ANKARA AVRUPA ÇALIŞMALARI DERGİSİ

Özel Sayı: Future of Europe

Konuk Editör
Çiğdem ÜSTÜN

ANKARA AVRUPA ÇALIŞMALARI DERGİSİ

İÇİNDEKİLER
Araştırma Makaleleri

CONTENTS
Research Articles

FUTURE OF EUROPE: REFLECTIONS FROM TÜRKIYE

Çiğdem ÜSTÜN *
Özgehan ŞENYUVA**

Research Article

Abstract

This special issue delves into the complex challenges confronting the EU and its member states, offering a meticulous examination of Europe's future. Focusing on security policies, regional relations, energy strategies, digital transformation, and the societal impacts of populism, particularly in the realms of social policies and gender equality, it explores potential future scenarios for the integration project. The motivation behind this issue is twofold. Firstly, despite Türkiye's pivotal role in the EU's strategic future, its direct involvement in discussions about Europe's prospects has been notably absent. This oversight ignores Türkiye's unique position as a crucial actor in the EU's future, regardless of its potential accession. Secondly, the interest in the EU and Europe within Turkish academia extends beyond the accession process and EU-Türkiye relations. European Studies, as an interdisciplinary field, has gained momentum, reflecting Türkiye's long-standing engagement with the study of the West's social and political aspects. This special issue aims to provide perspectives from Türkiye on themes crucial to Europe's unfolding future, envisioning a cooperative landscape that addresses critical challenges, with Türkiye as an integral part.

Keywords: Future of Europe, Turkiye, EU, European Studies.

Avrupa'nın Geleceği: Türkiye'den Görüşler

Öz

Bu özel sayı, AB ve üye devletlerinin karşılaştığı karmaşık zorluklara odaklanarak Avrupa'nın geleceğini derinlemesine incelemeyi amaçlar. Güvenlik politikaları, bölgesel ilişkiler, enerji stratejileri, dijital dönüşüm ve özellikle sosyal politikalar ile cinsiyet eşitliği gibi konularda popülizmin toplumsal etkilerine odaklanarak, entegrasyon projesi için olası gelecek senaryolarını araştırır. Bu özel

---
* Prof. Dr. İstanbul Nişantaşı University, e-mail: cigdem.ustun@nisantasi.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-4386-3231

** Prof. Dr. Middle East Technical University, e-mail: senyuva@metu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0003- 2433-0736

sayının motivasyonu iki katlıdır. İlk olarak, Türkiye'nin AB'nin stratejik geleceğinde kilit bir rol oynamasına rağmen, AB'nin geleceğiyle ilgili doğrudan tartışmalarda göz ardı edilmiştir. Bu eksiklik, Türkiye'nin potansiyel üyeliğine bakılmaksızın AB'nin geleceğinde kritik bir aktör olarak benzersiz konumunu göz ardı eder. İkinci olarak, Türk akademisindeki ilgi, AB-Türkiye ilişkileri ve katılım sürecinin ötesine geçmektedir. Avrupa Çalışmaları, disiplinlerarası bir alan olarak ivme kazanmış ve Türkiye'nin Batı'nın sosyal ve siyasi yönlerini uzun süredir inceleme konusundaki katkılarına odaklanmıştır. Bu özel sayı, Türkiye'nin perspektifinden Avrupa'nın geleceğini şekillendiren kritik temaları sunmayı amaçlar, Türkiye'nin işbirlikçi bir manzarada kritik zorluklara yanıt veren entegre bir parçası olarak görülmesini hedefler.

Anahtar Kelimeler*: Avrupa'nın geleceği, Türkiye, AB, Avrupa Çalışmaları.*

I - Evaluating Europe's Prospects: Insights from Türkiye

Commencing in April 2021 and concluding in May 2022, the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFE) provided a platform for citizen engagement, facilitating debates wherein participants voiced their expectations and aspirations for the European Union. Main themes listed in the call for the conference included climate change and environment, health, economy, social justice and jobs, EU in the world, values and rights, rule of law, security, digital transformation, European democracy, migration, education, culture, youth and sport. In these conferences, the candidate countries' citizens were not included in the debates and the EU Directorate at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized online "Future of Europe and the Youth" meetings. The Directorate listed 4 main themes to be discussed in these meetings with the youth, democracy, economy and social inclusion, climate change and digitalization, and security and foreign policy.

Following the CoFE, French President Macron's proposition on the establishment of European Political Community (EPC) heated the debates on the future of Europe. Since the head of the European Commission von der Leyen announced her intention to turn the EU into a more geopolitical actor, president of the European Council Michel, had a similar idea for the establishment of a "European geopolitical community".[1] In the EPC meetings,

---

[1] Charles Michel, "Speech at the Plenary Session of the European Economic and Social Committee." European Council, May 18, 2022. Accessed May 11, 2023 https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/05/18/discours-dupresident-charles-michel-lors-de-la-session-pleniere-du-comite-economique-etsocial-europeen/

started in October 2022 and since then 3 meetings were held in Czech Republic, Moldova and Spain and the main policy areas identified for EPC to work on are political cooperation, security, cooperation on energy, transport, investment, infrastructure and the movement of people.[2]

All these efforts by the EU and its member states are the result of the challenges faced lately due to several crises in recent years such as Covid-19, increasing migration flows, economic difficulties and lately not only security crises but also energy crises due to Russia-Ukraine war. This special issue aims to dissect Europe's multifaceted challenges and project potential future scenarios. It encompasses analyses on security policies, regional relations, energy strategies, digital transformation, and the societal impacts of populism, with a particular focus on social policies and gender equality. Each contribution examines the post-2015 crisis through the lens of these thematic pillars.

The main motivation behind this special issue was two folded. One, despite the centrality of Türkiye's role in the European Union's strategic future, its direct participation in the debates concerning Europe's prospects has been conspicuously absent, regardless of whether its potential accession to the EU materializes. This myopic vision neglects the issue that Türkiye has been and always will be a special actor in EU's future in achieving its desired goals. Second, the interest in the EU and Europe in Turkish academia is not limited to the accession process and EU's relations with Türkiye. European Studies gained momentum as an interdisciplinary field in the late 1990s, but the study of the West, especially its social and political aspects, has long been a fundamental part of academic research in Türkiye. This special issue was launched with the aim of providing perspectives from Türkiye on themes that are particularly important as the future of Europe takes shape.

This issue is crafted to delve into five primary themes, each representing key areas wherein Europeans must exert additional efforts for the future. The first theme is populism since it is the most fundamental issue shaking European politics. It negatively affects both the EU's ideal to become an ever-closer union and norms such as democracy, rule of law and values in relation to human dignity and rights. Especially when considered in the context

---

[2] Spanish Presidency, "European Political Community: a forum to promote dialogue and cooperation," October 1, 2023, https://spanish-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/european-political-community-granada-summit/ Accessed May 11, 2023

immigrants, right-wing parties, and human rights and freedoms emerge as the topics that will shape Europe's future in relation to populism. Müge Aknur and İbrahim Saylan, argue that populism has not only corroded normative European power but has also turned into an obstacle to the EU's aspirations for geopolitical European power.

The second theme present optimistic projections for 'low politics' areas like social policy and gender equality, highlighting the EU's commitment to these domains despite the challenges posed by immigration, Brexit, and the pandemic. A. İdil Aybars and Nazlı Kazanoğlu present a more positive future image in these issues. Aybars, explores the implications of the immigration waves, the Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic on social policies, which in turn, has impact on shaping the future of the EU through the citizens' perspectives. She concludes that the Commission underlines the importance of social values in the European project and there is a need to address all the major challenges collectively. Nazlı Kazanoğlu, similar to Aybars, argues that the EU has been committed to providing gender equality and although there are changes observed in the focus of the policies, it stays as one of the main effective EU policies.

Our third theme, sustainable energy, offers a positive outlook as well for the EU since the findings demonstrate the possibility for the EU to act as a normative actor in the sustainable and renewable energy field in relation to its new Green Deal framework. M. Efe Biresselioğlu et al. argue that the EU can sustain its normative power but challenges such as the unequal distribution of resources and inequality of opportunities should be addressed thoroughly.

Within this issue, the fourth theme explores digitalization, a domain that poses considerable challenges in anticipating its future impact. The complexity of digitalization as a policy area is dissected, emphasizing the EU's comprehensive approach and the critical factors that will determine its success in achieving technological sovereignty. The steps taken by the EU in this field are quite comprehensive. Thus, Salih Bıçakcı first attempts to paint the full picture in this field in his article. Additionally, this domain extends beyond security concerns, encompassing diverse sectors such as education, the labor market, and social policies. Given that it is a policy that interconnects such diverse policy areas, the success of digitization and the EU's ability to be an actor depend on numerous variables. Bıçakcı, argues that the DIGITAL program's implementation process, funding, and management efforts will determine its success in the long run and the outputs of these processes will demonstrate whether the EU could obtain its technological sovereignty.

The sphere of foreign and security policies emerges as the most pessimistic terrain concerning the prospective impact of the European Union. The final theme scrutinizes the EU's limited efficacy in foreign and security policy, exploring the constraints imposed by regional dynamics and internal EU discord. Ayça Ergun and Anar Valiyev, and Zeynep Özkurt Dördüncü discuss the obstacles to the EU's credibility and influence in the Caucasus and the Eastern Mediterranean. Ergun and Valiyev, in their article, analyze the limited success of the EU in the South Caucasus due to the lack of insufficient commitment and comprehensive policy. But also, they underline the importance of EU's efforts to restore its image as a benign actor in the region, while redefining its role as a mediator and peace builder. Özkurt Dördüncü evaluates the results of the EU's endeavors in diversifying external energy supplies and providing energy security by applying energy diplomacy model in the Eastern Mediterranean. Her conclusions include the hampering effect of the interest diversification and the lack of harmonization among the EU member states along with the geopolitical implications of external energy disputes in limiting the effectiveness of the EU's energy diplomacy. The paper on EU's foreign and security policies questions the possibility of a geopolitical Europe from a broader perspective by utilizing a neoclassical realist perspective. As the tensions rise around the EU borders, the emphasis on geopolitical actorness of the Union increases and we observe both the politicians from the member states and the representatives from the EU itself emphasize the concept of geopolitical Europe. However, the poor record of the EU in the past hinders positive expectations from the EU in the future. Ahmet K. Han and Çiğdem Üstün, look at the internal dynamics, external pressures and ideas/perceptions in the EU and conclude that although there are existential threats such as Russia and migration from the South, the internal dynamics do not allow the MSs to reach the level of power sharing in the foreign and security field. In essence, while external pressures and the perspectives of EU politicians are oriented toward the concept of a geopolitical Europe, internal constraints impede the realization of this ideal.

II - Türkiye's Academic Perspective on EU Affairs: A Shift in Focus

Türkiye's journey to join the European Union has been a complicated story, marked by shifting phases of aligning with European standards and moments of notable political differences. The European Commission's 2023

Türkiye Report[3], published on 8 November 2023, stands as the most recent barometer of this journey, reflecting a process mired in contention and stagnation. Yet, within the academic and policy-making spheres in Türkiye, this stagnation has not led to a waning of interest or a retreat from European affairs. On the contrary, the impasse has inadvertently fostered a more vibrant and diverse intellectual engagement with Europe, transcending the immediate politics of accession to explore a wider array of strategic, cultural, and normative issues. This section aims to dissect the intricate tapestry of Türkiye's EU accession process, scrutinizing the practical difficulties highlighted in the 2023 report, while simultaneously arguing that the current hiatus has been instrumental in broadening the scope of Turkish scholarly debate on Europe.

The European Union's enlargement policy, once a beacon of hope for bridging continental divides, has now become a tableau of unmet expectations and evolving dynamics. The 2023 Türkiye Report serves as a testament to the complex interplay of factors that have led to the current standstill. It is a narrative punctuated by chapters of reform initiatives, compliance efforts, and political setbacks, each contributing to the current state of EU-Türkiye relations. The report's sobering assessment of Türkiye's accession underscores the myriad challenges that have disturbed the process, ranging from concerns over judicial independence to pressing human rights issues. However, the implications of this report for Turkish academia and expert discourse are far-reaching and multifaceted.

The European Commission's 2023 report on Türkiye paints a stark picture of the country's current state of affairs, particularly in relation to its EU accession prospects. The magnitude of criticism directed at Türkiye is significant, with the report detailing "serious deficiencies" in democratic institutions, continued democratic backsliding, and structural problems within the presidential system. The report's emphasis on Türkiye's centralization of power, the undermining of political pluralism, and the pressure on opposition parties and mayors, as well as the lack of progress in key areas such as judiciary reform, anti-corruption measures, and civil society freedom, underscores a profound discord with EU principles and standards.

This report serves as a strong indicator that Türkiye's accession to the EU is unlikely in the medium term for several reasons. Firstly, the EU places a

---

[3] European Commission, "Turkey 2023 Report," accessed November 8, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_23_5630.

high value on the principles of democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and the protection of minorities, areas where Türkiye has been repeatedly flagged for regression rather than progress. The report's reference to Türkiye's non-compliance with European Court of Human Rights rulings and the lack of a credible peace process to resolve the Kurdish issue further alienate Türkiye from the EU's foundational values. Secondly, the EU's enlargement policy requires candidate countries to align with its Acquis Communautaire, the body of common rights and obligations that bind all member states. Türkiye's reported backsliding in areas such as economic policy, public administration reform, and the fight against corruption suggests a widening gap between Türkiye's current policies and the EU's expectations. The report's detailed criticism reflects systemic issues that cannot be quickly resolved, indicating a long road ahead before Türkiye could be considered ready for accession.

In the face of these challenges, Turkish scholars and experts have not remained passive observers. Instead, they have seized upon the opportunity to engage with the concept of Europe in a manner that is unshackled from the binary outcome of membership. This engagement has led to a renaissance in Turkish academic inquiry into European issues, where the focus has shifted from a singular preoccupation with accession to a broader, more critical examination of Europe's political, economic, and social trajectory. Turkish academia's response to the deceleration of the EU bid is reflective of a broader intellectual movement that seeks to redefine Türkiye's relationship with Europe, not as a candidate country on the periphery of the European project but as an active participant in shaping the continent's future.

In this expanded role, Turkish experts are contributing to the discourse on Europe with newfound depth and breadth. They are delving into the implications of the Eastern Mediterranean's geopolitics, the intricacies of energy dependency, the challenges of environmental sustainability, and the transformative potential of digital innovation. These areas of study are not only pertinent to Türkiye's interests but are also critical to the broader European agenda. The academic widening that has emerged from the stalled accession process has allowed for a more critical and independent analysis of these issues, fostering a debate that is as rigorous as it is essential for the future of both Türkiye and Europe.

This article in specific and the issue in its entirety, therefore, does not merely dwell on the cessation of Türkiye's EU accession as a regrettable diplomatic deadlock; rather, it acknowledges the paradoxical enrichment that has emerged from this standstill. The halt in the accession process, while

unfortunate, has inadvertently precipitated a broadening of perspectives within Turkish academic and expert analysis, transcending the narrow confines of membership discussions. This has fostered a more expansive and profound engagement with European studies, allowing Turkish scholars to offer deeper insights into the complex tapestry of European affairs. It is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of intellectual inquiry in Türkiye, demonstrating how perceived political stagnation can catalyze a dynamic and forward-thinking scholarly response. It is an exploration of how a seeming setback in political integration can lead to a progressive leap in academic and policy discourse, with Turkish experts contributing to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of Europe's multifaceted landscape.

When we look at Türkiye-Europe relations, it becomes evident that the discourse extends far beyond the contemporary debate on EU membership. The historical interplay between Turkish and European identities offers a rich longitudinal perspective, as meticulously chronicled by Gülmez, Topal, and Rumelili in their seminal work, "Europe and Turkey: Identities in Evolution."[4] Their analytical literature review traverses over two centuries of evolving perceptions and representations, shedding light on the complex and often contested narratives that have shaped interactions between these two entities. The scholarship of Turkish academia on this subject matter is both vast and varied, reflecting a commitment to understanding the multifaceted dimensions of Türkiye's place in Europe.

This special issue is a valuable addition to the expansive literature on Türkiye-Europe relations. The authors' exploration into vast array of issues on Europe's Future reveals the dynamic and enduring nature of Türkiye-Europe relations, one that transcends the immediacy of political negotiations. As such, the debate on EU membership, while significant, is but one chapter in the ongoing narrative of European studies in Türkiye—a narrative that continues to be written with insight and analysis from the Turkish academic community.

The field of European Studies in Türkiye, as outlined by Şenyuva and Üstün[5], has been a barometer for the nation's fluctuating relationship with the

---

[4]Seçkin Barış Gülmez, Alp Eren Topal, and Bahar Rumelili, "Europe and Turkey: Identities in Evolution. An Analytical Literature Review", *Open Research Europe* 3 (2023): 120. https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.16176.1

[5] Özgehan Şenyuva and Çiğdem Üstün. 2023. "Türkiye'de Avrupa Çalışmaları." In Türkiye'de Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışmaları: Alt Alanlar ve Bölgesel Odaklar, edited by A. Ergun, Ç. Üstün, and S. A. Akgül, 621-650. İmge.

European Union. The article provides an extensive historical account of the discipline's growth and transformation in response to political milestones. This work underscores the adaptability of Turkish scholars to the changing political landscape and their ability to maintain a broad and deep scope in their research endeavors. The expansion of European Studies in Türkiye, particularly during the optimistic phase of EU accession talks, saw a proliferation of research centers and academic programs dedicated to the subject. The analysis reveals that this was not merely a transient interest but a sustained academic engagement that has produced a wealth of literature on a diverse array of topics. From the politics of Europeanization to the challenges of migration and identity, Turkish academia has delved into complex issues that extend well beyond the binary of EU membership debates. Furthermore, the field's responsiveness to the political dialogue between Türkiye and the EU has led to a rich collage of scholarly work that reflects both the historical depth and the current realities of Türkiye-Europe relations. As Türkiye's EU accession process has faced challenges, the academic community has not been deterred. Instead, it has continued to explore the various dimensions of Türkiye's interactions with Europe, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the region's political, social, and cultural dynamics. This scholarly contribution is vital in understanding the broader context of Türkiye's international relations and continues to be a significant aspect of the global discourse on European affairs.

III- The Enlargement of the EU and Türkiye: The Question Remains.

The significance of EU enlargement for Türkiye transcends the immediate question of its membership status. While Türkiye's accession negotiations have stalled, the country's geopolitical and economic relevance to the EU remains substantial. Türkiye's inclusion in the EU would bring both potential benefits and challenges. On the one hand, Türkiye's strategic location as a bridge between East and West offers the EU a gateway to critical regions and markets since the EU clearly put being a geopolitical actor as a target for itself. On the other hand, the complexities of Türkiye's domestic politics, human rights issues, and the rule of law present significant hurdles to its integration into the EU framework.

The EU's enlargement policy, particularly concerning the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries, has implications for Türkiye. While Türkiye's own bid for membership remains in limbo, its role as a

regional power means that its actions and positions significantly influence the aspirations of these states. Türkiye's historical, cultural, and economic ties to these regions make it a valuable partner for the EU, but also a competitor in some respects. The EU's strategy towards enlargement must therefore consider Türkiye's multifaceted role and the broader geopolitical dynamics at play.

Economically, Türkiye has much to gain from closer integration with the EU, even outside the context of full membership. The existing Customs Union already ties Türkiye's economy closely to that of the EU, and further cooperation and modernization of this Customs Union could be mutually beneficial. However, the EU's approach to enlargement and Türkiye's role within it must be managed carefully to avoid exacerbating existing tensions or fostering further mistrust between Türkiye and EU member states.

In the broader regional context, Türkiye's experience with EU negotiations offers valuable lessons for both the EU and candidate countries. The protracted and often politicized negotiation process has led to a degree of skepticism and reform fatigue within Türkiye. This experience serves as a cautionary tale for how the EU manages its enlargement policy and engages with candidate countries. A clear, credible, and consistent approach that rewards democratic reforms and economic liberalization with tangible progress towards membership could help maintain momentum and support within candidate countries.

As the EU reflects on its future enlargement, it must also consider the broader implications for its relationship with Türkiye. A partnership that balances Türkiye's strategic interests with the EU's values and standards could pave the way for a more stable and prosperous region. This would require the EU to engage Türkiye not just as a candidate country but as a key regional actor with the potential to contribute significantly to the EU's strategic objectives, including energy security, trade, and regional stability.

Conclusion: Forging Ahead with a Shared Vision for Europe

As the EU continues to navigate through a period of significant transformation and challenges, the role of Türkiye in the future of Europe remains a subject of robust debate and strategic importance. The discussions within Türkiye about the EU's future—ranging from democratic ideals to economic interdependence—highlight the country's enduring relevance to the European project. Despite the current impasse in accession talks, the potential

for Türkiye and Europe to forge a stronger partnership looms large, with implications that extend far beyond the formalities of membership.

The journey of Türkiye's EU accession process has been fraught with complexities and setbacks, as detailed in the European Commission's 2023 Türkiye Report. Yet, it is precisely this journey that has spurred a deeper engagement with European issues within Turkish academia and policy-making circles. The intellectual discourse in Turkiye has transcended the binary outcome of accession, fostering a broader examination of strategic, cultural, and normative issues that are vital to both Turkiye and Europe's future.

This special issue has underscored the necessity for continued dialogue and collaboration between Turkish and European scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. Such collaboration is essential not only for the enrichment of academic discourse but also for the practical advancement of shared interests in areas like energy, security, and digital transformation. The insights and analyses provided by Turkish experts contribute significantly to the understanding of Europe's multifaceted landscape and offer perspectives that can help shape a more inclusive and resilient European identity.

Regardless of the outcome of the membership process, there is a clear potential for a mutually beneficial relationship between Türkiye and Europe. The EU's enlargement policy, while currently presenting a tableau of unmet expectations, still holds the promise of bridging continental divides if pursued with credibility and transparency. Türkiye's experience with EU negotiations—marked by skepticism and reform fatigue—offers valuable lessons for the EU's engagement with other candidate countries. A partnership that respects Türkiye's strategic interests and aligns with the EU's values can contribute to regional stability and prosperity.

