2023, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/green-deal/fit-for-55-the-eu-plan-for-a-green-transition/>

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> "EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)", *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: March 8,2023, [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-emissions-trading-system-eu-ets\\_en#a-cap-and-trade-system](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-emissions-trading-system-eu-ets_en#a-cap-and-trade-system)

<sup>89</sup> "Emission cap and allowances", *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: March 8, 2023, [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-emissions-trading-system-eu-ets/emissions-cap-and-allowances\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-emissions-trading-system-eu-ets/emissions-cap-and-allowances_en)

<sup>90</sup> "EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)".

<sup>91</sup> "Increasing the ambition of EU emissions trading", *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal/increasing-ambition-eu-emissions-trading\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal/increasing-ambition-eu-emissions-trading_en) (9 March 2023).

<sup>92</sup> "EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)".

pricing.<sup>93</sup> It also aims to substitute the existing EU system to deal with the "carbon leakage" peril.<sup>94</sup> In this way, the CBAM seeks to guarantee that producers in non-EU countries reduce their carbon footprint during their production process and do not harm the targets of the EU Green Deal.<sup>95</sup>

Given that the EU has an average import volume of USD 2.1 trillion, this regulation can potentially encourage the EU's trading partners to initiate a broad and deep green transformation of their industrial policies.<sup>96</sup> To avoid instability and legal uncertainty in relevant sectors, CBAM will be implemented gradually and will begin to be applied to specific types of products.<sup>97</sup> Hence, the first five main industrial sectors of the CBAM are considered "iron and steel, cement, fertilisers, aluminum, and electricity" due to the potential danger of their "carbon leakage", high carbon emissions, and administrative viability.<sup>98</sup>

The transitional phase of CBAM started in early 2023 and provides an adaptation period for both EU and non-EU markets until the system becomes completely functional in 2026.<sup>99</sup> Between 2023 and 2026, importers must submit a report of their product's emissions without any financial payments. With the beginning of 2026, EU importers will be required to report the emission amount of their import products annually and buy CBAM carbon certificates based on the carbon prices of these products.<sup>100</sup> This also means that there will be additional import fees on manufactured goods imported

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<sup>93</sup> "EU carbon border adjustment mechanism: Implications for climate and competitiveness", *European Parliament Members' Research Service*, 2022, Access Date: March 14, 2023, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/698889/EPRS\\_BRI\(2022\)698889\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/698889/EPRS_BRI(2022)698889_EN.pdf)

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> "Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: Questions and Answers", *European Commission*, July 14, 2021, Access Date: March 9, 2023, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda\\_21\\_3661](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_21_3661); Martijn Schippers and Walter De Wit. "Proposal for a carbon border adjustment mechanism.", *Global Trade and Customs Journal* 17, no. 1 (2022):10-18.

<sup>96</sup> "Yanı Başımızdaki Dev Pazar Avrupa Birliği", *T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı*, February 17, 2023, Access Date: March 9, 2023, <https://ticaret.gov.tr/dis-iliskiler/avrupa-birligi/yani-basimizdaki-dev-pazar-avrupa-birligi>

<sup>97</sup> , "Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: Questions and Answers".

<sup>98</sup> "EU carbon border adjustment mechanism"

<sup>99</sup> "Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: Questions and Answers".

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

from countries since CBAM will guarantee that the carbon price of imported goods is the same as that of domestic goods.<sup>101</sup>

As the EU can determine the new ‘normal’ in international politics, countries that do not follow climate targets and policies following the European Union are likely unable to gain a competitive advantage over countries that produce low carbon emissions. The EU’s trading partners’ alignment with the regulations under the Green Deal will depend on their ability to reduce their emissions and maintain their export competitiveness. As a “transference” tool of the EU’s norm diffusion, the CBAM will likely impact investments in production technologies, business practices, and consumer behaviours, ultimately contributing to increased sustainability-oriented private and public sector investments.

#### **IV. Examining the Opportunities and Challenges: Is European Green Deal a Successful Tool for the Normative Power Europe?**

The implications of the European Green Deal for the practices of both member states and trading partners are likely to reveal the validity of the NPE concept. As an output of the normative power of the EU, the Green Deal involves a series of initiatives to transform Europe into a carbon-neutral continent while changing the policy practices of third parties. However, the Green Deal’s sustainability depends on its feasibility by the actors it influences. Therefore, the opportunities and challenges facing the Green Deal will likely determine its sustainability and, in turn, the permanence of the EU’s “normative power”.

As one of the opportunities of the European Green Deal, the European Commission remains committed to sustaining the Green Deal. According to the Commission, the necessary budget for reaching the 2030 climate and energy-related targets will be approximately €260 billion, which requires the active role of the private and public sectors.<sup>102</sup> In this sense, European Green Deal Investment Plan and Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) under the Green Deal aimed to meet the investment needs for a green and sustainable Europe with at least €1 trillion.<sup>103</sup> With these initiatives, the Commission seeks to

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<sup>101</sup> “Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism”, *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: March 10, 2023, [https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/green-taxation-0/carbon-border-adjustment-mechanism\\_en](https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/green-taxation-0/carbon-border-adjustment-mechanism_en)

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.



ensure that the Green Deal projects are well-financed and receive incentives and support by "leaving no one behind".<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, as a tool for norm diffusion, the EU has used "transference" by funding sustainability projects worldwide. Accordingly, in 2021, the Commission funded 72 "Research and Innovation Projects" dealing with sustainability and climate change within the European Green Deal Call framework.<sup>105</sup> In addition, the first call for projects of common interest (PCI) under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) was initiated in September 2021, committing €785 million in funding for clean energy projects.<sup>106</sup> Similarly, the Horizon Europe program 2021-22 invested €5.8 billion in clean energy projects.<sup>107</sup>

Both top-down and bottom-up practices have also underpinned the consolidation of European normative identity about the Green Deal. Accordingly, the European Climate Law came into force on 29 July 2021 to support the Green Deal legally.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, the law guarantees that all EU strategies and economic and societal sectors support the objectives of the Green Deal. Accordingly, a "net zero greenhouse gas emission by 2050" became a legally obligatory goal for all the EU institutions and the member states.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, the Commission initiated the European Climate Pact to ensure the European public's active participation in the Green Deal, encouraging people to act towards a more sustainable and greener Europe. In this context, European citizens have so far made 4,337,420 commitments for climate action and achieved a reduction of 16,603,080 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e.<sup>110</sup> Hence,

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid; Simo Sarkki, Alice Ludvig, Maria Nijnik, and Serhiy Kopyi. "Embracing policy paradoxes: EU's Just Transition Fund and the aim "to leave no one behind"", *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* (2022): 1-32.

<sup>105</sup> "European Green Deal Call: Commission funds 72 projects with €1 billion to boost the EU's green recovery", *European Commission*, June 3, 2021, Access Date: March 10, 2023, [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/european-green-deal-call-commission-funds-72-projects-eu1-billion-boost-eus-green-recovery-2021-06-03\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/european-green-deal-call-commission-funds-72-projects-eu1-billion-boost-eus-green-recovery-2021-06-03_en)

<sup>106</sup> "EU funding possibilities in the energy sector", *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: March 10, 2023, [https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/funding-and-financing/eu-funding-possibilities-energy-sector\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/funding-and-financing/eu-funding-possibilities-energy-sector_en)

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> "European Climate Law".

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> "European Climate Pact", *European Union*, 2023, Access Date: March 12, 2023, [https://climate-pact.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://climate-pact.europa.eu/index_en)

both legal structure and European citizens' active support and contribution to the European Green Deal offer an excellent opportunity for reinforcing the European normative identity.

In addition, the self-identity of the EU as a normative power has been reinforced by the tangible results of the Green Deal. The EU defines the fight against climate change and the green transition as part of its identity and internalises goals such as reducing carbon emissions and increasing the share of renewable energy resources. In this sense, the share of renewable energy in the EU continued its upward trend, and renewable energy consumption in the EU was 37.5% in 2021 and is expected to increase to 69% in 2030.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, in 2022, the EU's solar and wind energy generation capacity transcended 400 GW, representing a 25% rise compared to 2020.<sup>112</sup> Accordingly, the EU produced 12% of its electricity from solar power and 13% from wind power between May and August 2022. As a result, the growth rate of the European solar photovoltaic (PV) sector reached its peak at 17-26% in 2022.<sup>113</sup> However, due to a decrease in water levels, hydroelectricity production fell from 14% to 11% in the same year compared to the former years.<sup>114</sup> Concerning energy-saving efforts in the EU, products with ecodesign requirements achieved a 10% reduction in annual energy consumption in 2021 and are expected to save 132 million tonnes of oil equivalent (Mtoe) of primary energy by 2030.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>111</sup> “Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions”, *European Commission*, October 18, 2022, Access Date: March 10, 2023, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0547&from=EN>