In conclusion, as the EU reflects on its future and considers its next steps in enlargement, it must do so with an appreciation for Türkiye's unique position and the contributions it can make. The dialogue between Türkiye and Europe must continue with vigor, informed by the rich complexity of shared history and the promise of shared destiny. The future of Europe, with Türkiye as an integral part, holds the potential for a landscape of cooperation that leverages the strengths of addressing the critical challenges of our time.

Bibliography

European Commission. "Turkey 2023 Report." Accessed November 8, 2023. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_23_5630.

Gülmez, Seçkin Barış, Alp Eren Topal, and Bahar Rumelili. 2023. "Europe and Turkey: Identities in Evolution. An Analytical Literature Review." Open Research Europe 3: 120. https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.16176.1.

Michel, Charles. "Speech at the Plenary Session of the European Economic and Social Committee." European Council, May 18, 2022. Accessed May 11, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/05/18/discours-dupresident-charles-michel-lors-de-la-session-pleniere-du-comite-economique-etsocial-europeen/.

Spanish Presidency. "European Political Community: a forum to promote dialogue and cooperation." October 1, 2023. Accessed May 11, 2023 https://spanish-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/european-political-community-granada-summit/

Şenyuva, Özgehan, and Çiğdem Üstün. 2023. "Türkiye'de Avrupa Çalışmaları." In Türkiye'de Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışmaları: Alt Alanlar ve Bölgesel Odaklar, edited by A. Ergun, Ç. Üstün, and S. A. Akgül, 621-650. İmge.

THE POPULIST CHALLENGE TO NORMATIVE AND GEOPOLITICAL EUROPE

İbrahim SAYLAN*
Müge AKNUR**
Research Article

Abstract

Populism has become a remarkable political force in contemporary European politics. Most populist parties in Europe currently have radical right leanings and stand for sovereigntism, nativism, and authoritarianism. Either in government or opposition, these parties have had various impacts on liberal democratic systems both nationally and supranationally. Drawing on the concept of geopolitical European power, the European Union has been in search of effective responses to current challenges, including populism. This research aims at grasping the populist challenge in terms of its impacts on European politics within the broader context of normative versus geopolitical European power debate. Our research shows that populism has not only corroded normative European power but has also turned into an obstacle to the EU's aspirations for geopolitical European power.

Keywords: Populism, Geopolitical Europe, Sovereigntism, Authoritarianism, Nativism.

Normatif ve Jeopolitik Avrupa'ya Yönelik Popülist Meydan Okuma

Öz

Popülizm günümüz Avrupa siyasetinde kayda değer bir siyasal güce dönüşmüştür. Avrupa'daki popülist partilerin çoğu radikal sağ eğilimlidir ve egemenlikçilik, yerlicilik ve otoriterliği desteklemektedir. İster hükümette ister muhalefette olsun, popülist radikal sağ partilerin ulusal ve ulusüstü düzeylerde liberal demokratik sistemler üzerinde çeşitli etkileri bulunmaktadır. Avrupa Birliği, jeopolitik Avrupa gücü kavramından hareketle, popülizm de dâhil olmak üzere

---

* Associate Prof., Dokuz Eylül University, Faculty of Business, Department of International Relations, E-mail: ibrahim.saylan@deu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-7395-9963.

** Associate Prof., Dokuz Eylül University, Faculty of Business, Department of International Relations, E-mail: muge.aknur@deu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-1407-7047.

güncel meydan okumalara karşı etkili yanıtlar arayışındadır. Bu araştırma, popülist meydan okumayı Avrupa siyaseti üzerindeki etkileri açısından normatif ve jeopolitik Avrupa gücü tartışmasının daha geniş bağlamı içinde kavramayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmamız, popülizmin sadece normatif Avrupa gücünü aşındırmakla kalmadığını, aynı zamanda AB'nin jeopolitik Avrupa gücü hedeflerinin önünde bir engele dönüştüğünü göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler*: Popülizm, Jeopolitik Avrupa, Egemenlikçilik, Otoriterlik, Yerlicilik.*

Introduction

Populism has become a remarkable political force, shaping both contemporary and future European politics. It has been especially on the rise in many European countries since the Eurozone crisis of 2009 while the 2015 refugee crisis also greatly contributed to the growing electoral appeal of populist parties across Europe. In many European countries, populist radical right parties (PRRPs) have gained political power through electoral success, forming governing coalitions in Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Finland, Norway, and Czechia, and supporting minority governments in the Netherlands and Denmark. Marking the growing appeal of right-wing populism, PRRPs achieved critical electoral successes in 2022. In particular, the Brothers of Italy (*Fratelli d'Italia* - FdI) won national elections to form the first radical right-led government in Italy since World War II. Having come second in Sweden's 2022 general elections, the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*–SD) gained direct influence over the national government for the first time. In Hungary, Victor Orban's Fidesz gained its fourth consecutive electoral victory since 2010.

Meanwhile, another Eastern European country, Poland, has been governed by a populist conservative coalition in which Law and Justice Party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* – PiS) has been the dominant partner since 2015. Even Germany, which has actively strived to isolate and marginalize radical right political actors since the end of World War II, witnessed a historical break when the Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland* – AfD) became the first radical right party to enter the federal parliament in 2015. In France, the National Rally (*Rassemblement National* – RN) competed in the second round of presidential elections in 2022 for the third time in its history. Having gained its highest vote rate in the recent election, the party continues to be an influential actor in French politics.

Above all, Brexit has probably been the greatest victory for populism in Europe, with significant political consequences for European politics.

Whether in government or opposition, PRRPs challenge liberal democratic political systems at both the national and European levels.[1] Populists negatively affect the EU due to their nativist, authoritarian, and sovereignist ideological characteristics. These impacts have normative and geopolitical aspects. In response to populist impacts, the EU tries to develop effective strategies and policies to tackle the populist challenge. These responses take shape as a part of a broader European attempt that finds its intellectual and political expression on the axis of European normative and geopolitical power debate.

This article neither aims to limit the analysis of populism to the national level nor seeks to make a comparative analysis of populist parties across Europe. Rather, it focuses on defining and analyzing the various impacts of the populist challenge on European politics, specifically on the EU, whose identity and roles are being reshaped in the face of geopolitical challenges. In other words, the aimed contribution of this research is to grasp the populist challenge in terms of its impacts on European politics within the broader context of normative versus geopolitical European power debate. This paper concludes that the populist impacts of PRRPs have not only undermined the normative aspect of European power but have also turned into an obstacle to the EU's attempt to reshape itself as a geopolitical power.

Taking populism as a challenge to both normative and geopolitical conceptions of Europe, this study first outlines the major elements of the normative and geopolitical European power debate before explaining the fundamental characteristics of populist radical right ideology. It then focuses on PRRPs as the most influential populist actors in contemporary European politics. While explaining the nature of populist radical right ideology, the study identifies the major reasons for its political rise. Then, the article analyzes various dimensions of the populist impact on national and EU levels, mainly through PRRPs' policies. In this analysis, the study considers the three primary major components of populist radical right ideology:

---

[1] Thomas Diez, "The EU in a Changing World Order: In Defence of Normative Power 2.0.," *Marmara Üniversitesi Avrupa Topluluğu Enstitüsü Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi* 29, no 1 (2021): 3; Rosa Balfour, "The Resistible Rise of Populism in Europe and Its Impact on European and International Cooperation," *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook*, 2017, Access Date: March 12, 2023, https://www.iemed.org/publication/the-resistable-rise-of-populism-in-europe-and-its-impact-on-european-and-international-cooperation/.

authoritarianism, nativism, and sovereigntism. This empirical research focuses on PRRPs in Germany, France, Italy, Poland, and Hungary due to their high representative capacity, along with other striking examples from other European countries when appropriate. Finally, the study evaluates the EU's responses to the populist challenge in the framework of the normative versus geopolitical European power debate.

I. The Normative vs. Geopolitical European Power Debate and the Populist Challenge

European countries and the EU have recently faced significant challenges, including populism. More specifically, a series of political, economic, and health crises have again revealed major structural problems at both national and EU levels and crystallized the need for effective responses to the intertwined continental and global challenges. Since the national level is necessarily embedded within the EU level in the EU's multilevel governance system, supposedly national problems and efforts to tackle them always have an EU dimension. Nevertheless, responding to the EU's challenges requires the active participation and consensus of Member States at the EU level. Hence, responses to populism in individual European countries and the EU as a whole must be understood within this complex network of interactions centered on the EU.

The EU's responses to populism have developed as part of ongoing intellectual and political debates and competition over Europe's identity and role in global politics. These debates are generally conducted on the axis of normative and geopolitical European power. Although these two conceptions of Europe differ on several grounds, they both favor the ideal of European integration whereas authoritarian, nativist, and sovereignist PRRPs challenge both conceptions for different reasons.

Normative European power means that European identity and behavior are based on specific shared values, primarily "peace, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, human rights, social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance".[2] These values have long underpinned the EU's norm-based policies and its self-presentation as a values-based order.[3] The EU also promotes these norms in its relations with third

---

[2] Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 40 (2002): 241.

[3] Raja Noureddine, "Critically Assess and Analyse the Notion that the EU is a Normative Power," *European Union External Action*, November 24, 2016, Access Date: April 03, 2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/15687_en.

countries in its efforts to create a rules-based international order. Thus, EU power arguably developed as a normative power in opposition to traditional geopolitically oriented conceptions of power.[4] Diez argues that the EU's normative power expanded thanks to the favorable environment provided by the "liberal moment" between 1990 and 2009. Examples of the EU's normative power in global politics include the Responsibility to Protect, the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the Kyoto Protocol. However, EU norm promotion has been challenged by populism, autocracy, and multilateralism due to China's rise as well as the EU's inner contradictions, such as Eurocentrism and "othering practices".[5] More specifically, the EU has failed as a normative actor due to unresolved tensions between Member States' interests and EU norms.[6]

Since the end of the "liberal moment" in 2009, the EU has experienced an obvious shift from a normative to geopolitical Europe.[7] Kundnani describes geopolitics as a vague concept that has been used in at least five ways: as a synonym of international politics; referring to the role of geography in international politics; the strategic use of military tools; as a synonym of power politics; and as the pursuit of economic interests. According to Kundnani, the EU authorities selectively refer to certain meanings of geopolitics, which makes geopolitical Europe conceptually fuzzy.[8] In response to Kundnani, Laidi argues that as a doctrine in the making of geopolitical Europe, it is not fuzzy; rather, it is aimed at "redressing norm-based EU's over-optimism of transforming international politics without giving up its norm-based character."[9]

---

[4] Manners, "Normative Power Europe."

[5] Diez, "The EU in a Changing World Order," 3.

[6] Noureddine, "Critically Assess."

[7] Stefan Lehne, "Making EU Foreign Policy Fit For a Geopolitical Europe," *Carnegie Europe*, April 14, 2022, Access Date: April 15, 2023, https://carnegieeurope.eu/2022/04/14/making-eu-foreign-policy-fit-for-geopolitical-world-pub-86886.

[8] Hans Kundnani, "Europe's Geopolitical Confusion," *Internationale Politik Quarterly*, Jan 4, 2023, Access Date: April 15, 2023, https://ip-quarterly.com/en/europes-geopolitical-confusion.

[9] Zaki Laidi, "The Meaning of Geopolitical Europe: A Response to Hans Kundnani," *Internationale Politik Quarterly*, Jan 16, 2023, Access Date: April 15, 2023, https://ip-quarterly.com/en/meaning-geopolitical-europe-response-hans-kundnani.

Within this context and reflecting its increasing emphasis on "shared interests" and the "European way of life," the EU introduced the European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) in 2016. In line with the concept of "principled pragmatism," this document is oriented to achieve a more effective EU defense and security policy, and a more active EU in dealing with crises, such as immigration. By stressing the concept of "strategic autonomy," the EUGS implies that the EU is willing to improve its own security and defense capabilities to act militarily without over-reliance on the USA.[10]

In response to the criticism that the EU is trying to become an actor in a traditional geopolitical great power competition, Josep Borrell, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, claims that a geopolitical Europe does not mean that the EU has abandoned its focus on norms. Rather, as reflected in his comment that "outside our post-modern garden, the jungle was growing," the EU should adapt itself to the age of power politics.[11] Calling himself "a realist Kantian,"[12] Borrell eloquently defines a geopolitical Europe as "the EU, which is more security-conscious, with a unity of purpose and capabilities to pursue its political goals on the world stage."[13] According to Borrell, the Ukraine war brought about a "geopolitical awakening" since European countries realized the high costs of "non-Europe" and accepted that the EU must use its economic and military means as instruments of power to respond to global challenges. The Ukraine war has given impetus to strategic convergence to achieve an integrated EU security and defense policy.[14]

---

[10] "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy," *European Union Global Strategy,* June 2016, Access Date: April 18, 2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ eugs_review_web_0.pdf.

[11] Josep Borrell Fontelles, "Europe in the Interregnum: Our Geopolitical Awakening after Ukraine," *European Union External Action*, March 24, 2022, Access Date: April 17, 2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/europe-interregnum-our-geopolitical-awakening-after-ukraine_en.

[12] Alberto Alemanno and Adam Mouyal, "'The Borrell Doctrine,' A Conversation with the HRVP*," groupe d'etudes geopolitiques*, October 31, 2022, Access Date: April 19, 2023, https://geopolitique.eu/en/2022/10/31/a-conversation-with-josep-borrell/.

[13] "A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence," *Strategic Compass*, March 24, 2022, Access Date: April 15, 2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf.

[14] Borrell Fontelles, "Europe in the Interregnum."

Another important political development towards a geopolitical Europe is French President Emmanuel Macron's introduction of the idea of the European Political Community (EPC). The EPC was established in 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine as an intergovernmental forum for political coordination between European countries across the continent. The EPC aims to develop "political dialogue and cooperation on issues of common interest to strengthen the security, stability, and prosperity of the European continent."[15] There is no doubt that a geopolitical Europe requires the EU to be more active in promoting European interests in multilateral global politics. For instance, Taylor recommends that "EU seize the geopolitical moment in the Balkans" and enable the integration of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. According to Taylor, if the EU fails to do so, Russia may exploit ongoing disputes among these countries to destabilize Europe.[16]

While geopolitical Europe is above all a response to global challenges, its progress is also related to the rise of populism at home. Populism challenges both interpretations of European power for specific reasons. Therefore, both normative and geopolitical conceptions of European power must take the populist factor into account. Before exploring Europe's responses to the impacts of populism, we will first explain populist radical right ideology and the nativist, authoritarian, and sovereignist impacts of populism.

II. The Populist Radical Right and its Rise in Europe

Populism is a contested concept. There are various theoretical explanations for its nature, causes, and impacts. Among others, Rovira Kaltwasser highlights two rival yet complementary approaches.[17] According to the first, populism is a political strategy in the hands of elites who aim to

---

[15] "Meeting of the European Political Community, 1 June 2023," *European Council, Council of the European Union*, June 2023, Access Date: April 20, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2023/06/01/.

[16] Paul Taylor, "EU must seize the geopolitical moment in the Balkans," *Politico*, December 14, 2022, Access Date: April 21, 2023, https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-balkans-accession-russia-china-geopolitics/.

[17] Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser, "Populism - An Overview of the Concept and the State of the Art," in *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*, eds., Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser et. al., (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017), 12.

obtain or maintain political power.[18] The second approach sees populism as a political ideology that has a particular conceptualization of society and government. However, unlike the classical political ideologies of liberalism and socialism, populism is thin-centered.[19] That is, it lacks a comprehensive political program, so it needs to rely on other political ideologies, which leads to widely differing interpretations of populism. As a political ideology, populism is characterized by two core ideas. First, political authority springs from the general will of the people. Second, politics in representative democracies is a struggle between "pure and virtuous people" and the "corrupt elite". Populists promise a restoration of popular sovereignty.[20]

These two ideas underlying the sovereignist conception of populist politics are intertwined with the other two elements of populist radical right ideology: nativism and authoritarianism.[21] The right-wing populist conception of a pure people is derived from the notion of a homogenous nation, characterized by a common native culture and history, and a determination to live together. Such a conception of national identity undoubtedly excludes ethnic, religious, and ideological minorities. It is also used to justify "welfare chauvinism," according to which the nation's institutions and welfare must benefit only its native population.[22]

At the European level, populists are Eurosceptic, primarily due to the sovereignist aspect of their ideology. The PRRPs' approaches to the EU can be grouped as "soft" or "hard" Euroscepticism. The former, which has "conditional" or "compromising" versions, seeks to restructure the EU in the form of a Europe of nations. In contrast, the latter's political objectives involve "rejecting," which can amount to leaving the EU.[23] In any case, PRRPs target EU institutions and European integration as they see the EU as

---

[18] Kurt Weyland, "Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics," *Comparative Politics* 34, no 1 (2001).

[19] Cas Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist," *Government and Opposition* 34, no 4 (2004); Ben Stanley, "The Thin Ideology of Populism," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13, no 1 (2008).

[20] Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist," 543.

[21] Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist," 543.

[22] Montserrat Guibernau, "Migration and the Rise of the Radical Right – Social Malaise vs the Failure of Mainstream Politics," *Policy Network Paper*, London (2010).

[23] Sofia Vasilopoulou, "European Integration and the Radical Right: Three Patterns of Opposition," *Government and Opposition* 46, no. 2 (2011).

a continental extension of corrupt elite rule, which is essentially the enemy of popular sovereignty. According to populists, the EU has recently shown its alienation from European peoples during the financial and refugee crisis; supported austerity measures rather than remedying social grievance; and failed to protect European borders, causing damage to national identities and European civilization.

In this sense, populist Euroscepticism has political, economic, and cultural dimensions. Populists consider themselves protectors of national identity and the national interest against the supranational EU, and present themselves as guardians of European civilization against non-Europeans, especially against the "invasion of Islam".

The rise of populism and the remarkable recent electoral successes of PRRPs can be explained in various ways. Demand-side explanations stress the public's disappointments and fears from unfulfilled expectations, the poor performance of political parties, falling living standards, and increasing precarity.[24] Supply-side explanations focus on the electoral appeal of political party programs, leadership capacity, media, and political opportunity structure, which may help or hinder the advance of populists.[25]

Besides these demand- and supply-side explanations, the rise of populism in Europe has significantly depended on the present conjuncture. That is, several recent crises in Europe have particularly contributed to the populists' electoral successes.[26] To give three examples, governments responded to the Eurozone crisis of 2009 with austerity measures that incited a series of public protests in many European countries; the refugee crisis in 2015 led some EU countries to suspend the Schengen Agreement and resist

---

[24] Hans-Georg Betz and Carol Johnson, "Against the Current- Stemming the Tide: The Nostalgic Ideology of the Contemporary Radical Populist Right," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9, no 3, (2004); Kenneth Roberts, "Populism and Populist Parties," in *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*.

[25] Sarah de Lange, "A New Winning Formula? The Programmatic Appeal of the Radical Right," *Party Politics* 13, no.4 (2007); Kurt Weyland, "A Political-Strategic Approach," in *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*.

[26] Benjamin Moffit, "How to Perform Crisis: A Model for Understanding the Key Role of Crisis in Contemporary Populism," *Government and Opposition* 50 (2014); Hans Peter Kriesi and Takis Pappas, *European Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession,* (Colchester: ECPR Press, 2015); David Art, "The AfD and the End of Containment in Germany," *German Politics & Society* 36, no 2 (2018).

migrant quotas to share Europe's refugee "burden"[27]; Brexit even fueled speculation about the EU's disintegration.[28] However, there are also counter examples. The public health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic showed that such crises do not always help populists[29] as the pandemic led the public to rally around the flag in favor of central governments. In this time of uncertainty, the EU was able to prepare a financial package of €750 billion for economic recovery.[30] Most recently, the Ukraine war has encouraged initiatives favoring a more integrated Europe to face global security and economic challenges. Thus, the empirical evidence suggests that the populist rise cannot be explained by a single general theory of crisis, although economic and political crises specifically do seem to provide a favorable environment for populist mobilization.

To sum up, although the factors contributing to the rise of populism vary, growing populism is generally a symptom of the crisis of liberal democracies. That is, the failure of Europe's liberal democracies to satisfy popular expectations has contributed to the rise of populism. The continued populist wave has not only made PRRPs established actors in national political systems but also enabled them to increase their ideological and policy-based influences throughout Europe.

---

[27] Ian Traynor and Helena Smith, "EU Border Controls: Schengen Scheme on the Brink After Amsterdam Talks," *The Guardian*, January 16, 2016, Access Date: March 15, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/25/refugee-crisis-schengen-area-scheme-brink-amsterdam-talks; Ian, Traynor, "EU Plans Migrant Quotas Forcing States to 'Share' Burden," *Guardian*, May 10, 2015, Access Date: March   16,   2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/10/european-commission-migrant-quota-plan-mediter ranean –crisis.

[28] Hans Vollaard, "One down, any to go? European disintegration after Brexit," *LSE,* March 23, 2020, Access Date: March 20, 2023, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2020/03/23/one-down-many-to-go-european-disintegration-after-brexit.

[29] Sevgi Çilingir, "The Covid-19 Crisis: Opportunity or Threat for Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe?," *Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 21, no 3 (2021).

[30] "Europe's Moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation," *European Commission*,   Access   Date: March   15,   2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_940.

III. Populist Impact

Populism that reflects itself through the policies of PRRPs has created serious challenges to cooperation among European nations. The PRRPs, whether in government or opposition, have unquestionably damaged European values and EU institutions due to their authoritarian, nativist, and sovereigntist policies. Through these policies, these parties have questioned the EU's normative power, particularly by endangering the rule of law, political rights, civil liberties, and minority rights. Moreover, with the help of these three characteristics, PRRPs have promoted nation-first preferences over common EU policies, by weakening geopolitical European power. PRRPs have challenged the EU's integration policies and restrained institutional progress, particularly in high-level political issues such as foreign policy, security, defense, and migration policies.