<sup>112</sup> “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age”, *European Commission*, February 1, 2023, Access Date: March 10, 2023, [https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/COM\\_2023\\_62\\_2\\_EN\\_ACT\\_A%20Green%20Deal%20Industrial%20Plan%20for%20the%20Net-Zero%20Age.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/COM_2023_62_2_EN_ACT_A%20Green%20Deal%20Industrial%20Plan%20for%20the%20Net-Zero%20Age.pdf)

<sup>113</sup> “Renewable Energy Statistics”, *Eurostat*, 2023, Access Date: March 10, 2023, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Renewable\\_energy\\_statistics#Share\\_of\\_renewable\\_energy\\_more\\_than\\_doubled\\_between\\_2004\\_and\\_2021](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Renewable_energy_statistics#Share_of_renewable_energy_more_than_doubled_between_2004_and_2021)

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> “Green Deal: New proposals to make sustainable products the norm and boost Europe's resource independence”, *European Commission*, March 30, 2022,

As a significant advantage of the EU's diffusing the norms about the Green Deal, reducing GHGs and tackling climate change have already become international norms for actors in world politics.<sup>116</sup> The international reports and agreements on climate change, including the recent Paris Agreement, have become a basis for the international legitimacy of states and non-state actors.<sup>117</sup> Hence, the international collaboration on the EU's norms related to the Green Deal has become a matter of international prestige and acceptance for states. As a result, the significant carbon emitters started to follow the path of the EU; for instance, the US launched the Inflation Reduction Act that aims to decrease carbon emissions by approximately 40% by 2030.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, Japan invested JPY 20 trillion to accelerate its "green transition", and India initiated the Production Linked Incentive Scheme to raise renewable technologies' competitive power.<sup>119</sup>

Despite the opportunities to maintain the EU's normative power on the Green Deal, this process is not immune to political and economic challenges. First and foremost, even though the EU members have prioritised the norms about climate change and the Green Deal in the last decade, it is likely to lose its place on Europe's agenda in the face of more pressing crises, including the Russia-Ukraine war and the Covid-19 pandemic. For instance, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the priority of the Green Deal was replaced by the "health emergency".<sup>120</sup> As a result, at the height of the pandemic, the

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Access Date: March 10, 2023, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_22\\_2013](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_2013)

<sup>116</sup> Injy Johnstone "The Global Green New Deal: The New Norm?" *Environmental Sciences Proceedings* 15, no. 1 (2022): 6.

<sup>117</sup> Behnam Taebi and Azar Safari. "On effectiveness and legitimacy of 'shaming' as a strategy for combatting climate change." *Science and Engineering Ethics* 23 (2017): 1289-1306; Karin Bäckstrand, Jonathan Kuyper, and Naghmeh Nasiritousi. "From collaboration to contestation? Perceptions of legitimacy and effectiveness in post-Paris climate governance", *Earth System Governance* 9 (2021): 1-11.

<sup>118</sup> "The Inflation Reduction Act", *The United States Senate*, 2022, Access Date: March 10, 2023, [https://www.democrats.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/inflation\\_reduction\\_act\\_one\\_page\\_summary.pdf](https://www.democrats.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/inflation_reduction_act_one_page_summary.pdf)

<sup>119</sup> "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions".