PRRPs are no longer ineffective marginal actors at the periphery of their political system as they have transformed themselves into established political actors. This can be observed in their stable election performances and their impact on agenda-setting or policy-making across a variety of issues, such as immigration, integration, culture, identity, law and order, and liberal democracy.[31] They also influence socio-economic policies, encouraging welfare chauvinism, and foreign policy decisions. These parties have created a so-called *Rechtstruck* (right turn) in European politics.[32] By time their radical discourse was normalized through their "contagion" impact on the mainstream parties as well as the entire party political system.[33]

Among these characteristics mentioned, nativism leads PRRPs to focus on ethno-cultural community and its 'pure culture' and marginalize people belonging to other religions, languages, and ethnicities. Due to nativism, PRRPs consider Europeanism and Christianity components of national identity and therefore oppose immigration, particularly Muslim immigration, to protect their national identity and European values. This leads them to follow an anti-Islamist agenda, both in cultural terms and security terms due

---

[31] See Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, *Populists in Power,* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 3; Cas Mudde, "The Study of Populist Radical Right Parties: Towards a Fourth Wave," *C-Rex Working Paper Series,* September 2016, 9.

[32] Mudde, "The Study," 9.

[33] Joost Van Spanje, "Contagious Parties and Their Impact on Other Parties' Immigration Stances in Contemporary Western Europe," *Party Politics* 16, no. 5 (2010).

to the increasing number of terror attacks.[34] By following their own security-oriented migration policies based on nationalist concerns, PRRPs challenge the normative values of the EU.

Among these parties, while the AfD in Germany in 2015 reacted to Chancellor Merkel's decision to pursue an open-door refugee policy due to its anti-Muslim rhetoric, in France, Marine Le Pen, then leader of the RN, in 2015 offered to impose quotas on refugees and called for an end to the Schengen visa-free zone.[35] In Italy, in 2018 interior minister Matteo Salvini of populist Lega introduced the Salvini Bill which included a series of measures to abolish significant forms of protection for migrants.[36] Similar tough anti-immigrant policies were taken during the short-lived ÖVP and far-right FPÖ coalition government in Austria and during the rule of current Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.[37] In March 2023, current British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's government proposed a draft bill that included the denial of asylum even to illegal immigrants who have come from a war zone and faced persecution. Moreover, the bill proposed to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda.[38]

---

[34] Aristotle Kallis, "Islamophobia in Europe: The Radical Right and the Mainstream," *Insight Turkey* 17, no.4 (2015): 28; Koen Abts and Stefan Rummens, "Populism versus Democracy," *Political Studies* 55, no. 6 (2007): 414.

[35] "AfD leader faces legal action for saying 'camel driver' Turks should 'go back to where they belong'," *The Local*, February 15, 2018, Access Date: January 30, 2023, https://www.thelocal.de/20180215/afd-leader-calls-turks-camel-drivers-who-should-go-back-to-where-they-belong; Anne-Sylvaine Chassany, "France's National Front taps into rising anti-immigrant mood," *Financial Times*, September 6, 2015, Access Date: January 30, 2023, https://www.ft.com/content/62131206-5473-11e5-8642-453585f2cfcd.

[36] Angela Giuffrida, "Italian Government approves Salvini Bill targeting Migrants," *Guardian*, September 24, 2018. Access Date: February 02, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/24/italian-government-approves-bill-anti-migrant-measures-matteo-salvini.

[37] Alex Fraser, "How will Italian PM Meloni's anti-immigration stance evolve in 2023?" *CGTN*, December 26, 2022, Access Date: February 02, 2023, https://newseu.cgtn.com/news/2022-12-26/How-will-Italian-PM-Meloni-s-anti-immigration-stance-evolve-in-2023--1g59e9AJHws/index.html; Margit Ammer and Lando Kirchmair, "The Restriction of Refugee Rights during the ÖVP-FPÖ Coalition 2017-2019 in Austria*,"* in *Migrants' Rights, Populism and Legal Resilience in Europe*, ed., Vladislava Stoyanova and Stijn Smet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): 284-285.

[38] Jennifer Rankin, "Europe's far-right praise UK's illegal migration bill," *The Guardian*, March 9, 2023, Access Date: April 03, 2023,

Likewise, following the 2015 refugee crisis in Hungary, Orban's populist radical right party Fidesz closed border crossing points from Serbia, fenced the border with Croatia and Romania, criminalized unauthorized border crossings, and ordered the rejection of all asylum requests made at the border.[39] In Poland, the populist radical right PiS exploited the refugee crisis for its election campaign by opposing the quota system proposed by the European Commission for the mass relocation of refugees across the EU.[40] Thus, these two Eastern European countries did not only damage the EU's normative aspect but also challenge its geopolitical orientation by pursuing their own security strategy and quota system.

The PRRPs' nativism also showed itself through discourses of xenophobia and Islamophobia. In the Netherlands, Prime Minister Mark Rutte, in an attempt to receive populist votes, stated that people who did not want to adapt Dutch values would leave their country.[41] Between 2011 and 2018, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Denmark, and the Netherlands all passed laws banning the wearing of face-covering veils in public spaces. These policies were all justified by populist politicians or parties as attempts to stop the "Islamization of Europe".[42]

---

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/09/europes-far-right-praise-uks-migration-bill. In June 2023, British Court of Appeal found that the Sunak government's intention to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda was unconstitutional.

[39] Elzbieta M. Gozdziak. "Using Fear of the "Other," Orban Reshapes Migration Policy in a Hungary Built on Cultural Diversity," *Migration Policy Institute*, October 10, 2019, Access Date: February 03, 2023, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/orban-reshapes-migration-policy-hungary.

[40] Karolina Vigura, "Poland's Islamophobia," *Carnegie Europe*, June 23, 2016, Access Date: February 02, 2023, https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/63892

[41] Kartik Raj, "How Nativist Populism is Going Mainstream in Europe," *Human Rights Watch*, February 21, 2020, Access Date: February 02, 2023, http://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/21/how-nativist-populism-going-mainstream-europe.

[42] "Dutch senate passes law enabling partial 'burqa ban'," *Reuters,* Access Date: February 03, 2023, June 26, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-netherlands-burqa-ban-idUSKBN1JM1I7; Rebecca Tan, "From France to Denmark, bans on full-face Muslims veils are spreading across Europe," *Washington Post,* August 16, 2018, Access Date: February 03, 2023, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2018/08/16/france-denmark-bans-full-face-muslim-veils-are-spreading-across-europe/.

In fact, all these nativist policies that included harsh measures against immigrants and refugees and anti-Islamist tendencies violated significant democratic values of the EU by rejecting multiculturalism and pluralism. Nativism resorts to authoritarianism by supporting majority-ethnic nationalism and by eroding liberal values and democratic institutions in the name of restoring popular sovereignty. Recent anti-immigration policies introduced by the Italian, Austrian, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, Hungarian, and Polish governments under the direct and indirect impact of PRRPs are all characteristic of authoritarian policies. These policies violate civil rights, including individual rights to protection of life, protection against illegitimate arrest, equal access to the law, and equal treatment by the law. Furthermore, the anti-Islamist policies of the French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, and Danish governments regarding the prohibition of face-covering veils can be viewed as violations of political liberties.

The two Eastern European countries ruled by PRRP governments, Hungary and Poland, have not only violated civil rights and political liberties but also disrupted the separation of powers, the rule of law, and EU values.[43] Indeed, Orban's authoritarianism has reached such an unprecedented level that the European Parliament and European Commission declared that Hungary openly violated European democratic values,[44] thus harming EU's geopolitical power.

Concerning the sovereignist aspect of populist impact, PRRPs reflect their Euroscepticism by stressing their nation-first stance. By becoming a full member of the EU, European countries have consented to share their sovereignty with this organization. They accepted the Copenhagen criteria, ensuring that they have democratic governance, a functioning market economy, and the ability to take on the obligations of membership, such as EU rules and standards. The EU's evolution into a system of multi-level governance in which sovereignty rights are shared between supranational,

---

[43] "Freedom in the World 2023: Hungary," *Freedom House*, Access Date: February 04, 2023, https://freedomhouse.org/country/hungary/freedom-world/2023; "Poland has a duty to preserve judicial independence," *Council of Europe*, July 17, 2017, Access Date: February 04, 2023, https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/poland-has-a-duty-to-preserve-judicial-independence.

[44] Lili Bayer and Camille Gijs, "European Parliament brands Hungary as 'no longer a democracy'," *Politico*, September 15, 2022, Access Date: February 04, 2023, https://www.politico.eu/article/viktor-orban-rule-of-law-european-parliament-brands -hungary-as-no-longer-a-democracy/.

national, and subnational institutions may constrain the supremacy of national governments.[45]

In this context, populists have accused the EU of violating the sovereignty of their countries, particularly during the 2009 Eurozone crisis and the 2015 refugee crisis. Considering themselves protectors of national interests against supranational organizations, populists argue that countries should take back control, particularly regarding the economy and immigration, to restore their national sovereignty. During the Eurozone crisis, they criticized the EU for resorting to austerity measures rather than alleviating social hardships. In Germany, for example, the populist right AfD criticized the bailout packages that Germany was forced to give while the RN in France used the crisis to strengthen its Eurosceptic discourse.[46] Italian populists also opposed EU austerity measures, claiming instead that they could resolve the crisis by sending immigrants back home.[47] In the UK, during the Brexit referendum campaign, the idea prevailed that "taking back control from Brussels would make the UK great again".[48]

Sovereigntist movements gained further momentum due to the 2015 refugee crisis, when the EU was accused of failing to protect European borders by permitting a refugee inflow, thereby endangering European states' culture, values, and national identity. Most EU Member States were angry at the refugee quotas allocated to them by the EU.[49] Populist parties saw themselves as the protectors of European civilization against non-

---

[45] Nathalie Brack, Ramona Coman, Amendine Crespy, "Sovereignty conflicts in the European Union," *Dans Les Cahiers du Cevipol*, No. 4 (2019): 7.

[46] Robert Grimm, "The Rise of the German Eurosceptic Party Alternative für Deutschland, Between Ordoliberal Critique and Popular Anxiety," *International Political Science Review* 36, no. 3 (2015): 269; Gilles Ivaldi, "Contesting the EU in times of Crisis: The Front National and Politics of Euroscepticism in France," *Politics*, 38, no. 3 (2018).

[47] James Mackenzie and Gavin Jones, "Italy delivers tough austerity measures" *Reuters*, August 13, 2011, Access Date: February 05, 2023, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-italy-crisis-idUSTRE77B1GF20110813.

[48] Hardeep Matharu, "The 2008 Financial Crisis paved the way for Brexit – Why don't We Talk About it Anymore?" *By Line Times*, November, 2, 2019, Access Date: February 05, 2023, https://bylinetimes.com/2019/11/07/the-2008-financial-crash-paved-the-way-for-brexit-why-dont-we-talk-about-it-anymore/.

[49] Ian Traynor and Patrick Kingsley, "EU Governments push through divisive deal to share 120,000 refugees," The Guardian, 22.09.2015, Access Date: February 06, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/22/eu-governments-divisive-quotas-deal-share-120000-refugees.

Europeans, particularly Muslims, and considered the allocation of quotas a violation of their country's sovereignty.

To regain national sovereignty, PRRPs, have adopted Eurosceptic policies. In targeting EU institutions and EU integration, PRRPs view the EU as an extension of a corrupt elite and the opponent of popular sovereignty. While some populist leaders, such as Salvini, Meloni, and Le Pen, eventually abandoned their hard Euroscepticism as well as the idea of exiting the EU, others, such as the AfD continued their Eurosceptic approach and supported the idea of leaving the EU. Concerning Brexit, all populist leaders supported Britain's exit from the EU. However, when they considered their own country's withdrawal from the EU, they were all concerned about the functioning of their economy without the EU.[50] In fact, Euroscepticism poses a substantial challenge to the EU's geopolitical power since it either advocates the exit of the Member States from the EU or reduces the EU's influence over member states. Reduced EU effect on Member States undermines the EU's ability to interfere in these nations' defense and security policies. Most crucially, these parties do not trust the EU on either low- or high-level political issues.

Concerning the geopolitical power of the EU, which focuses on common security and foreign policies, PRRPs claim to protect or defend their own homeland, their national territory, and the country. In her analysis of six populist parties' narratives on security, Oanca argues that in PRRPs in Austria, Finland, and Hungary mainly concentrate on their own citizens' security and welfare.[51] Although the Russian invasion of Ukraine generated an EU-wide reaction among Member States, the nature and extent of sanctions against Russia created disagreements. For example, Hungarian leader Orban due to his geopolitical motivations changed his initial pro-Ukraine policies into a pro-Russian populist narrative.[52]

---

[50] Carlo Martuscelli and Jacopo Barigazzi, "Veni, Vidi, Veto: Giorgia Meloni's March on Brussels," *Politico*, September 22, 2022, Access Date: February 06, 2023, https://www.politico.eu/article/veni-vedi-veto-giorgia-melonis-march-on-brussels/; Jon Henley and Jennifer Rankin, "'Frexit in all but name': what a Marine Le Pen win would mean for EU," *The Guardian*, April 15, 2022, Access Date: February 02, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/15/frexit-what-marine-le-pen-win-mean-eu.

[51] Alexandra Oanca, "'Security' and 'Crisis' in Populist Discourse –a Brief Exploratory Story— " *Relationes Internationales* 14, no: 1 (2022).

[52] Marina Henke and Richard Mayer, "The Populist Challenge to European Defense", *Journal of European Public Policy* 28, no: 3 (2021): 389.

IV. European Responses to Populism

These different populist impacts show that populism challenges both normative and geopolitical conceptions of European power to varying degrees. While its authoritarian and nativist dimensions have so far endangered fundamental principles and major institutions of national democratic systems and the EU, populist sovereigntism has become a particular threat to European integration and the EU's ability to overcome geopolitical challenges. The EU has developed a number of responses to global challenges, including populism. EU responses, which refer to a set of strategies and policies, have had direct and indirect consequences regarding different aspects of the populist impact, both on normative and geopolitical grounds.

The authoritarian impact of the populist radical right is deeply felt, especially in Hungary and Poland. In these countries, populist governments have established illiberal orders and insistently challenged the EU's normative power, which is entrenched in a number of fundamental principles and institutions. Against these populist attacks, the EU Commission started a procedure for Poland in 2017 under Article 7 of the Treaty of Union regarding alleged violations of the rule of law and European values. This move was supported by the European Parliament (EP). The EP also started the same procedure for Hungary in 2018. Although the situation in both countries has worsened in recent years, other Member States have hesitated to take the necessary steps to determine "a clear risk of a serious breach" of the EU's common values.[53] Nevertheless, the Council of the EU implemented the rule of law conditionality mechanism for Hungary in 2022, following the Commission's proposal. Thus, Hungary has been deprived of its share of €6.3 billion from the EU budget due to the country's "breaches of the principles of the rule concerning public procurement, the effectiveness of prosecutorial action, and the fight against corruption".[54] These temporary measures can be lifted without loss of EU funding if Hungary fulfills their

---

[53] "Rule of Law in Hungary and Poland: Plenary Debate and Resolution," *European Parliament News*, May 2-5, 2022, Access Date: March 10, 2023, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2022-05-02/6/rule-of-law-in-hungary-and-poland-plenary-debate-and-resolution.

[54] "The Rule of Law Conditionality Mechanism," *Council of the EU, Press Release*, December 12, 2022, Access Date: March 10, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/12/rule-of-law-conditionality-mechanism/.

requirements within two years.[55] The effectiveness of the EU's response will be tested in time. The authoritarian impact of populism has been less visible in Western European countries than in the illiberal regimes of Hungary and Poland. Nevertheless, populist discourses and policies have undoubtedly undermined the EU's legitimacy in all Member States to varying degrees.

Regarding European responses to nativism, the picture is equally frustrating. Europe has witnessed the mainstreaming of populist nativism, especially regarding migration. While multiculturalism has been abandoned, EU countries have tightened their immigration policies. The EU has also externalized migration control by signing many readmission agreements with many third countries.[56] This preference has occasionally developed at the expense of human rights protection, especially for asylum seekers. The UK government's agreement with Rwanda is a striking example of the extent of attitude change in migration policies across Europe.[57] During the refugee crisis in 2015, the EU failed to develop an EU-wide solution followed by its Member States. Instead, some EU members reacted with direct nationalist reflexes. The wall erected on the Greece-Turkey border has also become a new symbol of "Fortress Europe".

The growing populist impact of nativism does not only badly influence the normative aspect of European power. It also impedes the development of a Union-wide migration policy and, at least, equal sharing of burdens caused by irregular migration to EU countries. Migration continues to be a divisive issue among the EU Member States. Similar to the picture in the case of European normative power, Poland and Hungary have been the major countries that have stood against a common immigration policy.[58]

---

[55] "The Rule of Law Conditionality Mechanism."

[56] For detailed information about the goals, procedures, and the list of readmission agreements please see European Commission, Migration and Home Affairs, Access Date: March 22, 2023, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/irregular-migration-and-return/return-and-readmission_en.

[57] Melanie Gower et al., "UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership," *UK Parliament House of Commons Library*, December 20, 2022, Access Date: March 22, 2023, https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9568/.

[58] Jacopo Barigazzi et al., "Migration mutiny: EU summit deadlocks," *Politico*, June 30, 2023, Access Date: March 23, 2023,

Against the sovereigntist aspect of the populist impact, the EU refers to the basic fact that Member States acceded to the EU of their own will and have to comply with all EU rules and regulations, including the ones that dictate co-sovereignty in specific policy areas.[59] Besides the normative requirements of EU membership, the EU has developed the concept of geopolitical European power as a strategic response to global challenges. Although such an attempt is not directly aimed at tackling the populist challenge, if achieved, it is likely to be an effective response to populists at home. Geopolitical Europe requires deepened European integration on high-level political issues. In other words, it seeks to deepen European integration through a common defense and security policy, which also necessitates comprehensive cooperation on foreign policy. Besides a number of other complicated factors, populism has turned out to be an obstacle to this strategic evolution.

Specifically, populist sovereigntism along with nativism have up until now fueled Euroscepticism at home. In their foreign policy, populists have had good relations with Russia and China. Apart from the allegations that they take financial aid from Russia, populists have seen these countries as good partners to support their nations-first perspective at the expense of attempts to develop common EU strategies to face challenges from these two countries. Therefore, they have created "geopolitical void" by inciting anti-EU sentiment.[60]

The "geopolitical awakening" brought about by the Russian invasion of Ukraine has provided impetus to the idea of a geopolitical European power. Both the EU and Member States have taken assertive steps to support Ukraine and punish Russia. From economic sanctions against Russia to military support for Ukraine, these steps have reflected the EU's increased use of hard power against an imminent danger in its neighborhood. Nevertheless, countries governed by populists like Orban have not refrained from criticizing and resisting some of these steps.[61] The EU's

---

https://www.politico.eu/article/euco-council-eu-viktor-orban-charles-michel-hungary-poland-migration-mutiny-eu-summit-deadlocks/.

[59] "Enforcement of the EU Law," *EUR-Lex*, Access Date: March 23, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/enforcement-of-eu-law.html.

[60] Sven Biscop, "The Dangerous Geopolitics of Populism, and What NATO and the EU Can Do About It*," Egmont Institute, Security Policy Brief,* no 97, May 2018, Access Date: May 10, 2023, http://aei.pitt.edu/94373/1/SPB97.pdf.

[61] Victor Jack, "Orban to Veto EU Sanctions Against Russian Nuclear Sector," *Politico,* January 27, 2023, Access Date: May 10, 2023,

multidimensional reaction to the Ukraine war was not, of course, a response to populism, but it has still brought about some significant consequences in terms of populism. For instance, PRRPs' support for good relations with Putin's Russia has decreased dramatically after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It happened to varying degrees among PRRPs in different EU countries, but most remarkably in Italy.[62]

According to some political analysts, like Biscop, the EU has a valuable trump card against populists. Multispeed European integration can enhance geopolitical European power through deeper integration. At the same time, it can be an effective signal to the countries that insist on keeping authoritarian and Eurosceptic PRRPs in government. Such a conception of European integration may discourage these countries from opposing the formation of common European foreign and security policies, which would benefit all in the long term.[63] However, these intellectual speculations do not change the fact that geopolitical European power is currently a far-fetched ideal. According to Lehne, several institutional reforms are needed for a more effective foreign policy: a majority vote in the Council, an enhanced role for the Commission to coordinate and combine external economic relations with foreign policy, and an enhanced capacity for the European Council to lead the policy process.[64]

The recent progress toward a geopolitical Europe cannot easily save the EU from criticisms. As Balfour argues, globalization and Europeanization have made trade, development aid, immigration, and external migration policies highly critical issues with direct influence on people's daily lives. Therefore, the EU and its foreign policy have so far been easy targets for populists. Reforms to empower EU institutions have not made the EU more effective. Instead, they have fueled populist anti-elitist reactions against the removal of decision-making to the supranational level.[65] It is therefore not

---

https://www.politico.eu/article/orban-to-veto-eu-sanctions-against-russian-nuclear-sector/.

[62] Moira Fagan and Laura Clancy, "Among right-wing populists, favorable views of Russia and Putin are down sharply," *Pew Research Center*, September 23, 2022, Access Date: May 10, 2023, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/09/23/among-european-right-wing-populists-favorable-views-of-russia-and-putin-are-down-sharply/.

[63] Sven Biscop, "The Dangerous Geopolitics of Populism."

[64] Lehne, "Making EU Foreign Policy Fit For a Geopolitical Europe."

[65] Balfour, "The Resistable Rise of Populism in Europe."

easy to achieve foreign policy reforms toward further European integration, even by taking advantage of the EU's geopolitical awakening. The permissive consensus regarding European integration ended in the 1990s. Populism has risen over the democratic legitimacy problem, which has subsequently been deepened by a series of crises. Therefore, Lehne's suggested reforms remain an unlikely objective for the EU given that Eurosceptic populists are already targeting the current level of European supranationalism.

Europe's responses to crises show that the EU seeks to adapt itself to changing conditions through a shift to a geopolitical paradigm but without giving up its normative foundations. Despite significant erosion in norm promotion in its neighborhood, the EU still tries to adhere to its norms. While the war in Ukraine has stimulated a geopolitical awakening, the EU has denied Ukraine's fast-track EU accession, thereby refraining from politicizing its accession criteria.[66] The EU has also rejected showing any flexibility towards the United Kingdom during the Brexit negotiations.[67]

Nevertheless, it is difficult to assert that the EU has so far responded to the populist challenge effectively. Populism is mostly fueled by a sense of democratic illegitimacy. Therefore, the EU needs to be more receptive to public demands to strengthen its democratic credibility. Here, the EU's attitude during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis may be promising as it responded with a logic of solidarity rather than conditionality, in contrast to its backing for austerity policies in the wake of the Eurozone crisis.[68] Such instances should undoubtedly be duplicated so that they eventually aid the EU's attempts to close the gap between its policies and public expectations.

---

[66] "MEPs Say Work on Ukraine's EU Future Must Start Now," *News European Parliament*, February 2, 2023, Access Date: May 10, 2023, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230130IPR70207/meps-say-work-on-ukraine-s-eu-future-must-start-now.

[67] "Questions and Answers: EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement," *European Commision*, Access Date: May 10, 2023, December 24, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_2532.

[68] Eduardo Ongaro, Fabrizio di Mascio and Alessandro Natalini, "How the European Union Responded to Populism and Its Implications for Public Sector Reforms," *Global Public Policy and Governance* 2 (2022).

Conclusion

In light of their growing electoral appeal and the extent of their impacts, PRRPs have proven to be a force to be taken seriously. Contrary to predictions that populism was more of a warning than a threat to the consolidated democracies of the West,[69] PRRPs have turned into troublemakers in many ways. Their populist impacts can be understood in terms of their authoritarianism, nativism, and sovereigntism.

The authoritarian impacts of populism in Europe can be seen in many ways. In the cases of the United States and Brazil, populists have come to incite electoral denialism in the event of electoral defeat. Although PRRPs in Western Europe are not as powerful as those in Eastern Europe, they have taken power in Italy and served in coalition governments in Austria. They may also significantly increase their votes in France and overcome the electoral threshold in Germany to take seats in the federal parliament. Equally important, PRRPs have been in government in Hungary and Poland for many years. Whether they will be democratically disposed to accept electoral defeat in the future remains to be tested. However, the populist radical right ideology seems to have taken root deeply in these countries, so their removal from government will likely be caused by other populist parties. In any case, populists have become a threat to the rule of law, the separation of powers, and fundamental rights and freedoms. Their attacks on international law and legal institutions endanger the legitimacy of these institutions in the eyes of the public.

Regarding the nativist aspect, the most apparent impact of PRRPs has been on migration policy, with direct and indirect implications for asylum, integration, and citizenship policies. In particular, over the last two decades, EU countries have abandoned multiculturalism as a type of integration policy and instead tightened their migration policies. The EU has signed readmission agreements with many third countries, reflecting its changing attitude in favor of the externalization of migration control. These restrictive migration policies have been developed at the expense of human rights protection, especially for asylum seekers. Populist nativist propaganda has also increased Islamophobia in many European countries. Populists have employed discourses of Islamophobia not only to target Muslim immigrants

---

[69] Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser, "Populism and (Liberal) Democracy: A Framework for Analysis," in *Populism and Democracy in Europe and the Americas: A Threat or Corrective for Democracy*, ed. Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

in Europe but also to attack incumbent mainstream political party leaders, whom they accuse of encouraging immigration at the expense of the 'native' culture.[70]

Domestically, PRRPs promise to restore national sovereignty against the country's corrupt elite. These ideas are also reflected on a European scale in the form of Euroscepticism. Populists seek to restructure the supranational EU as a "Europe of Nations," which is hoped to be essentially intergovernmental. Therefore, attempts at further integration, as favored by the conception of a geopolitical Europe, run the risk of fueling support for populism. Ivaldi observes that while the RN has successfully evaded accusations of sympathy for Putin by employing a social-populist agenda in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the war has also increased support for populists due to the growing socio-economic anxieties it has caused.[71]

The EU seeks to deal with populism as well as some other global challenges. In doing this, it follows and develops strategies and policies that take shape on normative and geopolitical grounds. The EU responses have direct and/or indirect influences on populist radical right politics. Since PRRPs constitute a challenge from the inside of the EU, the EU seeks to guard its normative aspect at the institutional level with reference to the founding Treaties and current legal procedures to implement EU law. Compared to the EU's normative aspect, the EU's geopolitical evolution has so far generated small and indirect influences to restrict the rise of populism.

Therefore, our research shows that populism has not only corroded normative European power but has also turned into an obstacle to the EU's aspirations for geopolitical European power. Populist governments in Poland and Hungary have played a major role in this process. In turn, the EU's normative and geopolitical responses to the rise of populism have had limited success up to this point.

Populists are certainly competent actors to channel public discontent, but what they offer are culturally ultranationalist, economically protectionist, and internationally realist policies to address the complex challenges that Europe faces. These challenges, from multilateralism to waves of migration,

---

[70] Laçin İdil Öztiğ, Türkan Ayda Gürkan, and Kenan Aydın, "The Strategic Logic of Islamophobic Populism," *Government and Opposition* 56, no.3 (2019).

[71] Gilles Ivaldi, "The Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on Radical-Wing Populism in France," *European Center for Populism Studies* 2023, Access Date: May 10, 2023, https://www.populismstudies.org/the-impact-of-the-russia-ukraine-war-on-radical-right-wing-populism-in-france/

demand effective international and supranational cooperation within the European context. Therefore, populists are unlikely to be able to avoid this reality. Nevertheless, the rise of populism in contemporary European politics continues. Considering the extent and critical consequences of its impacts, populism can no longer be underestimated as a corrective force for Western liberal democracies. Liberal democratic systems are unlikely to protect themselves from the dangers of populist radical right ideology without tackling the growing socio-economic inequalities and rising uncertainties about the future that feed public discontent.

References:

"A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence." Strategic Compass. Access Date: April 15, 2023. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategiccompass _en3_web.pdf.

Abts Koen and Stefan Rummens. "Populism versus Democracy," Political Studies 55, no. 6 (2007): 405-424.

"AfD leader faces legal action for saying 'camel driver' Turks should 'go back to where they belong.'" The Local, February 15, 2018. Access Date: January 30, 2023. https://www.thelocal.de/20180215/afd-leader-calls-turks-camel-drivers-who-should-go-back-to-where-they-belong.

Albertazzi, Daniele and Duncan McDonnell. Populists in Power. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Alemanno Alberto and Adam Mouyal. "'The Borrell Doctrine,' A Conversation with the HRVP." groupe d'etudes geopolitiques, October 31, 2022. Access Date: April 19, 2023. https://geopolitique.eu/en/2022/10/31/a-conversation-with-josep-borrell/.

Ammer Margit and Lando Kirchmair. "The Restriction of Refugee Rights during the ÖVP-*FPÖ Coalition 2017-2019 in Austria."* In Migrants' Rights, Populism and Legal Resilience in Europe, editors Vladislava Stoyanova and Stijn Smet, 284-285. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Art, David. "The AfD and the End of Containment in Germany." German Politics & Society 36, no 2 (2018): 6-86.

Balfour, Rosa. "The Resistable Rise of Populism in Europe and Its Impact on European and International Cooperation." IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook, 2017. Access Date: March 12, 2023. https://www.iemed.org/publication/the-resistable-rise-of-populism-in-europe-and-its-impact-on-european-and-international-cooperation/.

Barigazzi, Jacopo et al., "Migration mutiny: EU summit deadlocks." Politico, June 06, 2023. Access Date: March 23, 2023. https://www.politico.eu/article/euco-council-eu-viktor-orban-charles-michel-hungary-poland-migration-mutiny-eu-summit-deadlocks/.

Bayer Lili and Camille Gijs. "European Parliament brands Hungary as 'no longer a democracy'." Politico, September 15, 2022. Access Date: February 04, 2023. https://www.politico.eu/article/viktor-orban-rule-of-law-european-parliament-brands -hungary-as-no-longer-a-democracy/.

Betz Hans-George and Carol Johnson, "Against the Current- Stemming the Tide: The Nostalgic Ideology of the Contemporary Radical Populist Right." Journal of Political Ideologies 9, no 3, (2004): 311-327.

Biscop, Sven. "The Dangerous Geopolitics of Populism, and What NATO and the EU Can Do About It," Egmont Institute, Security Policy Brief no.97. May 2018. Access Date: May 10, 2023. http://aei.pitt.edu/94373/1/SPB97.pdf.

Borrell Fontelles, Josep. "Europe in the Interregnum: Our Geopolitical Awakening after Ukraine." European Union External Action, March 24, 2022. Access Date: April 17, 2023. https://www.eeas.europa.eu /eeas/europe-interregnum-our-geopolitical-awakening-after-ukraine_en.

Brack, Nathalie, Ramona Coman, Amendine Crespy. "Sovereignty conflicts in the European Union." Dans Les Cahiers du Cevipol no 4 (2019): 3-30.

Chassany, Anne-Sylvaine. "France's National Front taps into rising anti-immigrant mood." Financial Times, September 6, 2015. Access Date: January 30, 2023. https://www.ft.com/content/62131206-5473-11e5-8642-453585f2cfcd.

Çilingir, Sevgi. "The Covid-19 Crisis: Opportunity or Threat for Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe?." Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi 21, no 3 (2021): 805-826.

de Lange, Sarah, "A New Winning Formula? The Programmatic Appeal of the Radical Right." Party Politics 13, no 4 (2007): 411-435.

Diez, Thomas. "The EU in a Changing World Order: In Defence of Normative Power 2.0." Marmara Üniversitesi Avrupa Topluluğu Enstitüsü Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi 29, no 1 (2021): 1-20.

"Dutch senate passes law enabling partial 'burqa ban'." Reuters, June 26, 2018. Access Date: February 03, 2023. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-netherlands-burqa-ban-idUSKBN1JM1I7.

"Enforcement of the EU Law." EUR-Lex. Access Date: March 23, 2023. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/enforcement-of-eu-law.html.

European Commission, Migration and Home Affairs. Access Date: March 22, 2023. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/irregular-migration-and-return/return-and-readmission_en.

"Europe's Moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation." European Commission. Access Date: March 15, 2023. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_940.

Fagan, Moira and Laura Clancy. "Among right-wing populists, favorable views of Russia and Putin are down sharply." Pew Research Center, September 23, 2022. Access Date: May 10, 2023.   https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/09/23/among-european-right-wing-populists-favorable-views-of-russia-and-putin-are-down-sharply/.

"Freedom in the World 2023: Hungary." Freedom House. Access Date: February 04, 2023. https://freedomhouse.org/country/hungary/freedom-world/2023.

Fraser, Alex. "How will Italian PM Meloni's anti-immigration stance evolve in 2023?." CGTN, December 26, 2022. Access Date: February 02, 2023. https://newseu.cgtn.com/news/2022-12-26/How-will-Italian-PM-Meloni-s-anti-immigration-stance-evolve-in-2023--1g59e9AJHws/index.html.

Giuffrida, Angela. "Italian Government approves Salvini Bill targeting Migrants." Guardian, September 24, 2018. Access Date: February 02, 2023. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/24/italian-government-approves-bill-anti-migrant-measures-matteo-salvini

Gozdziak, Elzbieta M. "Using Fear of the "Other," Orban Reshapes Migration Policy in a Hungary Built on Cultural Diversity." Migration Policy Institute, October 10, 2019. Access Date: February 03, 2023. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/orban-reshapes-migration-policy-hungary.

Grimm, Robert. "The Rise of the German Eurosceptic Party Alternative für Deutschland, Between Ordoliberal Critique and Popular Anxiety." International Political Science Review 36, no 3 (2015): 264-278.

Gower Melanie et al. "UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership." UK Parliament House of Commons Library, December 20, 2022. Access Date: March 22, 2023. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9568/.

Guibernau, Montserrat. "Migration and the Rise of the Radical Right – Social Malaise vs the Failure of Mainstream Politics." Policy Network Paper, London (2010).

Henke Marina and Richard Mayer. "The Populist Challenge to European Defense". Journal of European Public Policy, 28, no: 3 (2021): 389-406.

Henley Jon and Jennifer Rankin. "'Frexit in all but name': what a Marine Le Pen win would mean for EU." The Guardian, April 15, 2022. Access Date: February 6, 2023. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/15/frexit-what-marine-le-pen-win-mean-eu.

Ivaldi, Gilles. "Contesting the EU in times of Crisis: The Front National and Politics of Euroscepticism in France." Politics, 38, no. 3 (2018): 278-294.

Ivaldi, Gilles. "The Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on Radical-Wing Populism in France." European Center for Populism Studies (2023). Access Date: May 10, 2023. https://www.populismstudies.org/the-impact-of-the-russia-ukraine-war-on-radical-right-wing-populism-in-france/

Jack, Victor. "Orban to Veto EU Sanctions Against Russian Nuclear Sector," Politico, January 27, 2023. Access Date: May 10, 2023. https://www.politico.eu/article/orban-to-veto-eu-sanctions-against-russian-nuclear-sector.

Kallis, Aristotle. "Islamophobia in Europe: The Radical Right and the Mainstream." Insight Turkey 17, no 4 (2015): 27-37.

Kaltwasser, Cristobal Rovira. "Populism - An Overview of the Concept and the State of the Art." In The Oxford Handbook of Populism, editors Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser et al., 1-24. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Kriesi Hans Peter and Takis Pappas, European Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession. Colchester: ECPR Press, 2015.

Kundnani, Hans. "Europe's Geopolitical Confusion." Internationale Politik Quarterly, Jan 4, 2023. Access Date: April 15, 2023. https://ip-quarterly.com/en/europes-geopolitical-confusion.

Laidi, Zaki. "The Meaning of Geopolitical Europe: A Response to Hans Kundnani," Internationale Politik Quarterly, Jan 16, 2023. Access Date: April 15, 2023. https://ip-quarterly.com/en/meaning-geopolitical-europe-response-hans-kundnani.

Lehne, Stefan. "Making EU Foreign Policy Fit For a Geopolitical Europe." Carnegie Europe, April 14, 2022. Access Date: April 15, 2023. https://carnegieeurope.eu/2022/04/14/making-eu-foreign-policy-fit-for-geopolitical-world-pub-86886.

Mackenzie, James and Gavin Jones. "Italy delivers tough austerity measures," Reuters, August 13, 2011. Access Date: February 05, 2023. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-italy-crisis-idUSTRE77B1GF20110813.

Manners, Ian. "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?." JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies 40 (2002): 235-258.

Martuscelli, Carlo and Jacopo Barigazzi. "Veni, Vidi, Veto: Giorgia Meloni's March on Brussels." Politico, September 22, 2022. Access Date: February 6, 2023. https://www.politico.eu/article/veni-vedi-veto-giorgia-melonis-march-on-brussels/.

Hardeep, Matharu. "The 2008 Financial Crisis paved the way for Brexit – Why don't We Talk About it Anymore?." By Line Times, November, 2, 2019.

Access Date: February 05, 2023. https://bylinetimes.com/2019/11/07/the-2008-financial-crash-paved-the-way-for-brexit-why-dont-we-talk-about-it-anymore/.

"MEPs Say Work on Ukraine's EU Future Must Start Now." News European Parliament, February 2, 2023.   Access Date: May 10, 2023. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room   /20230130IPR70207 /meps-say-work-on-ukraine-s-eu-future-must-start-now.

Moffit, Benjamin. "How to Perform Crisis: A Model for Understanding the Key Role of Crisis in Contemporary Populism." Government and Opposition 50 (2014): 1-29.

"Meeting of the European Political Community, 1 June 2023." European Council, Council of the European Union, June 2023. Access Date: April 20, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2023/06/01/.

Mudde, Cas and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser, "Populism and (Liberal) Democracy: A Framework for Analysis." In Populism and Democracy in Europe and the Americas: A Threat or Corrective for Democracy, editors Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012: 1-26.

Mudde, Cas. "The Populist Zeitgeist." Government and Opposition 34, no 4 (2004): 541-563.

Mudde, Cas. "The Study of Populist Radical Right Parties: Towards a Fourth Wave," C-Rex Working Paper Series, September 2016.

Noureddine, Raja. "Critically Assess and Analyse the Notion that the EU is a Normative Power." European Union External Action, November 24, 2016. Access Date: April 3, 2023. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/15687 _en.

Oanca, Alexandra "'Security' and 'Crisis' in Populist Discourse –a Brief Exploratory Story-." Relationes Internationales 4, no 1 (2022): 7-27.

Ongaro, Eduardo, Fabrizio di Mascio and Alessandro Natalini. "How the European Union Responded to Populism and Its Implications for Public Sector Reforms." Global Public Policy and Governance 2 (2022): 89-109.

Öztiğ, Laçin İdil, Türkan Ayda Gürkan, and Kenan Aydın. "The Strategic Logic of Islamophobic Populism." Government and Opposition 56, no 3 (2019): 446-464.

"Poland has a duty to preserve judicial independence." Council of Europe, July 17, 2017.   Access   Date: February   04,   2023. https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/poland-has-a-duty-to-preserve-judicial-independence.

Raj, Kartik. "How Nativist Populism is Going Mainstream in Europe." Human Rights Watch, February 21, 2020. Access Date: February 02, 2023.

http://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/21/how-nativist-populism-going-mainstream-europe.

Rankin, Jennifer. "Europe's far-right praise UK's illegal migration bill." The Guardian, March 9, 2023. Access Date: April 03, 2023. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/09/europes-far-right-praise-uks-migration-bill.

Roberts, Kenneth. "Populism and Populist Parties." In The Oxford Handbook of Populism, editors Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser et al., 287-304. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Rule of Law in Hungary and Poland: Plenary Debate and Resolution." European Parliament News, May 2-5, 2022. Access Date: March 10, 2023. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2022-05-02/6/rule-of-law-in-hungary-and-poland-plenary-debate-and-resolution.

"Questions and Answers: EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement." European Commission, December 24, 2020. Access Date: May 10, 2023. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_2532.

"Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy." European Union Global Strategy, June 2016. Access Date: April 18, 2023. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ eugs_review_web_0.pdf.

Stanley, Ben. "The Thin Ideology of Populism." Journal of Political Ideologies 13, no 1 (2008): 95-110.

Tan, Rebecca. "From France to Denmark, bans on full-face Muslims veils are spreading across Europe." Washington Post, August 16, 2018, Access Date: February 03, 2023. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2018 /08/16/france-denmark-bans-full-face-muslim-veils-are-spreading-across-europe/.

Taylor, Paul. "EU must seize the geopolitical moment in the Balkans." Politico, December 14, 2022. Access Date: April 21, 2023. https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-balkans-accession-russia-china-geopolitics/.

"The Rule of Law Conditionality Mechanism." Council of the EU, Press Release, December 12, 2022. Access Date: March 10, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/12/rule-of-law-conditionality-mechanism/.

Traynor Ian and Helena Smith. "EU Border Controls: Schengen Scheme on the Brink After Amsterdam Talks." The Guardian, January 16, 2016. Access Date: March 15, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world /2016/jan/25/refugee-crisis-schengen-area-scheme-brink-amsterdam-talks.

Traynor, Ian. "EU Plans Migrant Quotas Forcing States to 'Share' Burden." The Guardian, May 10, 2015. Access Date: March 16, 2023. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/10/european-commission-migrant-quota-plan-mediterranean-crisis.

Traynor Ian and Patrick Kingsley. "EU Governments push through divisive deal to share 120,000 refugees." The Guardian, September 22, 2015. Access Date: February 6, 2023. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/22/ eu-governments-divisive-quotas-deal-share-120000-refugees.

Van Spanje, Joost. "Contagious Parties and their impact on other Parties' Immigration Stances in Contemporary Western Europe." Party Politics 16, no 5 (2010): 563-586.

Vasilopoulou, Sofia. "European Integration and the Radical Right: Three Patterns of Opposition." Government and Opposition 46, no 2 (2011): 223-244.

Vigura, Karolina. "Poland's Islamophobia." Carnegie Europe, June 23, 2016. Access Date: February 02, 2023. https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/63892.

Vollaard, Hans. "One down, any to go? European disintegration after Brexit." LSE, March 23, 2020. Access Date: March 20, 2023. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2020/03/23/one-down-many-to-go-european-disintegration-after-brexit.

Weyland, Kurt. "A Political-Strategic Approach." in The Oxford Handbook of Populism, editors: editors Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser et al., 48-72. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Weyland, Kurt. "Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics." Comparative Politics 34, no 1 (2001): 1-22.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL POLICY IN EUROPE

Ayşe İdil AYBARS∗
Research Article

Abstract

Social policy in the European Union (EU) remains sidelined in the debates on the future of Europe. In the last decade, EU has faced numerous crises having significant repercussions for its social policies, including immigration waves, the Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. As an area of direct concern to EU citizens, with its features on employment, education/training, non-discrimination and equality bearing crucial implications for their daily lives, social policy should be reconsidered from an angle that encompasses the citizens' perspective and effectively addresses the major challenges it faces in the new global order. The main objective of this study is to explore the implications of these challenges for EU social policy, which in turn, has a key role in shaping the future of the EU.

Keywords: Social Policy, Citizens, Immigration, Covid-19, Brexit.

Avrupa'da Sosyal Politika'nın Geleceği

Öz

Avrupa Birliği (AB) sosyal politikası, Avrupa'nın geleceği ile ilgili tartışmalarda hak ettiği ilgiyi göremeyen ve gölgede kalan bir konudur. Geçtiğimiz on yılda AB, göç dalgaları, Brexit ve Covid-19 pandemisi gibi sosyal politikalarını önemli ölçüde etkileyen çok sayıda krizle karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Bu bağlamda, istihdam, eğitim, ayrımcılıkla mücadele ve eşitlik ile ilgili unsurları AB vatandaşlarının günlük yaşamlarını doğrudan etkileyen AB sosyal politikası, vatandaşların perspektiflerini de içerecek ve yeni küresel düzende Birliğin karşılaştığı başlıca engel ve zorluklara cevap verecek şekilde farklı bir açıdan ve yeniden ele alınmalıdır. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, sosyal politikanın AB'nin geleceğini şekillendirmekte kilit bir rol oynadığı anlayışından hareketle, son dönemdeki krizlerin AB sosyal politikasına etkilerini incelemek ve AB'nin geleceği ile ilgili tartışmalara sosyal politika tartışmaları açısından katkıda bulunmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Politika, Vatandaşlar, Göç, Covid-19, Brexit.