<sup>120</sup> Marco Siddi, "Green Revolution? A Tentative Assessment of the European Green Deal", *International Organisations Research Journal* 16 no 3 (2021): 90; Melita Carević, "The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Implementation of the

Green Deal lost its importance in the discourses and policies of the EU members.<sup>121</sup> Hence, in mid-April 2020, the European Commission declared that Green Deal's "less essential initiatives", including the farm-to-fork and the biodiversity were likely to be postponed until 2021.<sup>122</sup>

Similarly, Europe's dependence on Russia's natural gas has adversely impacted the EU's commitments to the Green Deal. Accordingly, the energy security of EU members took precedence over their norms on the Green Deal due to the deterioration of the EU-Russia relations in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war. As a result, even though the European Commission initiated a REPowerEU plan to reduce the EU's reliance on Russia's gas by reducing energy use, diversifying the EU's energy supplies, and generating clean energy,<sup>123</sup> many European members have resorted to fossil fuels as emergency measures. In addition, several EU countries, including Germany, France, Austria, Italy and the Czech Republic, revitalised their coal-fired units and nuclear power plants to maintain energy security.<sup>124</sup> Under these circumstances, the following years and data on GHG emissions will reveal whether the EU member will continue to be on track to reach their climate goals and whether the EU will retain its normative power about the Green Deal.

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European Green Deal", *EU and comparative law issues and challenges series* (ECLIC) 5 (2021):.903-925.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Frédéric Simon, "Green Deal facing delays due to coronavirus, EU admits", *Euroactiv*, March 19, 2020, Access Date: March 12, 2023, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/news/green-deal-facing-delays-due-to-coronavirus-eu-admits/>

<sup>123</sup> "REPowerEU: affordable, secure and sustainable energy for Europe".

<sup>124</sup> "France reboots coal-fired power plant to boost winter electricity supplies", *RFI*, November 29, 2022, Access Date: March 10, 2023, <https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20221129-france-reboots-coal-fired-power-plant-to-boost-winter-electricity-supplies>; "Germany to delay phase-out of nuclear plants to shore up energy security", *The Guardian*, September 5, 2022, Access Date: March 10, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/05/germany-to-delay-phase-out-of-nuclear-plants-to-shore-up-energy-security>; "Italy may reopen coal plants amid concerns about energy supply, PM says", *The Local*, February 25, 2022, Access Date: March 10, 2023, <https://www.thelocal.it/20220225/italy-may-reopen-coal-plants-amid-concerns-about-energy-supply-pm-says/>; "In Germany, the Stuttering Bid to Jumpstart Coal Plants", *VOA News*, August 28, 2022, Access Date: March 10, 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/6719878.html>

More importantly, the effectiveness of the Green Deal's two fundamental mechanisms, the ETS and CBAM, has been controversial. Even though the ETS reduced carbon emissions from "stationary installations" by 11.4% in 2019 and 2020,<sup>125</sup> there have also been concerns about its future. Accordingly, it is argued that when the fuel suppliers are involved in the extended version of ETS and have to pay an additional charge for their carbon emissions, they will likely reflect these extra payments on their customers' bills.<sup>126</sup> Given this risk, the Commission initiated a Social Climate fund to protect "vulnerable households". Nevertheless, the critics point to the ETS's possible risk of harming disadvantaged households without assuring specific emission cuts.<sup>127</sup>

The criticisms toward the CBAM are essential for the EU's "norm diffusion" ability as it is closely related to third parties.<sup>128</sup> According to the critics, the CBAM mechanism does not protect neighbours with less effective and less resilient economies.<sup>129</sup> Due to the additional taxes, the top exporters to the EU in the sectors included in CBAM, such as Russia, China, Türkiye, Ukraine, the Republic of Korea, India, and Brazil, will likely be adversely affected.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, low-income African countries such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Morocco, Algeria, and South Africa have also exported CBAM-related goods to Europe and will be negatively impacted by

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<sup>125</sup> "The EU Emissions Trading System in 2021: trends and projections", *European Environment Agency*, January 12, 2022, Access Date: March 12, 2023, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/the-eu-emissions-trading-system-2>

<sup>126</sup> Jorge Liboreiro, "Why is the EU's new Emissions Trading System so controversial?", *Euronews*, August 26, 2021, Access Date: March 12, 2023, <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2021/07/16/why-is-the-eu-s-new-emissions-trading-system-so-controversial>

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Sakuya Yoshida Sato, "EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: Will It Achieve Its Objective (s)?" *Journal of World Trade* 56, no. 3 (2022): 1-19 ; Byeongh Lim, Kyoungseo Hong, Jooyoung Yoon, Jeong-In Chang, and Inkyo Cheong. "Pitfalls of the eu's carbon border adjustment mechanism", *Energies* 14, no. 21 (2021):1-18.

<sup>129</sup> Indra Overland and Rahat Sabyrbekov, "Know your opponent: Which countries might fight the European carbon border adjustment mechanism?", *Energy Policy* 169 (2022):1-12.

<sup>130</sup> "EU should consider trade impacts of new climate change mechanism", *UNCTAD*, July 14, 2021, Access Date: March 12, 2023, <https://unctad.org/news/eu-should-consider-trade-impacts-new-climate-change-mechanism>

the CBAM.<sup>131</sup> For instance, considering that the EU accounted for 20% of South African exports in 2020, it has been argued that CBAM would reduce South African exports and raise unemployment in the country or push the government to decarbonise in a "socially unsustainable" way to avoid reducing its exports to the EU.<sup>132</sup> Hence, it is debatable whether CBAM is negatively influencing the EU's role as a norm diffuser on the importance of the Green Deal.

There are also questions about whether the CBAM contradicts the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles and the Paris Agreement's "common but differentiated responsibilities" code.<sup>133</sup> Accordingly, China, India and Brazil have criticised CBAM for adopting "green protectionism" and being discriminatory against their traded goods.<sup>134</sup> On the other hand, there have been arguments that the CBAM deals with all EU and non-EU goods equally as they would pay an equal amount of price for the carbon emissions of their products.<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, the essential requirement for the

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<sup>131</sup> Guntram B. Wolff, "Why border carbon adjustment is important for Europe's green deal", *Bruegel*, November 27, 2019, Access Date: March 13, 2023, <https://www.bruegel.org/comment/why-border-carbon-adjustment-important-europes-green-deal>

<sup>132</sup> "Online workshop: The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and its implications for a global Just Transition: The case of South Africa", *Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung European Union, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Cape Town and the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies*, (2022):7

<sup>133</sup> "DDG Paugam: WTO rules no barrier to ambitious environmental policies", *World Trade Organization*, September 16, 2021, Access Date: March 13, 2023, [https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news21\\_e/ddgjp\\_16sep21\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news21_e/ddgjp_16sep21_e.htm); Giulia Claudia Leonelli "Export rebates and the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: WTO law and environmental objections", *Journal of World Trade* 56, no. 6 (2022): 963-984; Anna Dias and Agnieszka Nosowicz, "EU border carbon adjustment and the WTO: Hand in hand towards tackling climate change", *Global Trade and Customs Journal* 15, no. 1 (2020):15-23.

<sup>134</sup> James Bacchus, "Legal Issues with the European Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism", *CATO Institute*, August 9 2021, Access Date: March 13, 2023, <https://www.cato.org/briefing-paper/legal-issues-european-carbon-border-adjustment-mechanism#background>

<sup>135</sup> André Sapir, "The European Union's carbon border mechanism and the WTO", *Bruegel*, July 19, 2021, Access Date: March 13, 2023, <https://www.bruegel.org/blog-post/european-unions-carbon-border-mechanism-and-wto>

EU to sustain its normative power is to consider the concerns of the Global South and not to have "tariff wars" with other big emitters.<sup>136</sup>

In addition, despite the EU's funding efforts to sustain the Green Deal, including the JTM<sup>137</sup>, there are significant differences among the EU members' financial support. Accordingly, while 0.57% of the total GDP of the EU was endowed in favour of renewable energy sources in 2020, one country spent approximately 1% of its GDP, and the other ten members allocated less than half of the EU members' average support.<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, the Commission committed to increasing the EU funding on the Green Deal and supporting member states in realising reforms and empowering their administrative capacity.<sup>139</sup> In this sense, the insufficient and unequal contribution of the EU members can be seen as a challenge to the sustainability of the EU's normative power on climate policies within the framework of a just transition process.

Figure 8 summarises the opportunities and challenges of the European Green Deal, addressing the NPE concept.

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<sup>136</sup> Siddi, "Green Revolution? A Tentative Assessment of the European Green Deal", 10.