∗　Assoc. Prof. Dr., Middle East Technical University, Department of Sociology, e-mail: aybars@metu.edu.tr. ORCID: 0000-0003-4511-4493,

Introduction

Social policy in the European Union (EU) is a peculiar topic that attracts less attention than it deserves, and that remains sidelined in many debates concerning European integration, Europeanization and the future of Europe. Its significance lies primarily in its direct relevance for the lives of EU citizens, in terms of its power to shape their employment, education and training opportunities, as well as its more general impact on their welfare and wellbeing. Compared to many other policy areas governed by the EU, social policy comes to the fore as an important area of contestation between the EU and member states, as it is primarily a national domain,[1] implemented by national actors, through national institutions and national funding. While EU action on social policy has been inevitable throughout the integration process, it has always been met by hesitation and reluctance by member states, some more than others, which has considerably limited the EU's room for maneuver on the issue. More importantly, however, is the fact that social policy is a major test case of the so-called 'democratic deficit' of the EU, meaning, among other things, that the Union has difficulties to convince the citizens across the member states that what it does is for their good, and have direct implications for their daily lives. In simple terms, citizens cannot understand the EU, and thus do not identify with it, seeing it rather as a distant business done by technocrats and bureaucrats, adopting policies that do not require their support.[2] The importance of this debate for social policy is that the democratic deficit is found by several scholars to emanate mainly from the failure to develop a European welfare state, or to give the EU a stronger role in the redistribution of income, since this would increase the legitimacy of the EU in the eyes of its citizens just as it provided an essential source of democratic legitimacy for the nation state in the course of the integration of national markets, through social security, education health and welfare services, acting as symbols of national solidarity.[3]

---

[1]   James S. Mosher and David M. Trubek, "Alternative approaches to governance in the EU: EU social policy and European Employment Strategy," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 41, no 1 (2003): 63-88.

[2]   Andreas Follesdal and Simon Hix, "Why there is a democratic deficit in the EU? A response to Majone and Moravcsik," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44, no 3 (2006): 533-562.

[3]   See Giandomenico Majone, "Europe's 'democratic deficit': The question of Standards," *European Law Journal* 4, no 1 (1998): 5-28.

A last but not least significance of social policy for the future of the EU, which is taken as the key starting point for this study, stems from the fact that the Union, along with the rest of the world, has encountered numerous crises which have tremendous implications for the social dimension of the European integration project. This is because the latter has increasingly been suffering from a divide that it has itself created, namely, that between the 'winners' and 'losers' of European integration,[4] i.e., those who are well-educated, young and highly-skilled, able to travel and come into frequent contact with other Europeans, versus those who tend to be less educated, less skilled and older populations, who live in their close communities. It is this divide that shows the tremendous importance of social policies for determining the future direction of the EU, as well as their potential to distinguish the Union at the world stage by offering its citizens a higher quality of life and welfare compared to other regional integration projects.

Despite its strong implications for the future of the EU, social policy is a field relatively sidelined by the predominant emphasis on the economic, legal and political aspects of the European project. Social policy has been constantly changing and evolving since the inception of the EU, gaining numerous dimensions and diverse meanings. Perceived as the "natural outcome" of economic integration, thus not requiring any specific interventions, in the Rome Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, social policy in the EU in the 21st century is a continuously expanding body encompassing a remarkable legal framework on employment, labour conditions, gender equality and non-discrimination, as well as comprehensive cooperation and coordination processes in matters of poverty, health, social protection and social inclusion, to name a few. In this process, a widespread network consisting of, along with the EU institutions like the European Commission and Court of Justice of the European Communities, member states' relevant bodies, as well as local, national and supra-national policy-makers, bureaucrats, activists and academics have played a significant role.[5]

---

[4] Neil Fligstein, *Euroclash: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe*. Oxford: OUP, 2008: 2.

[5] Ayşe İdil Aybars, "Sosyal Politika," in *Avrupa Birliği: Tarihçe, Teoriler, Kurumlar ve Politikalar*, 4th Edition, Editors Belgin Akçay and İlke Göçmen, 549-572. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık, 2023.

The EU has been involved in many innovative efforts in social policy, having tremendous implications for its member states and beyond. It has actively pursued various social policy agendas since its inception, distinguishing it as a unique body at the global stage, and bringing to the fore its emphasis on 'human wellbeing' and 'welfare.' On the other hand, social policy in the EU, or the so-called 'EU social policy' has seldom put its mark in major academic and policy debates surrounding European integration, Europeanization, as well as the future of the Union, and many scholars have characterized it as 'weak,' 'inconsistent,' and 'fragmented,' no more than a 'facilitator' of the economic integration process.[6] While this has been linked to the general reluctance of the member states to pursue further integration in this area, due to the 'sensitive' nature of social policy, to be 'jealously guarded' by the member states,[7] this lack of emphasis is still surprising as social policy is a field with direct repercussions on the future of Europe, having tremendous importance for the citizens and the way they perceive the Union, as a number of recent examples clearly demonstrate. Indeed, several authors have emphasized that a more active role for the EU in social policy and the establishment of EU-wide social standards, meaning a social union, would be crucial to rescue the European project.[8]

This study focuses on three such recent examples, or more accurately, crises, that have significant potential to affect the future direction of EU social policies, namely the immigration waves sparked by the so-called 'refugee crisis', the Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. The main reason for the selection of these three main challenges as the focus is that they bear direct implications for the socio-economic conditions, wellbeing and perceptions of the citizens, who are the major subject of social policies, who have major power – that is usually undermined – to shape the future of the EU, but who are mainly sidelined in the European studies literature. The

---

[6] See Paul Pierson, "Fragmented Welfare States: Federal Institutions and the Development of Social Policy," *Governance* 8, no 4 (1995): 449-478; Wolfgang Streeck, "Neo-Voluntarism: A New European Social Policy Regime?" European Law Journal 1, no 1 (1995): 31-59; Robert R. Geyer, *Exploring European Social Policy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.

[7] Maurizio Ferrera et al., "Open Coordination against Poverty: the new EU 'social inclusion' process," *Journal of European Social Policy,* 12, no 3 (2002): 227-239.

[8] See Jürgen Gerhards et al, "Do European citizens support the idea of a European welfare state? Evidence from a comparative survey conducted in three EU member states," *International Sociology* 31, no 6 (2016): 677-700.

latter tends to be overly preoccupied with macro-level legal, political and economic discussions, leaving less, if any, room for the perspectives of the citizens, which are shaped by the opportunities (not) provided by the European integration in the areas of employment, health, social cohesion and equality. In other words, all the three crises seem to have sparked by the tensions, in the social realm, emanating from the difficulty for the 'losers' of European integration, i.e., those who have not reaped the benefits of the integration project, to identify with the EU and to grasp its meaning in their daily lives. It is here that the EU has a crucial role to play, particularly by strengthening its social policies and underlining the importance of the citizens in the European project.

This paper first outlines the main turning points of the development of EU social policy, so as to reveal its main strengths and weaknesses in terms of appealing to, and responding to the needs of, EU citizens. It then turns to the importance of the citizens perspective in the social policy realm, which has been largely neglected in the course of the evolution of EU social policy. Building on this background, the paper focuses on three recent crises putting considerable strains on EU social policy and directly affecting citizens across member states, with a view to exploring their particular repercussions for the future of the EU, namely, the refugee crisis, the Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. It examines the implications of these crises for the citizens' perceived gains and losses from European integration, with a view to underlining their significance for the future of the European project.

I. EU Social Policy: A Historical Overview

When today's European Union (EU) was established as the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957 by six member states,[9] its main aim was to ensure economic integration amongst the founding members and to establish a common market with a view to preventing any future wars and promoting peace in the continent. The EEC Treaty, which was built on this understanding, did not include clear and concise social policy goals. By the 1970s, however, the need for a more proactive stance on social policies started to be increasingly pronounced, along with the understanding that free and unregulated competition of market forces was unacceptable and, indeed, contrary to long-term interests of the member states. In the years that followed, this understanding has paved the way for the idea that the social

---

[9] Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg

dimension is an integral part of the European integration and a complementary element of economic policies.[10]

Still, the economic emphasis in the foundation of the EEC has continued until today, albeit acquiring different dimensions and meanings over the course of almost 70 years. Several scholars underline that, while the economic and monetary policies of the Union are well-established and have a sound basis, its social policies lag remarkably behind and fall short of the qualities and standards of most of the established welfare states, which are the constituent members of the Union of today.[11] Accordingly, EU social policy provisions today are heavily focused on economic growth and competitiveness in the global knowledge economy, mostly confined to measures in the field of employment and labour market. On the other hand, in fields such as gender equality, non-discrimination and health and safety at work, a comprehensive binding legal framework has been built over the years through the 'Community method of integration,' which has led to significant improvements in the legislations of the member states. Furthermore, particularly since the turn of the century, 'sensitive' issues where member states wish to retain their sovereignty, including education and training, health care, social protection and social inclusion, have also been incorporated in the EU framework through the Open Method of Coordination (see below).[12] It would be useful to briefly look at the evolution of social policy understanding of today's EU so as to assess the current approach and the implications for the future of the EU debate.

From its inception in the 1950s up until 1970s, the EEC pursued a 'market logic' in its approach to social policy, where, as indicated above, the latter did not obtain a central status.[13] The EEC Treaty signed in 1957 was built on the understanding that economic integration would automatically lead to social progress. Accordingly, if companies in the founding member states could freely compete under equal conditions, resources could be

---

[10] Linda Hantrais, Social Policy in the European Union. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

[11] Bruno Palier and Philippe Pochet, "Toward a European Social Policy – At Last?" in Editors Nicolas Jabko and Craig Parsons, *The State of the European Union: With US or Against US? European Trends in American Perspective*. Oxford: OUP, 2005: 253–273.

[12] Aybars, 2023.

[13] Mark Kleinman, *A European Welfare State? European Union Social Policy in Context*. Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002.

efficiently redistributed and economic growth could continue without interruption, which would automatically lead to the harmonization of the social systems of the member states towards higher standards.[14] In this sense, the founding Treaty left social policy to national welfare states,[15] with the exception of two major areas, namely, equal pay for women and men,[16] and the implications of the freedom of movement principle.[17] The EEC Treaty, therefore, reflected a preoccupation with the prevention of factors that distort competition, which would render specific interventions on redistribution unnecessary. Redistributive elements were seen as the primary responsibility of the member states, and provisions on equal pay for equal work, increasing living standards and social cohesion were made as long as they supported the overall objective of economic integration. The social policy that was the outcome of this process was, thus, market-oriented, unambitious and narrowly framed.

This market logic persisted at least until the mid-1970s, when conditions of economic recession and the first enlargement of the EEC towards the UK, Ireland and Denmark triggered a growing emphasis on the importance of the social dimension and the need to adopt a more progressive stance in this respect. The 1970s saw the adoption of numerous Directives on equality between women and men, health and safety at work and various fields of labour law, which entailed binding legal obligations for all member states through the so-called "Community method of integration." It is important to note that Directives have, at least up until the turn of the

---

[14] Only 12 out of the 248 Articles of the EEC Treaty contained provisions on social policies (Articles 117-128), and even those were conceived with a preoccupation to prevent all elements to distort competition. See Hantrais, 2007.

[15] Palier and Pochet, 2005: 255.

[16] During the negotiations preceding the adoption of the Treaty, the French government insisted for the inclusion of a clause on equal pay for women and men, as France already had such a clause in its constitution, and this would place the country in an economically disadvantaged position. The consensus reached with other founding governments led to the incorporation of a vague social policy title in the Treaty, with no foreseen mechanisms and commitments to reach the objectives.

[17] Articles 48-51 and 52-58 contained measures to facilitate the free movement of persons, services and capital throughout the Community, as a key rationale behind the European project, which put its mark on social policies that remained limited to provisions that supported free movement of labour at least until late 1960s. See Palier and Pochet, 2005.

century, been the most favoured legal instruments deployed by the Community in the area of social policy. Identifying clear goals and targets for legislation, which have usually been defined as minimum standards so as to facilitate agreement among member states, but leaving the most effective form and method of implementation to member states, Directives have been widely used in various fields of social policy, particularly equal employment opportunities for women and men and working conditions, creating an effective legal framework for the protection of work-related rights at the EU level.

By the mid-1980s, the 'social dimension' started to be increasingly pronounced within the Community, due to increasing pressure for a regulatory social policy. The idea of a 'social space' (*espace social*) initiated by the Commission President of the time, Jacques Delors, placed employment at the heart of Community social policy, paving the way for an increasing dialogue between the social partners, as well as an emphasis on cooperation and consultation processes on matters pertaining to social security. Social policy in this second period gained ground as a field to be developed on an equal footing with economic, monetary and industrial policies, and increasingly started to be seen as the pre-condition of economic integration.

The Single European Act (SEA), adopted in 1986 by the then 12 member states and representing the first major revision of the Treaty, incorporated important initiatives to facilitate and speed up social policy-making processes. By expanding the area of application of qualified majority to several areas of social policy, it provided a significant opportunity to overcome the deadlocks in social policy due to the reluctance of some member states to proceed in this field. The Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, seen by many as the social aspect of the SEA, was accepted by all member states except the UK in 1989. While the Charter made reference to 'citizens' rather than 'workers' in its early versions, the resistance by member states' governments led the document to focus on workers in its final form, and to remain as a non-binding official declaration in the end.[18] The Charter is a significant building block of the Union's approach to social policy, which illustrates its preoccupation with workers rather than citizens, and also demonstrates the limitations imposed by the conflicting interests of the member states, shaping the future progress of the field.

---

[18] Hantrais, 2007.

The unfavourable economic and political context of the time (particularly enhanced by the Thatcher and Reagan governments) rendered the achievement of the objective of the harmonization of social policies increasingly difficult. This paved the way, towards the end of the 1980s, for a Community strategy to identify lowest-common-denominator solutions, i.e., minimum standards to be acceptable across all member states.[19] With the accession of Greece in 1981, and Spain and Portugal in 1986, social policies reached once again the point of stagnation. The 1980s, therefore, mostly witnessed fierce debates on the prevention of 'social dumping' in some member states to create advantages for competition by lowering social protection standards, as well as the need to achieve common rules and standards for all member states so as to enhance a healthy competitive environment. Also in this period, member states' concern with losing their sovereignty in the field of social policies started to be increasingly pronounced.

Social policies entered the 1990s in this climate, where social policy started to be increasingly conceptualized as 'employment-anchored.'[20] The EU Treaty signed in Maastricht in 1992 represented a significant turning point for EU social policy, mainly due to the Agreement on Social Policy annexed to it, while the fact that it was not incorporated into the Treaty but annexed as a separate protocol (due to the UK's insistence) was an important sign about the difficulty to reach consensus among member states in the social field. The Agreement, removing all references to the harmonization of social systems in the EEC Treaty, set specific objectives on the development of employment, better living and working conditions, social protection, social dialogue and human resources, with a view to supporting high and sustainable employment and struggle against social exclusion. It is particularly significant that all these targets were to be attained by measures taking account of the diversity of national practices. Thus, instead of 'harmonization', 'diversity' started to be emphasized in social policies by the 1990s, enhanced by the 'subsidiarity' provision of the Maastricht Treaty.[21]

---

[19] Palier and Pochet, 2005.

[20] Julia S. O'Connor, "Employment-anchored social policy, gender equality and the open method of policy coordination in the European union," *European Societies* 7, no 1 (2005): 27-52.

[21] According to the subsidiarity principle, the Union can only intervene (through binding legislation) in cases where the objectives of the stated action cannot be effectively reached by the member states.

The adoption of this principle has, in the field of social policy, considerably limited the EU's room for maneuver in terms of adopting legally binding measures, except for a limited number of issues. The subsidiarity principle was in fact an important sign of the ongoing reluctance of member states to the formation of a supra-national social policy that would threaten their own national sovereignty.

Still, in the following years the rationale of social policy considerably moved from 'an obstacle to economic integration' to 'a productive force facilitating change and progress' through the numerous initiatives of the European Commission.[22] The emphasis on the social dimension concerned its importance for the EU-level response on common social challenges such as the Economic and Monetary Union, demographic change and ageing society, and the enlargement process. Social policy's effective role in the new millennium in ensuring, for all, access to employment, better working conditions and equal opportunities, and a quality of life for a participatory and healthy society, started to be increasingly pronounced. The Amsterdam Treaty signed in 1997 incorporated the Agreement on Social Policy into the main body of the Treaty, with the UK's withdrawal of its opt-out, as Title XI on Social Policy, Education, Vocational Training and Youth. Parallel to the concern caused by increasing unemployment at the EU level, 'high level of employment and social protection' was put in the second place in Article 2 stating the Union's priorities. The new Article 13 expanded the grounds of measures to combat discrimination to include sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, or sexual orientation.

Perhaps more importantly, the Treaty incorporated a newly added Title VIII on Employment (Articles 125-130), stipulating the responsibilities of the Union and the member states and underlining the importance of cooperation and coordination processes in matters of employment. While limiting the role of the Union to 'supporting and complementing' member state action in these processes, this Title also entailed the Council and the Commission the duty to monitor, establish guiding principles and examine measures developed by the member states, thereby giving the first signals of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) to be shortly introduced in the field of employment and social policy.

---

[22] For a discussion on the developments of this period, including the Green and White Papers on social policy and the action programmes, see Aybars, 2023.

Adopted in 2000, the Nice Treaty brought new decision-making procedures, which had important implications for social policies. The Treaty proposed a re-weighing of the votes in order to ensure that smaller member states' impact would be proportionate to their population, and expanded qualified majority to anti-discrimination measures, mobility and economic and social cohesion. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, finalized in the Nice Summit of 2000, expanded the boundaries of social policy from workplace to issues of work-life balance, protection and care of children and the elderly, social assistance, housing and preventive health care services. The objective of the Charter was to underline the Union's commitment to the values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity, and its respect for the diversity of cultures and traditions. Nevertheless, like the Social Charter, it did not obtain a binding status and remained as an official declaration until it was put in force by the Lisbon Treaty of 2009.

While it raised significant expectations as to the expansion of social policy at the EU level, the Lisbon Treaty remained limited in terms of the expansion of areas subject to qualified majority voting desek mi? demeden de anlaşılır mı? and the increase of EU powers on social policy.[23] The Treaty clearly stipulated that the Union can only act within the framework of the competences defined for it by the member states, and social policy is an area of 'shared competence' as set out in its Article 4. Accordingly, member states are free to issue their own regulations as long as the EU does not legislate. On the other hand, employment policies are specified as an area of 'coordination', whereby the Union can support and complement member state action on issues such as the amelioration of working environment so as to protect the health and safety, working conditions, consultation and information of workers, integration of individuals who remain outside of the labour market, equal labour market opportunities for women and men, and combat against social exclusion. The European Council, on the other hand, can issue directives, through unanimity, containing minimum standards on areas such as the social security and protection of employees, protection of employees whose labour contract is terminated, representation and collective protection of the interests of employees and employers, and working conditions of third country nationals. Lisbon Treaty also stipulates that OMC can be used in social policies, enhancing cooperation amongst member states through initiatives aiming to promote the exchange of knowledge, encourage

---

[23] Isabelle Schömann, "The Lisbon Treaty: A More Social Europe At Last?" *ETUI Policy Brief, European Social Policy*, No: 1/2010, 2010.

innovative approaches and evaluate experiences. The Lisbon Treaty, which constitutes the EU's legal framework today, clearly identified the boundaries of the Union's role in social policy and underlined, in many social policy areas, its 'coordination' and 'cooperation' role.

This is in tandem with the new governance method for employment and social policies, officially introduced by the Lisbon Summit of 2000, establishing a 'soft' alternative to the Community method. As the latter's limitations were increasingly being felt in terms of securing agreement in a Union of 15 member states, preparing for the largest round of enlargement in history towards the Central and Eastern European Countries in the 2000s, and as the rising levels of unemployment and economic volatility across member states signaled the need for a new Union-wide approach, the European Employment Strategy (EES) was launched in Luxembourg in 1997.[24] This was followed by the Lisbon Summit of 2000, introducing the new method to be used in the EU employment and social policies of the new millennium as the 'Open Method of Coordination' (OMC), seeing it as the main tool to reach the strategic targets set by the EU to "become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion"[25] by the year 2010.

The OMC, at least in its early phase, was commonly seen as a 'carefully coordinated process,' identifying indicators in nationally-sensitive issues, setting national and EU-wide targets, enhancing periodical reporting and allowing for multi-lateral monitoring of social and employment issues,[26] aiming to disseminate good practices and to entail a learning process for all actors involved. The innovative dimension of the method has been found in its non-binding, 'soft' character, recognizing the diversity of the social systems of the member states, thus allowing them to develop their tailor-made solutions and learn from others, without facing formal sanctions. Rather than establishing a single binding framework, the method aims to provide a platform where member states can work, at their own pace and in

---

[24] Caroline De La Porte, "Is the Open Method of Coordination Appropriate for Organising Activities at European Level in Sensitive Policy Areas?" *European Law Journal* 8 no. 1 (2002): 38–58.

[25] Lisbon European Council, 23-24 March 2000, Presidency Conclusions. Available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm

[26] De La Porte, 2002: 38.

line with their own national realities, to attain the common objectives, taking into account the diversity of values and regulations. While the first and most comprehensive application of the OMC to date has been the EES, by the 2000s, the method started to be used in a variety of social policy areas, where member states have traditionally been reluctant to transfer their sovereignty to the Union, including poverty and social exclusion, pensions, education and social protection.[27]

While the OMC has constituted the principal method of organization of EU social policy in the new millennium,[28] it has not completely replaced the Community method, whereby the Union continues to spread minimum standards in social policy across member states through binding measures. Since the turn of the millennium, new directives have been adopted, or existing ones have been re-cast, in areas such as gender equality, working conditions and non-discrimination. Still, it would not be wrong to argue that the main principles of 'harmonization' and 'subsidiarity,' which marked the social policy of the Union for a long time, have been replaced by 'coordination' and 'cooperation' in recent years, where the binding legal framework has given its place to 'soft' governance tools and quantified objectives, and the limited but crucial social rights that have been the subject of EU social policy for a long time have been left behind in favour of 'widening' action areas, but not allowing a simultaneous 'deepening' of social policy concerns.