<sup>137</sup> JTM has committed to allocating approximately €100 billion between 2021 and 2027 in "the most affected regions" by the green transition. "Financing the green transition: The European Green Deal Investment Plan and Just Transition Mechanism", *European Commission*, January 14, 2020, Access Date: March 10, 2023, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_17](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_17)

<sup>138</sup> "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions".

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

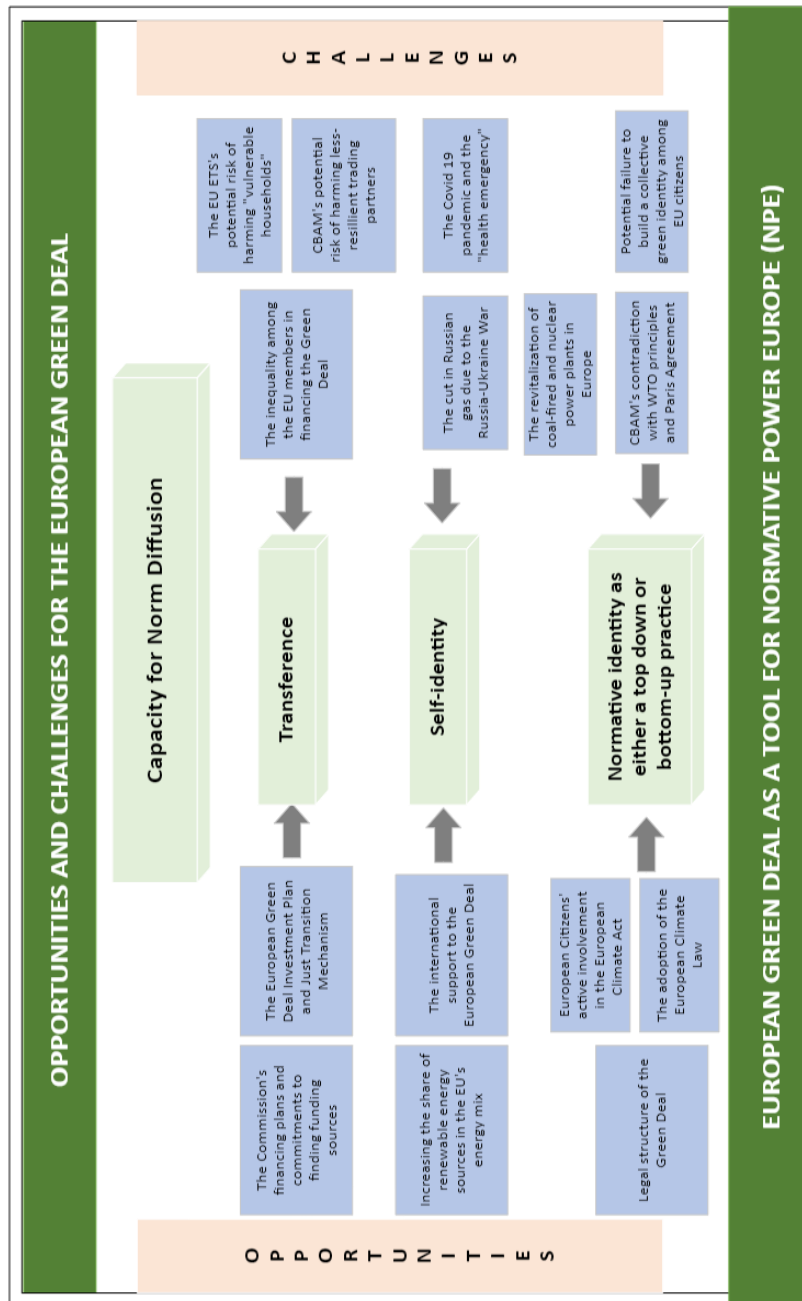


Figure 8. Opportunities and Challenges for the European Green Deal



### Conclusion

The EU has initiated several new practices, norms, and policies in world politics as a normative power. In this way, the EU maintains its self-identity as a “normative power” while influencing other actors’ behaviours through “norm diffusion”. The EU’s “norm diffusion” has mainly taken place through the Europeanization process, which pushes third states to align their policies and practices in line with the criteria set by the EU. As the latest example of the EU’s “norm diffusion” efforts, it is significant to examine the European Green Deal from the perspective of the “Normative Power Europe” concept since it brings new green norms and values to third parties to reduce their GHG emissions.