What this overview reveals is that, while the social policy provisions of the Union have evolved and broadened in scope over time, the economic rationale in the establishment of the EEC has continued up to today, which has put its mark on social policies as targeting workers, rather than citizens. Indeed, citizens have been mostly absent from the debates surrounding the subsequent motives to enlarge social policy. Social policy measures have, moreover, primarily been adopted so as to remove elements that distort economic competition amongst the member states, rather than being pursued to evoke a positive integration process and targeting the removal of welfare state barriers across the national governments. Finally, the expansion of social policy at the EU level has been constantly curtailed by the member states, which displayed a strong inclination to guard their national provisions

---

[27] For a discussion on the evolution of the OMC since 2000 onwards, see Aybars, 2023.

[28] Palier and Pochet, 2005: 268.

in an era increasingly marked by social and economic tensions. What this has amounted to is a careful, sometimes reluctant, and fragmented approach to social policies, which has not integrated citizens as its main constituent elements. The social policy scene at the EU-level, moreover, continues to shrink in the face of numerous crises, including economic recession, financial crises, demographic change, non-stop immigration waves, Brexit, as well as the latest health crisis induced by the Covid-19 pandemic, which have important repercussions for the ways the citizens perceive the Union, and to which we now turn.

II. Citizens and EU Social Policy

As evidenced above, today's EU was established in 1957 primarily as an economic integration project in a continent devastated by two world wars, with the thought that the interdependency of the member states' economies would prevent them, in the future, to wage war against each other, and with the aim to promote peace and prosperity across the continent. While the economic and political dimensions of the European integration project have been widely debated in the European studies literature and beyond, its social aspect remains much less discussed in all accounts. Several authors have argued for a re-consideration of the citizens role in the European integration process, claiming that they are the missing part of the puzzle bearing the direct consequences of the integration, and that they need to be specifically targeted in any attempt to discuss the future of the Union as they increasingly feel alienated from the bureaucratic and technocratic character of the European integration, taking place somewhere far away called Brussels.

Ernst Haas wrote, as early as 1958, that the European project was to succeed if it could move from being a concern of governments to that of citizens: "the task of a federation must be intimately related to the crucial social relations and issues of its people, e.g., defense, economic policy, foreign affairs or social welfare."[29] Fligstein, half a century later, observes that, despite the successes of economic and political integration, most Europeans are unaware of what is going on in Brussels, or even "how connected Europeans have become." [30] While this points to the famous

---

[29] Ernst Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Economic and Social Forces 1950-1957*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958: 35.
[30] Fligstein, 2008.

'democratic deficit' problem whereby the citizens do not relate the high-level politics of Brussels to their daily lives, it has crucial implications for social policies. Fligstein goes on to argue that the European integration has created its own winners and losers, i.e., those who are able to benefit from the opportunities provided by economic and political integration as opposed to those who suffer from its consequences, and points to a clash between the two, which has tremendous potential to affect the future direction of the EU. The winners, accordingly, are overwhelmingly from the middle and upper-middle classes, well-educated, young and highly-skilled, usually holding high-level jobs, able to travel and come into frequent contact with other Europeans. The losers, on the other hand, tend to be less educated, less skilled and older populations, who live in their close communities and who therefore have much less chances of interaction. In between are those who are located in the middle range of education and skills distributions, who show a more positive outlook to European integration as it has offered new opportunities to work and go to school in other countries, but who tend to count on their governments to protect them from the negative effects of too much market competition. It is this divide that has the potential to put the citizens in individual countries against each other and push their national governments in different directions,[31] as several examples have recently demonstrated. It is now to these examples that we turn, namely, the immigration waves sparked by the so-called 'refugee crisis', the Brexit, and Covid-19 pandemic, which illustrate how this major divide is influential in triggering a negative response to the EU from the citizens, and how the EU could respond, not least by strengthening and renewing its commitment to social policies.

III. The 'Refugee Crisis'

It is generally argued that few issues have divided Europe as much as the inflow of immigrants in recent years.[32] The so-called 'Syrian refugee crisis' halted in 2015, when refugees escaping from the war in Syria moved in unprecedented numbers to Europe in request of asylum. In 2015 and 2016, 1.3 million people have filed application for asylum in the EU, the overwhelming majority of whom were Syrians. While the numbers of

---

[31] Fligstein, 2008.

[32] Christian S. Czymara, "Attitudes toward Refugees in Contemporary Europe: A Longitudinal Perspective on Cross-National Differences," *Social Forces* 99 no. 3 (2021): 1306–1333.

asylum applications were almost halved after the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement, dealing with refugee resettlement at the borders of Europe, the social, economic and political consequences for EU countries are widely debated[33] and have significant social policy implications. This point becomes clearer through a closer look at the limited number of studies on the perceptions and attitudes of EU citizens towards immigrants.

Although not conducted within the particular context posed by the latest Syrian refugee crisis, studies on attitudes and perceptions towards immigrants underline the close association between positive and tolerant attitudes with high income and economic security, high socio-economic status, high educational attainment, high skill levels, and youth.[34] These findings are resonated in studies on the refugee influx after 2015, which also underline that economic prosperity, high occupational status, high income,[35] and high education[36] translate into more supportive attitudes and perceptions of citizens of EU member states towards these groups. The inverse trend can be observed for those with insufficient income, facing disadvantages,[37] with precarious economic backgrounds,[38] and less education.[39] While other explanations have also been provided, the main argument is that negative attitudes primarily emanate from feelings of social and economic insecurity, leading to the perception of immigrants as 'economic competitors,'[40] and

---

[33] Czymara, 2021: 1307.

[34] For a detailed discussion of previous studies, see Mindaugas Butkus et al., "Socio-Demographic Factors Influencing Attitude towards Refugees: An Analysis of Data from European Social Survey," *Globalization and its socio-economic consequences: 16th International Scientific Conference*, 5th–6th October 2016. Zilina: University of Zilina, 2016.

[35] Lamis Abdelaaty and Liza G. Steele, "Explaining Attitudes Toward Refugees and Immigrants in Europe," *Political Studies* 70 no. 1 (2022): 110–130.

[36] Katja Albada et al., "Polarization in attitudes towards refugees and migrants in the Netherlands," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 51 (2021): 627– 643.

[37] Butkus et al., 2016.

[38] Sebastian Koos and Verena Seibel, "Solidarity with refugees across Europe. A comparative analysis of public support for helping forced migrants," *European Societies* 21, no. 5 (2019): 704-728.

[39] Albada et al., 2021.

[40] Abdelaaty and Steele, 2022.

thus as a threat to individual or collective economic wellbeing,[41] availability of employment and education/training possibilities.

A further point can be made about the interlinkage between strong social policies and host community perceptions of refugees. It has been argued, for instance, that inclusive policies which contribute to refugee wellbeing in areas such as health, education and employment are associated with more positive attitudes towards immigrants.[42] It should be underlined that the views towards refugees highly differ across EU member states, along with the integration efforts of national governments and the level of social benefits provided to migrants, as well as national political institutions,[43] such as the welfare state.[44] What is more important, however, is that the refugee influx has caused a solidarity crisis in the EU, in some cases leading to the erosion of social cohesion,[45] and polarization,[46] which is also driven by a distrust in the more general EU politics and institutions.[47] The fact that there is no agreement on policy paths to follow and the very limited EU capacity to address the migratory pressures due to the resistance of member state governments[48] points to an increasing politicization, whereby the broadening of EU integration towards core state powers (including those that directly touch upon the welfare state) creates political conflicts, both domestically and at the EU level.[49] It has been argued that the refugee crisis has raised significant questions on the role of the EU as a promoter of human rights in the world, and even led to the questioning of the

---

[41] Czymara, 2021.

[42] Elizabeth Ferris, ″Making Sense of Public Policy on Refugee Integration," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 690, no.1, (2020): 200-224

[43] Czymara, 2021.

[44] Koos and Seibel, 2019.

[45] Conrad Ziller and Sara Wallace Goodman, "Local Government Efficiency and Anti-Immigrant Violence," *Journal of Politics* 82 no.3 (2020): 895-907.

[46] Albada et al., 2021.

[47] Czymara, 2021: 1327.

[48] Felix Biermann (et al), "Political (non-)reform in the euro crisis and the refugee crisis: a liberal intergovernmentalist explanation," *Journal of European Public Policy* 26, no.2 (2019): 246–266.

[49] Jonathan Zeitlin (et al), "Introduction: the European Union beyond the polycrisis? Integration and politicization in an age of shifting cleavages," *Journal of European Public Policy* 26, no.7 (2019): 963–976.

EU integration project itself, due to the lack of a concerted approach to deal with the crisis.[50]

The issue of national-level differences and erosion of EU-wide solidarity has certainly implications for the debates on European integration and the future of the EU. Indeed, it has been argued that the politicization over the issue, opening up space for mobilizing national publics against the EU and its institutions, has the potential to lead to the disintegration of the EU itself.[51] On the other hand, the fact that stronger support exists for refugees in countries with a comprehensive welfare state, and by individuals with higher socio-economic conditions,[52] points to the importance of an EU-wide re-consideration of social policies so as to make them more inclusive and expansive.

IV. The 'Brexit'

The historical decision of the United Kingdom to leave the EU as a result of the referendum held on 23 June 2016, with a no vote of 51,9%, which resulted in 2020 in the first-ever exit of a member state in its more than half-a-century history, constituted another crisis for the Union with important social implications. The so-called Brexit sparked a heated debate about 'why' people voted for Brexit, mostly pointing to public concerns over immigration,[53] which is closely related to the point discussed above. Accordingly, anxiety over immigration in the UK public can be traced back to the 2004 EU enlargement towards Central and Eastern Europe,[54] which raised concerns about economic and cultural implications of this process. By the time of the referendum, these concerns had reached new heights with the refugee crisis started in 2015, leading UK citizens to rank immigration as the most important issue of the country, and immigration to become the most salient issue of the public debate throughout the referendum, driven by the populist right and anti-EU UK Independence Party (UKIP).[55]

---

[50] Arne Niemann and Natascha Zaun, "EU Refugee Policies and Politics in Times of Crisis: Theoreticaland Empirical Perspectives," *JCMS* 56, no. 1 (2018): 3-22.

[51] Zeitlin et al, 2019: 965.

[52] Koos and Seibel, 2019.

[53] Matthew Goodwin and Caitlin Milazzo, "Taking back control? Investigating the role of immigration in the 2016 vote for Brexit," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2017): 450–464.

[54] James Dennison and Andrew Geddes, "Brexit and the perils of 'Europeanised' migration," *Journal of European Public Policy* 25, no. 8 (2018): 1137-1153.

[55] Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017: 451.

There is almost consensus that Brexit is the outcome of the track record of Euroscepticism of Britons, culminated in the post-2004 era with the increasing public concern on the EU's free movement principle.[56] More important for the purposes of this paper, several studies have since shown that the 'Leave' vote was significantly higher in 'left behind' areas, which have long suffered from industrial decline and cuts in public services,[57] with higher number of pensioners, low-skilled workers and less-well educated citizens.[58] Class was found to be among the major factors, whereby those holding professional occupations and higher educational qualifications supported 'Remain,' as opposed to those in manual and routine white-collar occupations and those with low levels of education.[59] It has been underlined that, while the EU should certainly not to be blamed because of the conditions of increasing poverty and alienation suffered by the working class in those areas,[60] and it had indeed provided significant funding to these deprived regions, "'Europe' was successfully presented as a scapegoat for the anger of the losers from social and economic transformation, whose disaffection has often been captured by racists and demagogues."[61]

Furthermore, the 'Leave' vote was concentrated amongst those who perceive the immigrants to be a burden on the welfare state and to be bad for the national economy.[62] It has been argued that lower-skilled workers constituted a group worthy of attention, as they tend to believe that "immigration – particularly of other low skilled workers – was likely to have a range of negative economic consequences on jobs for British citizens, on government accounts, social spending and on the national and local economy

---

[56] Dennison and Geddes, 2018: 1148.

[57] Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick and Richard Hyman, "What about the workers? The implications of Brexit for British and European labour," *Competition & Change* 21, no. 3 (2017): 169-184.

[58] Matthew J. Goodwin and Oliver Heath, "The 2016 referendum, Brexit and the left behind: An aggregate-level analysis of the result," *The Political Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (2016): 323–332.

[59] Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2017.

[60] It is important to note that the Brexit vote was equally driven by populist concerns about the national welfare system itself, mostly in response to continuous austerity-informed reforms of the welfare state since at least 2010 onwards. For details, see Thiemo Fetzer, "Austerity Caused Brexit," *The CAGE Background Briefing Series*, No. 96, 2019.

[61] Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2017: 172.

[62] Goodwin and Milazzo 2017: 458.

more generally."[63] This was partly triggered by the persuasion of the 'Leave' campaign led by UKIP that immigration was putting significant pressure on public services, which led voters to perceive it as a real threat to the economy, culture and the welfare state. Another important element was the age division, where almost three-quarters of those 25 and under supported 'Remain,' as opposed to overwhelming majority of those over 65, who voted for 'Leave.'[64]

What all these point to, once again, is the so-called 'losers' of European integration, whose economic marginalization shaped by lack of educational qualification, low incomes and bleak economic prospects led to their 'Leave' vote, along with their anti-immigration attitudes.[65] More importantly, this picture suggests the crucial need for a renewal of commitment on the part of the EU to social policy in order to capitalize on the past achievements of a common approach and to prevent further waves of resentment and discontent with the result of more countries wishing to leave the Union.

V. Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a further recent challenge to the EU and its member states, having crucial repercussions for the EU and national social policies. Indeed, it is argued to have posed an unprecedented challenge that tested the meaning of European integration and the EU's place in the global economic and political order.[66] It has a different character than the first two crises discussed above, as the latter have rather significant implications on the citizens' attitudes and perceptions of social policies and welfare state. The pandemic, on the other hand, has provided a test case for the future direction of the EU, impinged by stronger solidarity and cooperation in social policies and implying significant lessons for its institutional structure. A first distinguishing feature of this crisis was its 'force majeure' character, i.e., that it was "nobody's fault," as it did not emanate from any policy failure.[67] A second was its direct, rather than indirect, effects on the welfare systems of almost all countries in the world,

---

[63] Dennison and Geddes, 2018: 1144-1145.
[64] Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2017: 171.
[65] Goodwin and Milazzo 2017: 457.
[66] Lucia Quaglia and Amy Verdun, "The COVID-19 pandemic and the European Union: politics, policies and institutions," *Journal of European Public Policy* 30, no. 4 (2023): 599-611.
[67] Quaglia and Verdun, 2023: 600.

including the EU member states. Starting as a public health emergency turning into a substantive socio-economic crisis, it had tremendous implications for the health care, education, employment and social protection systems EU-wide, involving:

> "large-scale state interventions in the economy, soaring levels of unemployment, ballooning public debts, disruptions of production and supply chains, overloads of public health systems, repeated lockdowns, disruptions of education systems, limitations of personal liberties, and worsening social inequalities."[68]

The third and most important distinguishing feature of this crisis is the capacity of the EU to act, this time, in solidarity and cooperation, bringing to the fore new ways of joint problem-solving, and having repercussions for the EU institutional structure. In the first days of the outburst of the pandemic, with the virus spreading fast implying an unprecedented health crisis, the EU appeared to be incapable, slow and ignored by member states, "as core tenets of EU integration such as open borders and the prohibition of export bans were flouted. Amidst panic, national interests dominated."[69] Accordingly, public authorities in the member states, in line with their national interests, responded quickly by introducing various restrictions and lockdowns and applying other measures such as temporary export controls. As health policy has traditionally been a national competence, this should not come as a surprise. Moreover, the 'Eurobond' crisis sparked by Italy in the early months of the pandemic signaled a new solidarity crisis at the EU level, this time around the resistance of some member states to halt the government debts via a pooling of resources amongst Eurozone countries.[70] However, the unfolding of the crisis witnessed the member states rapidly starting to work together, the EU coordinating "the repatriation of stranded citizens, … reopening the borders for medical and critical goods, initiating joint procurement processes for medical and protective equipment, deploying health personnel, and releasing new funds for urgent health care spending."[71]

---

[68] Quaglia and Verdun, 2023: 600.

[69] Eleanor Brooks et al., "Covid-19 and European Union health policy: from crisis to collective action," in Bart Vanhercke et al. (Eds.) *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020*. Brussels: ETUI, 2021: 33

[70] Alde Party, "Italy's insistence on Eurobonds is dividing Europe," 20 April 2020. Available at: https://www.aldeparty.eu/italy_s_insistence_on_eurobonds_is_dividing_europe

[71] Brooks et al, 2021: 33.

The Commission, meanwhile, proposed a 'European Health Union' through various legislative measures to increase the role of the EU in the field of health and strengthen its emergency capacities.[72] All this point to a window of opportunity for a deeper 'health integration,'[73] which would be writ large as further integration in social policies.

On the other hand, looking deeper into the socio-economic impacts of the crisis reveals a pattern that is similar to those crises preceding the pandemic. Studies have demonstrated that the crisis resulted in inequalities across different fields, including the economic performances of the member states, employment statuses of individuals, and gender inequalities.[74] Several studies have pointed to increasing inequality and poverty levels across the EU as the negative social outcomes of Covid-19 and measures put in place to mitigate its impacts, which disproportionately hit the poor and the vulnerable, jeopardizing the 2030 target of reducing the number of the poor by 20 million.[75] The crisis hit hardest those on non-standard contracts, including temporary and part-time workers, as well as self-employed, particularly in lower-income countries, where social protection benefits were less available and less generous.[76] It has also been underlined that the majority of these workers were women and young people.[77] The disproportionate impact of the pandemic on – particularly lower-educated and lower-income – women has been a particular concern, mainly due to the increasing need for care work as a result of school closures, as well as the impact of the crisis on the 'feminised' jobs and non-standard forms of employment in the health and social care sectors.[78] The pandemic has thus underlined significant differences across countries, sectors and social groups in terms of its impacts, reflecting differences in socio-economic structures

---

[72] Quaglia and Verdun, 2023.

[73] Brooks et al, 2021: 33.

[74] Bart Vanhercke et al., "Conclusions: Facing the economic and social consequences of the pandemic: domestic and EU responses," in Bart Vanhercke et al., (Eds.) *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020*. Brussels: ETUI, 2021

[75] Vanhercke et al., 2021: 159.

[76] Martin Myant, "The economic and social consequences of Covid-19," in Bart Vanhercke et al., (Eds.) *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020*. Brussels: ETUI, 2021.

[77] Vanhercke et al., 2021.

[78] Jill Rubery and Isabel Tavora, "The Covid-19 crisis and gender equality: risks and opportunities," in Bart Vanhercke et al., (Eds.) *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020*. Brussels: ETUI, 2021

and policy responses, "with lower-income countries generally providing less protection against negative social effects," and thus deepening the already existing divergences within the EU.[79] All this went together with a rapid decline in public trust in the EU, found to be "not well structured for rapidly responding to a crisis," with its slow decision-making and limited budget.[80]

Conclusion

What the long history of European integration in social policy, as well as the full-fledged crises that the EU has faced in social field in the last decade, demonstrate is a crucial need to reconsider social policy from a new perspective, one that capitalizes on the gains of social policy integration of the last 70 years and that reflects on its major shortcomings in terms of inclusiveness and credibility in the eyes of EU citizens. The Reflection Paper by the European Commission to project on the future of EU social policy in the aftermath of Brexit in 2017 is a noteworthy attempt in this respect, outlining the specific challenges and opportunities faced by the Union in the current context, and bringing to the fore three different scenarios for the future direction of the EU in this area.[81] Acknowledging the significance of rapid population changes, increasing diversity in society, new work patterns (which have undergone further crucial changes with the pandemic), and the need to modernize the welfare systems to meet these new social risks, the Paper underlines that jobs and social policies constitute a top priority for the citizens across the EU, expecting both the EU and their national, regional and local governments to take more action in this field.

Therefore, from the three scenarios of (i) limiting the 'social dimension' to free movement; (ii) allowing the member states that want to do more to do more in the social field; and (iii) EU-27 deepening the social dimension together, the Commission appears to opt for the third, underlining the fundamental place of social values in the European project since its inception, as well as the need to address today's major challenges (some of which have been discussed above, and certainly going beyond them in an ever-changing social environment) collectively. This means using all the instruments that the EU has at its hand, including legislation, cooperation,

---

[79] Myant, 2021: 67.
[80] Myant, 2021: 61.
[81] European Commission, *Reflection Paper on the Social Dimension of Europe*. COM(2017)206, 2017. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/publications/ reflection-paper-social-dimension-europe_en

guidance and funding, in order to promote equal rights for all citizens across the member states, to make European economies more resilient to shocks, and to strengthen Europe's international standing by responding to challenges together.

Needless to say, it is crucial that the EU pursues, in all its social dimension, the objective of enhancing the identification of its citizens with, and their support to, the European project, if it aims to tackle the gap between the 'winners' and 'losers' that the latter has so far caused. The three recent crises examined above carry the risk of deepening this gap, and resulting in further inequalities, if the social dimension is not brought, once again, to the fore. Alternatively, they also demonstrate the potential of the EU to bring its project closer to the citizens and demarcate the need for collective action, from which all will benefit and to which all will contribute.

Bibliography

Abdelaaty, Lamis and Liza G. Steele. "Explaining Attitudes Toward Refugees and Immigrants in Europe," Political Studies 70 no. 1 (2022): 110–130.

Albada, Katja, Nina Hansen and Sabine Otten. "Polarization in attitudes towards refugees and migrants in the Netherlands," European Journal of Social Psychology 51 (2021): 627– 643.

Armstrong, Kenneth A. "EU Social Policy and the Governance Architecture of Europe 2020", Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research 18, no. 3 (2012): 285-300.