The concerns about climate change and environmental degradation have occupied the agenda of international actors for decades. However, the European Union’s efforts to be “the world’s first climate-neutral continent” by 2050 are innovative for changing the climate strategies of EU members and third parties. Accordingly, the EU seeks to transform itself into “a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy” by achieving resource-independent economic growth. Hence, the European Green Deal aims to create a “circular economy” by bringing “sustainable growth and jobs” to Europe and removing GHG emissions by 2050. Furthermore, it involves using resources effectively, improving biodiversity, and stopping pollution on its path toward a “cleaner and more competitive Europe”.

To this end, the European Green Deal brings a set of green norms and values to Europe and third parties. Hence, the durability of the European Green Deal is likely to be based on the EU’s success in diffusing the Green Deal’s norms to both member states and third parties. As a normative power, the EU has sought to influence EU members’ and third parties’ carbon emission policies through the Green Deal’s mechanisms, including ETS and CBAM. Regarding public opinion within the EU, it appears that the carbon-neutral policies advocated by the EU have garnered crucial support among citizens. The EU’s Green Deal discourses seem to have resonated with European people. This sentiment is also underpinned by the 2021 Eurobarometer survey findings, which demonstrate that European citizens perceive climate change as a significant global challenge.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, the Green Deal rhetoric impacts energy consumption patterns within Europe. Consequently, there has been a significant increase in the share of renewable

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<sup>140</sup> “Eurobarometer: Climate Change”, *European Union*, 2021, Access Date: July 14, 2023, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2273>

energy sources in energy production and a gradual reduction in GHG emissions in recent years. Nevertheless, the opportunities and challenges facing the Green Deal will likely determine its sustainability and, in turn, the persistence of the EU's "normative power".

Considering this in mind, this study suggests that the EU's "normative power" on the European Green Deal faces several opportunities, including the "transference" tool of "norm diffusion" used by the European Commission in initiating financing plans and funding sustainability projects around the world. Furthermore, top-down and bottom-up practices have underpinned European normative identity to the Green Deal during this period. Accordingly, this study evaluates increasing the share of renewable energy resources in the EU's energy mix, international collaboration on the European Green Deal, European citizens' active involvement in the European Climate Pact, and adopting the European Climate Law within this framework.

In contrast, the norms of the European Green Deal also face several political and economic challenges. Despite the EU's prioritising climate change and the Green Deal in the last decade, the cut in Russian gas due to the Russia-Ukraine war and the "health emergency" following the Covid-19 pandemic have pushed the EU members to change their agenda. The revitalisation of coal-fired and nuclear power plants in Europe can be an example of this agenda change. More importantly, the Green Deal's two fundamental mechanisms, the ETS and CBAM, have been controversial. The ETS's potential risk of harming "vulnerable households" and CBAM's risk of harming less-resilient trading partners and contradiction with WTO principles raise a question over the sustainability of the European Green Deal and thus the "Normative Power Europe." Furthermore, the disparity among EU members in financing the Green Deal raises another issue: whether EU members are sufficiently embracing the norms and values of the European Green Deal.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature on the European Green Deal by examining it from the perspective of the "Normative Power Europe" concept. In this sense, it suggests the importance of the link between the normative power of Europe and its "norm diffusion" mechanisms related to the Green Deal. The Green Deal's sustainability mainly depends on its feasibility and acceptance by the actors it influences. It is a policy initiative that reflects the EU's self-identity, norms, values, and green transition targets. With its mechanisms and how it is implemented through the EU's political will and determination, it supports climate goals and facilitates the

realisation of carbon neutrality. Therefore, it can be considered a mechanism for the EU to maintain its normative power. However, the question is to what extent the EU Green Deal enables the EU to maintain such normative power. The opportunities and challenges of the Green Deal shape the area to which it can sustain its normative power and the extent to which its norms can influence third parties. For example, its challenges regarding the unequal distribution of resources and inequality of opportunities may undermine Europe's normative power. As a solution, shaping and implementing the Green Deal mechanism by focusing on just transition principles (i.e., procedural justice, recognition justice, and distributive justice) and encouraging citizen participation in energy transition would also strengthen the EU's normative power.

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