Aybars, Ayşe İdil. "Sosyal Politika," in Avrupa Birliği: Tarihçe, Teoriler, Kurumlar ve Politikalar, 4th Edition, Editors Belgin Akçay and İlke Göçmen, 549-572. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık, 2023.

Biermann, Felix, Nina Guérin, Stefan Jagdhuber, Berthold Rittberger and Moritz Weiss. "Political (non-)reform in the euro crisis and the refugee crisis: a liberal intergovernmentalist explanation," Journal of European Public Policy 26, no.2 (2019): 246–26.

Brooks, Eleanor, Anniek de Ruijter and Scott L. Greer. "Covid-19 and European Union health policy: from crisis to collective action," in Bart Vanhercke, Slavina Spasova and Boris Fronteddu (Eds.) Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020. Brussels: ETUI, 2021

Butkus, Mindaugas, Alma Maciulyte-Sniukiene and Kristina Matuzeviciute. "Socio-Demographic Factors Influencing Attitude towards Refugees: An Analysis of Data from European Social Survey," Globalization and its socio-economic

consequences: 16th International Scientific Conference, 5th–6th October 2016. Zilina: University of Zilina, 2016

Copeland, Paul and Mary Daly. "Varieties of Poverty Reduction: Inserting the Poverty and Social Exclusion Target into Europe 2020," Journal of European Social Policy 22, no. 3 (2012): 273-287.

Czymara, Christian S. "Attitudes toward Refugees in Contemporary Europe: A Longitudinal Perspective on Cross-National Differences," Social Forces 99 no. 3 (2021): 1306–1333.

De La Porte, Caroline. "Is the Open Method of Coordination Appropriate for Organising Activities at European Level in Sensitive Policy Areas?" European Law Journal 8 no. 1 (2002): 38–58.

Dennison, James and Andrew Geddes. "Brexit and the perils of 'Europeanised' migration," Journal of European Public Policy 25, no. 8 (2018): 1137-1153.

European Commission. Reflection Paper on the Social Dimension of Europe. COM(2017)206, 2017. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/publications/reflection-paper-social-dimension-europe_en

Ferrera, Maurizio, Manos Matsaganis and Stefano Sacchi. "Open Coordination against Poverty: the new EU 'social inclusion' process," Journal of European Social Policy 12, no 3 (2002): 227-239.

Ferris, Elizabeth. "Making Sense of Public Policy on Refugee Integration," The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 690, no.1, (2020): 200-224

Fetzer, Thiemo. "Austerity Caused Brexit," The CAGE Background Briefing Series, No. 96, 2019.

Fligstein, Neil. Euroclash: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe. Oxford: OUP, 2008.

Follesdal, Andreas and Simon Hix. "Why there is a democratic deficit in the EU? A response to Majone and Moravcsik," Journal of Common Market Studies 44, no 3 (2006): 533-562.

Gerhards, Jürgen, Holger Lengfeld and Julia Hauberer. "Do European citizens support the idea of a European welfare state? Evidence from a comparative survey conducted in three EU member states," International Sociology 31, no 6 (2016): 677-700.

Geyer, Robert R. Exploring European Social Policy. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.

Goodwin, Matthew J. and Oliver Heath. "The 2016 referendum, Brexit and the left behind: An aggregate-level analysis of the result," The Political Quarterly 87, no. 3 (2016): 323–332.

Goodwin, Matthew and Caitlin Milazzo. "Taking back control? Investigating the role of immigration in the 2016 vote for Brexit," British Journal of Politics and International Relations 19, no. 3 (2017): 450–464.

Guillen, Ana M. and Santiago Alvarez. "The EU's Impact on the Spanish Welfare State: The Role of Cognitive Europeanization," Journal of European Social Policy 14, no. 3 (2004): 285–299.

Gumbrell-McCormick, Rebecca and Richard Hyman. "What about the workers? The implications of Brexit for British and European labour," Competition & Change 21, no. 3 (2017): 169-184.

Haas, Ernst. The Uniting of Europe: Political, Economic and Social Forces 1950-1957. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958: 35.

Hantrais, Linda. Social Policy in the European Union. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Kleinman, Mark. A European Welfare State? European Union Social Policy in Context. Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002.

Koos, Sebastian and Verena Seibel. "Solidarity with refugees across Europe. A comparative analysis of public support for helping forced migrants," European Societies 21, no. 5 (2019): 704-728.

Majone, Giandomenico. "Europe's 'democratic deficit': The question of Standards," European Law Journal 4, no 1 (1998): 5-28.

Mosher, James S. and David M. Trubek. "Alternative approaches to governance in the EU: EU social policy and European Employment Strategy," Journal of Common Market Studies 41, no 1 (2003): 63-88.

Myant, Martin. "The economic and social consequences of Covid-19," in Bart Vanhercke, Slavina Spasova and Boris Fronteddu (Eds.) Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020. Brussels: ETUI, 2021.

Niemann, Arne and Natascha Zaun. "EU Refugee Policies and Politics in Times of Crisis: Theoreticaland Empirical Perspectives," JCMS 56, no. 1 (2018): 3-22.

O'Connor, Julia S. "Employment-anchored social policy, gender equality and the open method of policy coordination in the European union," European Societies 7, no 1 (2005): 27-52.

Palier, Bruno and Philippe Pochet. "Toward a European Social Policy – At Last?" in Editors Nicolas Jabko and Craig Parsons, The State of the European Union:

With US or Against US? European Trends in American Perspective. Oxford: OUP, 2005: 253–273.

Pierson, Paul. "Fragmented Welfare States: Federal Institutions and the Development of Social Policy," Governance 8, no 4 (1995): 449-478.

Quaglia, Lucia and Amy Verdun. "The COVID-19 pandemic and the European Union: politics, policies and institutions," Journal of European Public Policy 30, no. 4 (2023): 599-611.

Rubery, Jill and Isabel Tavora. "The Covid-19 crisis and gender equality: risks and opportunities," in Bart Vanhercke, Slavina Spasova and Boris Fronteddu (Eds.) Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020. Brussels: ETUI, 2021

Schömann, Isabelle. "The Lisbon Treaty: A More Social Europe At Last?" ETUI Policy Brief, European Social Policy, No: 1/2010, 2010.

Streeck, Wolfgang. "Neo-Voluntarism: A New European Social Policy Regime?" European Law Journal 1, no 1 (1995): 31-59.

Vanhercke, Bart, Slavina Spasova and Boris Fronteddu. "Conclusions: Facing the economic and social consequences of the pandemic: domestic and EU responses," in Bart Vanhercke, Slavina Spasova and Boris Fronteddu (Eds.) Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020. Brussels: ETUI, 2021.

Zeitlin, Jonathan, Francesco Nicoli and Brigid Laffan. "Introduction: the European Union beyond the polycrisis? Integration and politicization in an age of shifting cleavages," Journal of European Public Policy 26, no7 (2019): 963–976.

Ziller, Conrad and Sara Wallace Goodman. "Local Government Efficiency and Anti-Immigrant Violence," Journal of Politics 82 no.3 (2020): 895-907.

THE POLITICS OF EU GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES: PROSPECTS FOR CHANGING GENDER EQUALITY PARADIGM AT THE EU

Nazlı KAZANOĞLU[*]
Research Article

Abstract

Gender equality has long been a central theme of the European social model. Using the example of work - life balance policies, this article aims to identify two successive periods and explore the changing policy paradigm with respect to gender equality at the EU. In so doing, the article draws on two conceptual approaches in terms of theoretical basis: (a) Esping-Andersen's three welfare pillar conceptualisation and (b) genderised and de-genderised distinction. Drawing on a comprehensive literature review and the content analysis of official EU policy texts, the article contends that the EU gender policies have shifted away from serving to change the redistribution of work between men and women, towards improving women's employment opportunities.

Keywords: De-genderisation, Genderisation, Social Policy, Policy Paradigm, Social Investment Perspective.

Avrupa Birliği Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Politikaları: AB'de Değişen Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Politika Paradigması için Öngörüler

Öz

Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği uzun zamandır Avrupa sosyal modelinin ve Avrupa Birliği'nin (AB) merkezi bir temasıdır. Bu makale, iş-yaşam dengesi politikaları örneğini kullanarak, birbirini takip eden iki dönemi tanımlamayı ve AB'de toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğine ilişkin değişen politika paradigmasını, özellikle Avrupa borç krizlerinin yaşandığı dönem olarak tanımlanan 2010 sonrası döneme odaklanarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bunu yaparken, makale teorik temel açısından iki kavramsal yaklaşımdan yararlanmaktadır: (a) Esping-Andersen'in üç refah sütunu

---

[*] PhD, Political Science and Public Administration Department, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, İstanbul Nişantaşı University, e-mail: nazli.kazanoglu@nisantasi.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0003-4870-6435.

kavramsallaştırması ve (b) cinsiyetlendirilmiş ve cinsiyetlendirilmemiş ayrımı. Kapsamlı bir literatür taramasına ve toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği, istihdam ve aile ile ilgili resmi AB politika metinlerinin içerik analizine dayanan makale, AB toplumsal cinsiyet politikalarının, kadın ve erkek arasındaki işin yeniden dağılımını değiştirmeye hizmet etmekten, kadınların istihdam fırsatlarını iyileştirmeye doğru kaydığını iddia etmektedir.

***Anahtar Kelimeler:** Cinsiyetlendirme, De-Cinsiyetlendirme, Sosyal Politika, Sosyal Yatırım Perspektifi, Politika Paradigması.*

Introduction

The European Union (EU) was initially formed as a regional organisation with the aim of fostering and increasing economic integration and cooperation among its member states. Yet, in time the EU has come to pay more attention on social affairs including equality between men and women. In other words, in time the EU has come to consider gender equality as a fundamental right. Therefore, the EU has developed a range of gender policies aiming to abolish or at least decrease the inequalities between men and women in different spheres of life such as politics, employment, education and family[1]. It was the Maastricht Treaty, which was signed in 1992 included a commitment to providing equality between men and women in terms of labour market opportunities and treatment at the work place[2]. This commitment was then reinforced by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, which introduced the term gender mainstreaming. With the introduction of the term gender mainstreaming in 1997, gender equality has come to gain a new dimension at the EU as gender mainstreaming requests gender equality perspective to be incorporated in all policy areas. Since then, gender equality has become an integral component of the EU's social policy model, departing from its historical role as a supplementary policy area[3] because the

---

[1] Johanna Kantola. *Gender and the European Union*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010.

[2] Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the implementation of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of pregnant workers, women workers who have recently given birth and women who are breast-feeding, Official Journal of the European Communities. November 28, 1992., Accessed November 9, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31992L0085

[3] Masselot, Annick, and Eugenia Caracciolo di Torella, *Reconciling work and family life in EU law and policy,* Springer, 2010.

main idea behind gender mainstreaming is to ensure the equality between men and women in all aspects of life and improve women's status within the society by formulating the laws and regulations in a gender sensitive way.

In order to ensure the equality between men and women and tackle gender-based discrimination, the EU has introduced various initiatives and roadmaps, prepared numerous strategies, drafted legislations and formulated a range of goals and targets. In other words, particularly, starting from the mid-1990s, gender equality policies increasingly began to appear in EU social policy documents both in the form of 'hard' law and 'soft' policy instruments. In other words, certain initiatives, such as treaties, directives, and rules from the European Court of Justice, carry legal obligations, requiring Member States to incorporate them into their national legislative frameworks. On the other hand, there are also quasi-legal instruments, including guidelines, roadmaps, and recommendations, which lack legal binding force[4].

EU's efforts on making gender equality a reality includes a wide range of topics. First of all, since women have always been over-represented in low paid jobs[5] and still continue to earn almost 13% less than men across Europe[6], the EU aims to close the gender pay gap. Guaranteeing the equal pay for equal work has been on EU's policy agenda since the Treaty of Rome, which was signed in 1957[7]. Since the Treaty of Rome, EU documents have been taking actions towards fighting against pay discrimination[8]. Second, as another most persistent form of gender inequality is violence against women, the EU has paid a salient attention to combatting both domestic violence and violence against women. In this regard the EU has both signed and required its member states to sign the Council of Europe

---

[4] Bulmer, Simon J., and Claudio M. Radaelli. *The Europeanisation of national policy?*. No. p0042. Queens University Belfast, 2004; Kantola, *Gender and the European Union*; Ulrike Liebert. *Gendering Europeanisation: patterns and dynamics*. Peter Lang Publishing. 2003.

[5] Jane Lewis. "Work/family reconciliation, equal opportunities and social policies: the interpretation of policy trajectories at the EU level and the meaning of gender equality." Journal of European public policy 13, no. 3 (2006): 420-437.

[6] Sophie Jacquot. "European Union gender equality policies since 1957." *EHNE. Digital Encyclopedia of European History* (2020).

[7] Jacquot, European Union gender equality policies since 1957.

[8] Dalila Ghailani. "Gender equality, from the Treaty of Rome to the quota debate: between myth and reality." Social developments in the European Union (2013): 161-190.

Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which is known as the Istanbul Convention[9]. Third, given that women have been under-represented in decision-making positions, the EU has also taken significant actions in terms of achieving gender balance in decision-making both in politics and labour market. On 27 December 2022, the Commission has passed the new directive on improving the gender balance in company boards[10]. The directive asked a large number of companies across the EU to reach gender balance in their executive board members by 30 June 2026. Finally, especially with the rapid and significant increase in women's employment rates across Europe, the EU certainly acknowledged the significance of work - life balance and introduced a wide range of initiatives with respect to work and family life reconciliation[11].

Although each area is as important as the other, this article focuses on the EU work - life balance policies as work - life balance by nature appears as an ambivalent policy area, which is particularly worth examining. Grebe[12] puts forward '*the problem of incompatibility of paid employment and care work has sporadically been represented as a gender equality problem*'. In a similar manner, Nancy Fraser argues that, the full gender equality will not be able to practice unless the work - life balance problem is solved[13]. Therefore, this article will focus on this specific policy area, because work - life balance measures seem a bit dispersed as they have highly been intertwined with the policy areas of labour market, gender and family. With subtle variations in their content, these laws can demonstrate the promotion of gender equality by reshaping the distribution of household chores between men and women[14]. Additionally, they may enhance women's employment prospects

---

[9]   Kantola, *Gender and the European Union*.

[10] Alberto Alesino, Ignazio Angeloni, and Ludger Schuknecht. "What does the European Union do?." *Public Choice* 123, no. 3-4 (2005): 275-319.

[11] Jane Lewis. *Work-family balance, gender and policy*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2009; Nazlı Kazanoğlu. The politics of Europeanisation: work and family life reconciliation policy. Routledge, 2021.

[12] Cornelius Grebe. Reconciliation policy in Germany 1998-2008: construing the 'problem' of the incompatibility of paid employment and care work. Springer Science & Business Media, 2010.

[13] Nancy Fraser. "Heterosexism, misrecognition, and capitalism: A response to Judith Butler." *Social text* 52/53 (1997): 279-289.

[14] It is very important to note that domestic work refers to any kind of house work including childcare, elderly care, washing the dishes or the clothes, sweeping and cleaning. However, it is childcare, which retains women from advancing in their

by alleviating familial responsibilities, thereby contributing to economic growth[15]. Using the example of work - life balance policies, this article aims to identify two successive periods and explore the changing policy paradigm with respect to gender equality in the EU with a particular focus on the post-2015 period, which is identified as the times of the interrelated crises of migration, security and climate change through the lens of genderisation/de-genderisation distinction. Here, the term genderised denotes the policies that reproduces the gender roles whereas de-genderised refers to policies that would eliminate the existing gender roles. In an attempt to delve into the shift in policy paradigms within this particular domain, this article is structured in three sections. The first section introduces the theoretical framework that grounds the article. The second section delves into the EU, scrutinizing the evolving rationale guiding work-life balance policy-making, accompanied by an overview of EU legislation on work-life balance. Ultimately, the article concludes by illustrating the factors contributing to this shift in policy paradigms. Empirical data for this article has been gathered through an exhaustive content analysis of official EU policy documents related to gender equality, employment, and family.

I. Conceptual framework

In order to examine the changing policy paradigm with respect to gender equality at the EU, this article draws on two conceptual approaches in terms of theoretical basis: (a) ''*three welfare pillars*'' conceptualisation developed by Esping-Andersen and (b) the distinction of genderised and de-genderised policies. Esping-Andersen, in his influential work "*Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*", formulated welfare regimes based on the concept of decommodification[16]. Decommodification referred to the ways in which welfare is produced and distributed. In other words, while formulating his typology of welfare regimes, Esping-Andersen categorized welfare states

---

career most. Therefore, in this article domestic work is mostly used to denote caring tasks.

[15] Simon Duncan. "Policy discourses on 'reconciling work and life'in the EU." *Social Policy and Society* 1, no. 4 (2002): 305-314; Lewis, *Work-family balance, gender and policy*; Amy G. Mazur. *Theorizing feminist policy*. OUP Oxford, 2002; Maria Stratigaki. "The cooptation of gender concepts in EU policies: The case of "reconciliation of work and family"." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 11, no. 1 (2004): 30-56.

[16] Gøsta Esping-Andersen, "The three political economies of the welfare state." International journal of sociology 20, no. 3 1990: 92-123.

based on the distribution of welfare responsibilities among the family, the market, and the state. He argued that welfare states consist of three interrelated pillars: families, the state, and the market. According to Esping-Andersen, these three welfare pillars work in tandem to deliver social welfare[17]. Individuals can obtain welfare services including childcare, elderly care, pensions as well as healthcare from any of them. Although the welfare regime typology has long been associated with Esping-Andersen's work within the comparative welfare state analysis literature, he has also faced criticism from various perspectives, particularly from feminist scholars, for omitting the consideration of care provisions in his typology and placing a greater emphasis on the interaction between the market and the state[18]. Feminist scholars[19] developed the concept de-familisation as an alternative to Esping-Andersen's concept of decommodification, which lacks the care arrangements from the welfare state analysis.

Esping-Andersen has recognized these criticisms, leading him to incorporate the concepts of de-familialization and familialization into his study while revisiting his welfare typology[20]. Theoretically, a familialistic regime referred to the welfare regimes, wherein families are seen to be responsible for individuals' welfares and on the contrary, a de-familialistic welfare regime referred to those in which social policies are able to diminish

---

[17] Esping-Andersen, *The Three Political Economies of the Welfare State*. 92-123.

[18] Mary Daly and Mary E. Daly. The gender division of welfare: the impact of the British and German welfare states. Cambridge University Press, 2000; Jane Lewis. "Gender and the development of welfare regimes." Journal of European social policy 2, no. 3 1992: 159-173; Julia S. O'connor. "Gender, class and citizenship in the comparative analysis of welfare state regimes: theoretical and methodological issues." *British Journal of Sociology* 1993: 501-518; Ann Shola Orloff. "Gender and the social rights of citizenship: The comparative analysis of gender relations and welfare states." *American sociological review* 1993: 303-328.

[19] Ruth Lister, 'She has other duties'-women, citizenship andsocial security." Social Security and Social Change: New Challengesto the Beveridge Model, Eds. Sally Baldwin and Jane Falkingham: Harvester Wheatsheaf 1994; E. McLaughlin,and C. Glendinning. *"Paying for care in Europe: Is there a feminist approach? Family Policy and the Welfare of Women*. L. Hantrais and S." Morgan. Longborough 1994.

[20] Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *Social foundations of post-industrial economies*. OUP Oxford, 1999.

individuals' welfare dependence on kinship and family by transferring this responsibility either to the state or to the market[21].

Although concepts of familialisation and de-familialisation have satisfied feminist scholars' desire to incorporate the care arrangements into welfare state analysis, these terms were used in a broader comparison of welfare regimes not in exploration of policy-paradigms. Moreover, these terms were also seen to be too ambiguous and ambivalent. Steven Saxonberg states that these terms have been used by different scholars in different ways in order to obtain different results[22]. Therefore, while discussing the policy paradigm change in EU gender policies, this article appeals to the concepts of genderised and de-genderised. The term genderised is used to denote the policies that reproduces the gender roles whereas de-genderised refers to policies that would eliminate the existing gender roles[23]. Within the realm of work - life balance, de-genderised policies would include parental leaves that encourage fathers to take relatively more leaves so that childcare would no longer remain as the responsibility of mothers and childcare policies that would encourage the state or at least the market to provide a relatively large number of childcare policies for both children aged below and over three[24]. The next section of the article applies this genderised and de-genderised distinction to EU work - life balance policies and discusses the changing policy paradigm with respect to gender equality at the EU from this perspective.

II. Discussion

In the final quarter of the twentieth century, a notable surge in women pursuing higher education, the structural evolution of the labour market, a widening gap between prices and income, coupled with the growing economic imperative for dual-income households, has not only led to a transformation in the prevailing family model but has also impacted existing

---

[21] Esping-Andersen, *Social foundations of post-industrial economies;* Sigrid Leitner. "Varieties of familialism: The caring function of the family in comparative perspective." *European societies* 5, no. 4 2003: 353-375.

[22] Steven Saxonberg. "From defamilialization to degenderization: Toward a new welfare typology 1." *Social Policy & Administration* 47, no. 1 2013: 26-49.

[23] Saxonberg, *From defamilialization to degenderization: Toward a new welfare typology.* 26-49.

[24] Leitner, *Varieties of familialism: The caring function of the family in comparative perspective.* 353-375; Saxonberg, *From defamilialization to degenderization: Toward a new welfare typology.* 26-49.

gender roles[25]. Consequently, the conventional male breadwinner family model, wherein women were expected to dedicate their lives to family obligations, acting essentially as *'domestic servants[26],'* while men pursued lifelong employment, has gradually waned in social prevalence. Instead, other family models, such as the adult earner family model or, at the very least, the one and a half earner family model, have gained prominence. These alternative models anticipate women being involved in both domestic work and employment. While these changes were anticipated to enhance women's societal standing by granting them economic independence, they have not only intensified pre-existing social disparities but have also given rise to new ones, as women find themselves grappling with the dual responsibilities of work and family life. Given the main aim of social policy-making is to provide human well-being and social equality, formerly neglected work - life balance has turned into one of the most pressing policy and political subjects across Europe but especially at the EU[27].

In addition to responding the changing family forms, in the course of the post-industrial era, with the aim of tackling the ageing population and low economic growth[28] increasing global competitiveness[29], and alleviating bankruptcy risks among member states[30], the EU has adopted the 'social investment perspective' in terms of employment, economic and social policy. This new policy-paradigm was centred on the idea of economic growth through full employment among all citizens, including those with family responsibilities[31] and thus perceived the work - life balance policies

---

[25] Esping-Andersen, *The Incomplete Revolution: Adapting to Women's New Roles.* Anton Hemerijck, *Changing welfare states.* OUP Oxford, 2012; Lewis, *Work-family balance, gender and policy.*

[26] Esping-Andersen, *The Incomplete Revolution: Adapting to Women's New Roles*, 27.

[27] Eileen Dreew. "Re-conceptualising families." In Women, work and the family in Europe, pp. 29-44. Routledge, 2002.

[28] Caroline De la Porte and Kerstin Jacobsson. "Social investment or recommodification? Assessing the employment policies of the EU member states." In *Towards a social investment welfare state?*, pp. 117-150. Policy Press, 2011.

[29] Nathalie Morel, Bruno Palier, and Joakim Palme. "Beyond the welfare state as we knew it?." In *Towards a social investment welfare state?*, pp. 1-30. Policy Press, 2011.

[30] Bengt-Åke Lundvall and Edward Lorenz. "From the Lisbon strategy to Europe2020" In Nathalie Morel, Bruno Palier och Joakim Palme (ed.) *Towards a social investment welfare state? Ideas, Policies and Challenges.*

[31] De la Porte and Jacobsson, *Social investment or recommodification? Assessing the employment policies of the EU member states;* Janine Goetschy. "The

as the key instruments. As a result, particularly since the mid-1990s, work - life balance has become an inseparable part of the EU social policy model[32]. Ferree highlights the significance attributed to work - life balance by arguing, '*it is not a side issue, instead, a rudimentary European value*'[33]. Concomitantly, over the last three to four decades, work - life balance policies have increasingly begun to appear in EU policy documents[34]. However, a closer examination of EU work - life balance policies indicates a paradigm shift in time from combatting the traditional gender roles through alleviating the unequal division of labour within the households by distributing the domestic work equally between men and women towards[35] encouraging women to be more active within the labour market through transferring their disproportionate domestic workload either to the state or at least to the market[36]. Within this context, this article identifies two successive periods with respect to meaning that has been attributed to work - life balance at the EU.

European employment strategy: Genesis and development." *European journal of industrial relations* 5, no. 2 1999: 117-137.

[32] Caracciolo di Torella and Masselot, *Reconciling work and family life in EU law and policy*; Kantola, *Gender and the European Union.*; Lewis, *Work-family balance, gender and policy*; Stratigaki, *The cooptation of gender concepts in EU policies: The case of 'reconciliation of work and family'.* 30-56.

[33] Myra Marx Ferree. "Framing equality: The politics of race, class, gender in the US, Germany, and the expanding European Union." *Gender politics in the expanding European Union: Mobilization, inclusion, exclusion* 2008: 237-256.

[34] Caracciolo di Torella and Masselot, *Reconciling work and family life in EU law and policy*; Drew, E. *Re-conceptualising families*; Susanne Fahlen. "Facets of work–life balance across Europe: How the interplay of institutional contexts, work arrangements and individual resources affect capabilities for having a family, and for being involved in family life." PhD diss., Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2012; Linda Hantrais."Family policy matters." *Responding to family change in Europe* 2004; Lewis, *Work/family reconciliation, equal opportunities and social policies: the interpretation of policy trajectories at the EU level and the meaning of gender equality.* 420-437; Lewis, *Work-family balance, gender and policy*; Grace James."Forgotten children: work–family reconciliation in the EU." *Journal of social welfare and family law* 34, no. 3 2012: 363-379; Stratigaki, *The cooptation of gender concepts in EU policies: The case of 'reconciliation of work and family'.* pp. 30-56.

[35] In order to distribute the domestic work equally between men and women, the EU has introduced a number of soft laws, which encourages fathers to be more active especially in terms of childcare.

[36] Kazanoğlu, *The Politics of Europeanisation: Work and Family Life Reconciliation Policy.*

III. 1992-2000: Genderised Work - Life Balance Policies

As mentioned earlier, newly emerged social risks and inequalities across Europe urged work - life balance policy making at the EU. Accordingly, as can be seen in the appendix-1, staring from the early 1990s until the beginning of the 2000s, the EU has introduced three hard, and one soft laws with respect to work – life balance. A comprehensive content analysis of these hard and soft laws explicitly chimes with the logic of genderisation. As we mentioned earlier genderising policies denotes work – life balance measures which promote different gender roles for men and women. More precisely, genderising work – life balance policies would address only to mothers and attribute the domestic work and especially childcare responsibility to mothers rather than encouraging fathers to be an important part of the childcare responsibility. As can be seen in the appendix-1 below, work – life balance measures introduced within the period between 1990 and 2000 reproduce the gender-based division of labour by considering care work as a domain reserved for mothers. Although they aim to provide children's well-being by encouraging one parent to stay at home with the child during the child's optimal mental and physical development process and protect the parent who will stay home from a job dismissal together with generous cash benefits, appointing mothers for this eventually keeps the traditional gender roles alive, which eventually reproduces women's disadvantaged positions within the society. Although genderised work – life balance policies too, aim to help women in terms of work and family life reconciliation, the ways in which they do so do not ease their labour market entrance. Although women's economic independence and promoting equal opportunities for men and women within the labour market are two main components of gender equality, genderised work – life balance measures remain inadequate in providing these to women. While compensating for women's employment gaps resulting from their childbirth and childcare responsibilities is crucial in recognizing the significance of previously overlooked care work, it also presents challenges for women re-entering the labor market. In line with what Bianchi and her colleagues argued the longer women remain outside the labour market the harder for them to be employed as employers would not see them attractive. All in all, even genderised work – life balance policies successfully prevent women to carry the double burden of work and family lives, they continue to consider women as natural care-givers instead of transferring care obligations from familial sphere to public sphere.

IV. 2000 and Onwards: De-genderised Work – Life Balance Policies

The late 1990s and early 2000s chime with the time when the EU has adopted the social investment paradigm. As mentioned earlier, this new paradigm aimed to address challenges related to the aging population and low economic growth[37], increasing global competitiveness[38], and alleviating bankruptcy risks among member states[39] by increasing the employment rates in the member states. In other words, this new policy paradigm requested all citizens, including those with family responsibilities as well to be employed, which has well been reflected into the content of the work – life balance policies. As can be seen in appendix-2 below, despite the paradigm change, the work – life balance policies have continued to enjoy a strong emphasis until the second half of the 2000s. Between 2000 and 2005, the EU has introduced four soft laws with respect to work – life balance. However, starting in 2005 until 2010, work-life balance experienced a decline in the political enthusiasm that it had enjoyed in the preceding decade. This shift was attributed to an intensified campaign against gender ideology and an increased number of conservative rightist Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) advocating for austerity.[40]. However, with the introduction of the EU Parental Leave Directive in 2010, work – life balance policies have reappeared on the EU policy-making agenda. In the meantime, social partners and European social institutions, particularly COFACE and the European Women's Lobby, have made significant efforts to expand work-life balance measures. They declared 2014 as the 'Year of Reconciling Work and Family Life in Europe.'

These efforts have resulted in EU's re-acknowledgement of the importance and essentialness of the work – life balance policies and they have continued to enjoy the political emphasis from where they left off. Yet, with a considerable paradigm change. Contrary to work – life balance measures of the previous decade, the work – life balance policies introduced in 2000 and onwards have given precedence to the delegation of family

---

[37] De la Porte, and Jacobsson, *Social investment or recommodification? Assessing the employment policies of the EU member states.*

[38] Nathalie Morel, Bruno Palier, and Joakim Palme. "Beyond the welfare state as we knew it?." In *Towards a social investment welfare state?*, pp. 1-30. Policy Press, 2011.

[39] Lundvall and Lorenz, *From the Lisbon Strategy to EUROPE2020.*

[40] Borbála Juhâz and Enikő Pap. "Backlash in gender equality and women's and girls' rights." 2018.

responsibilities, directing them either towards the state or the market. In so doing, work – life balance policies have come to serve women's labour market participation and equal redistribution of domestic responsibilities between men and women, which clearly reflect the logic of de-genderisation as they endeavour to eliminate the traditional gender roles in three ways. First of all, shorter maternal leaves would encourage women to return to labour market relatively quicker and this would keep women's promotion potential as high as men's. Because when women spend relatively less amount of time out of the labour market, they will not be disconnected from business lives. Because when women spend a comparatively shorter amount of time away from the labor market, they will remain more connected to professional life. Second, requesting parental leave to be taken both by mothers and fathers clearly implies a fight against traditional gender roles as it is breaking the rule that childcare is naturally mothers' job. Last but not least, setting increased childcare enrolment rate targets also encourage women to be active within the labour market as it explicitly emancipates women from their care duties. All in all, work – life balance policies introduced over the last two decades, clearly chimes with de-genderisation as they serve not only women's labour market participation but also the equal redistribution of care work. In other words, they do not only aim to increase women's employment rates but they also aim to increase fathers' involvement within the domestic work.

Conclusion

This article has sought to explore the changing policy paradigm with respect to gender equality at the EU with a particular focus on the post-2008 period, which is identified as the times of the severe European debt crises. In the quest for full understanding of the policy paradigm shift within this specific policy area at the EU level, this article relied on feminist critiques of Esping-Andersen's welfare regime typology. However, contrary to notable feminist social policy scholars, this article has utilised the genderisation and de-genderisation distinction rather than the familialisation and de-familialisation distinction for two key reasons. First, the latter distinction has been used in welfare regime comparisons rather than policy-paradigm explorations and second, they were seen as ambivalent concepts as they remained inadequate in explaining the clear aims of the policies. Within this theoretical framework, by using the EU work - life balance policies as an example to investigate the changing policy paradigm and discuss the EU

gender policy prospects, this article puts forward two key arguments. First, the EU has been committed to providing gender equality since the 1990s, especially with the introduction of the term gender mainstreaming in 1996, the significance attached to gender equality has reached the maximum. Nevertheless, despite a robust emphasis for nearly ten years, the influence of various factors in the latter half of the 2000s has led to the marginalization of work-life balance policies. These factors encompassed the 2008 Euro crisis, the 2009 European debt crisis, and a rise in the number of conservative rightist Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) advocating for austerity. Consequently, work-life balance policies have experienced a decline in the political support they enjoyed in the preceding decade. Yet, with the significant lobbying efforts of the social partners and European social institutions work – life balance policies have reappeared on the EU's policy-making agenda. Second, in addition to this changing level of significance attributed to work – life balance policy making, the meaning attributed to these policies has also showed great variations over time. While these policies initially serve to tackle the feminist challenges, in time they have come to serve the tackle the low female employment rates. In other words, the meaning attributed to providing gender equality has shifted away from increasing men's relatively lower involvement in domestic tasks towards increasing women's capacity to work. In the aftermath of EU adopting the social investment perspective, which revolved around the concept of economic growth through the full employment of all citizens, gender equality policies have evolved to support economic growth by facilitating women's participation in the labour market. Reducing the duration of parental leaves, coupled with increased access to public childcare services and universal enrolment rights, underscores the EU's commitment to eliminating gender roles. This approach aims to integrate more women into the labour market by shifting their family responsibilities to either the state or, at the very least, the market, which marks an alignment with the concept of de-genderisation. Although it is hard to come to a definite conclusion, relying on the comprehensive content analysis of official EU documents, it would not be unjustified to argue that the EU aims to empower women economically by facilitating their engagement in the labour market and alleviating domestic responsibilities. The ultimate goal is to foster economic growth, initially at the national level and subsequently at the supranational level.

References

Agapiou-Josephides, Kalliope, and Kypros Savva. "Governing Gender Inequality: A Genealogy of EU State Feminism." *Gender, Law and Institutions* (2015): 147.

Alesina, Alberto, Ignazio Angeloni, and Ludger Schuknecht. "What does the European Union do?." *Public Choice* 123, no. 3-4 (2005): 275-319.

Bianchi, Suzanne M., Melissa A. Milkie, Liana C. Sayer, and John P. Robinson. "Is anyone doing the housework? Trends in the gender division of household labor." *Social forces* 79, no. 1 (2000): 191-228.

Bulmer, Simon J., and Claudio M. Radaelli. *The Europeanisation of national policy?*. No. p0042. Queens University Belfast, 2004.

Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the implementation of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of pregnant workers, women workers who have recently given birth and women who are breast-feeding, Official Journal of the European Communities. 28 November 1992. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:01992L0085-20140325.

Council Directive, 'Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the implementation of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of pregnant workers, women workers who have recently given birth and women who are breast-feeding'.

Council Directive, 'Council Directive 1999/70/EC of 28 June 1999 on the concerning the framework agreement on fixed-term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP, Official Journal of the European Communities. 10 July 1999.   https://eurlex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31999L0070andfrom=EN

Council Directive, 'Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 on implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC', Official Journal of European Union. 18 March 2010. https://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:068:0013:0020:EN:PDF.

Council Directive, 'Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC, Official Journal of the European Communities. 20 January 1998. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31997L0081andfrom=EN.

Council Directive, 'Council Directive 1999/70/EC of 28 June 1999 on the concerning the framework agreement on fixed-term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP, Official Journal of the European Communities. 10 July

1999.   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31999L0070andfrom=EN.

Daly, Mary, and Mary E. Daly. *The gender division of welfare: the impact of the British and German welfare states*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

De la Porte, Caroline, and Kerstin Jacobsson. "Social investment or recommodification? Assessing the employment policies of the EU member states." In *Towards a social investment welfare state?*, pp. 117-150. Policy Press, 2011.

Drew, Eileen P., Ruth Emerek, and Evelyn Mahon, eds. *Women, work, and the family in Europe*. Psychology Press, 1998.

Duncan, Simon. "Policy discourses on 'reconciling work and life'in the EU." *Social Policy and Society* 1, no. 4 (2002): 305-314.

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. "The three political economies of the welfare state." *International journal of sociology* 20, no. 3 (1990): 92-123.

Esping-Andersen, Gosta. *Social foundations of postindustrial economies*. OUP Oxford, 1999.

Esping-Andersen, Gosta. *Incomplete revolution: Adapting welfare states to women's new roles*. Polity, 2009.

European Council. Council Recommendation of 31 March 1992 on child care 92/241/EEC., Official Journal of the European Communities, No L 123/16. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31992H0241

European Union, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Official Journal of the European Communities. December 18, 2000. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf.

European Union. Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019 (Rep.). Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, (2015).

Fahlen, Susanne. "Facets of work–life balance across Europe: How the interplay of institutional contexts, work arrangements and individual resources affect capabilities for having a family, and for being involved in family life." PhD diss., Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2012.

Fraser, Nancy. "Heterosexism, misrecognition, and capitalism: A response to Judith Butler." *Social text* 52/53 (1997): 279-289.

Ferree, Myra Marx. "Framing equality: The politics of race, class, gender in the US, Germany, and the expanding European Union." *Gender politics in the expanding European Union: Mobilization, inclusion, exclusion*. 2008: 237-256.

European Commission. *Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025*,

https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/202003/gender_equality_strategy_factshe
    et_en.pdf.

Ghailani, Dalila. "Gender equality, from the Treaty of Rome to the quota debate:
    between myth and reality." *Social developments in the European Union* (2013):
    161-190.

Grebe, Cornelius. *Reconciliation policy in Germany 1998-2008: construing the
    'problem' of the incompatibility of paid employment and care work*. Springer
    Science & Business Media, 2010.

Goetschy, Janine. "The European employment strategy: Genesis and
    development." *European journal of industrial relations* 5, no. 2 (1999): 117-
    137.

Hantrais, Linda. "Family policy matters." *Responding to family change in Europe.*
    OUP Oxford, 2004.

Hemerijck, Anton. *Changing welfare states*. OUP Oxford, 2012.

James, Grace. "Forgotten children: work–family reconciliation in the EU." *Journal
    of social welfare and family law* 34, no. 3 (2012): 363-379.

Jacquot, Sophie. "European Union gender equality policies since 1957." *EHNE.
    Digital Encyclopedia of European History* (2020).

Juhâz, Borbála, and Enikő Pap. "Backlash in gender equality and women's and girls'
    rights." (2018).

Kantola, Johanna. *Gender and the European Union*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010.

Kazanoğlu, Nazlı. *The politics of Europeanisation: work and family life
    reconciliation policy*. Routledge, 2021.

Leitner, Sigrid. "Varieties of familialism: The caring function of the family in
    comparative perspective." *European societies* 5, no. 4 (2003): 353-375.

Lewis, Jane. "Work/family reconciliation, equal opportunities and social policies:
    the interpretation of policy trajectories at the EU level and the meaning of
    gender equality." *Journal of European public policy* 13, no. 3 (2006): 420-437.

Lewis, Jane. *Work-family balance, gender and policy*. Edward Elgar Publishing,
    2009.

Lewis, Jane. "Gender and the development of welfare regimes." *Journal of
    European social policy* 2, no. 3 (1992): 159-173.

Lister, Ruth. "'She has other duties'-women, citizenship and social security." *Social
    Security and Social Change: New Challengesto the Beveridge Model, Eds.
    Sally Baldwin and Jane Falkingham: Harvester Wheatsheaf.* 1994.

Masselot, Annick, and Eugenia Caracciolo di Torella. *Reconciling work and family life in EU law and policy*. Springer, 2010.

McDonald, Peter. "The "toolbox" of public policies to impact on fertility–a global view." (2000).

Mazur, Amy G. *Theorizing feminist policy*. OUP Oxford, 2002.

McLaughlin, E., and C. Glendinning. "Paying for care in Europe: Is there a feminist approach? Family Policy and the Welfare of Women. L. Hantrais and S." *Morgan. Longborough* (1994).

Morel, Nathalie, and Bruno Palier, eds. *Towards a social investment welfare state?: ideas, policies and challenges*. Policy Press, 2012.

O'Connor, Julia S. "Gender, class and citizenship in the comparative analysis of welfare state regimes: theoretical and methodological issues." *British journal of Sociology* (1993): 501-518.

Orloff, Ann Shola. "Gender and the social rights of citizenship: The comparative analysis of gender relations and welfare states." *American sociological review* (1993): 303-328.

Saraceno, Chiara. "Family change, family policies and the restructuring of welfare." In *Family, Market and Community. Equity and Efficiency in Social Policy*, vol. 21, pp. 81-100. OECD, 1997.

Saxonberg, Steven. "From defamilialization to degenderization: Toward a new welfare typology 1." *Social Policy & Administration* 47, no. 1 (2013): 26-49.

Stratigaki, Maria. "The cooptation of gender concepts in EU policies: The case of "reconciliation of work and family"." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 11, no. 1 (2004): 30-56.

Appendix-1: Work – life balance measures within the EU between 1990 and 2000[41]

Directive:	Content:
92/85/EEC Pregnant Workers Directive	o 14 weeks maternity leave with a payment or an allowance; o Job dismissal protection during the leave; o The right to return the same job with the same working conditions (EEC, 1992).
Council Recommendation (1992)	o Member States should take and/or progressively encourage initiatives to enable women and men to reconcile their occupational, family and upbringing responsibilities arising from the care of children (CEC, 1992:2).
97/81/EC Part time work Directive	o Introduce measures facilitating access to part time work for and women in order to ease work and family life reconciliation; o Eliminate any kind of discrimination against part time workers and improve their working quality (EC, 1997).
1999/70/EC Fixed term work Directive	o Remove any kind of discrimination from the fixed-term contracts; o Provide fixed-term workers the opportunity to access corresponding trainings (EC, 1999).

Appendix-2: Work – life balance measures within the EU from 2000s and onwards[42]

Directive:	Content:
Lisbon Strategy (2000)	o Make it easier to reconcile working life and family life, in particular by setting a new benchmark for improved childcare provision. o Ease to reconcile working life and family life, in particular via childcare provisions.
Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (2000) Article 33	o Protection against any kind of job dismissal coming from any kind of leave
Barcelona Council (2002)	o Member States should provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children below age of three.

---

[41] EC, 1992; EEC, 1992; EC,1999.

[42] Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025; EC, 1996; EC, 1997; EC, 1999; EU, 2015.

Fourth Action Program for Equal Opportunities for Women and men (2004-2008)	o Promote flexible leave provisions for reconciling personal and professional lives. o Promote flexible working arrangements for reconciling personal and professional lives.
2010/18/EU Parental Leave Directive	o Member and candidate states should provide working parents an individual non-transferable at least 18 weeks of leave in case of child birth and/or adoption until the eighth birthday of the child; o Job dismissal protection and the right to return the same job or to an equivalent position o The right to request for working hours and/or patterns change for a set period of time according to parents' needs (EU, 2010).
European Commission Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015)	o Make further progress in reconciliation of work and family life policy development particularly affordable and high-quality care
Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality (2016-2019)	o Modernise the current EU legal framework in terms of leave arrangements. o Modernise the current EU legal framework in terms of flexible working arrangements.
2019/1158/EU Work-Life Balance Directive	o Establishes a minimum of 4 months of parental leave. o At least 2 out of the 4 months are non-transferable from a parent to another. o At least the 2 non-transferable months have to be adequately compensated at a level to be decided in each EU country. o Parents have the right to request taking the leave in a flexible way (part-time and in a piecemeal way). o Fathers/ second parents have the right to take at least 10 working days of paternity leave around the time of birth of the child. o gives all working parents of children up to at least 8 years and all carers a right to request flexible working arrangements. o These comprise reduced working hours, flexible working hours and flexibility in place of work.
Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025	o Challenge the gender stereotypes; o Close gender gaps in the labour market; o Close the gender care gap; o Make EU-rules on work-life balance for women and men work in

	practice by ensuring that Member States transpose and implement the rules.
	o Promote equal uptake of family leaves and flexible working arrangements;
	o Improve access to high quality and affordable childcare and other care services by investing in care services.

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

Mehmet Efe BİRESSELİOĞLU[*]
Berfu SOLAK[**]
Zehra Funda SAVAŞ[***]
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.*

[*]   Corresponding Author: Full Professor of Energy Policy, Sustainable Energy Division, Izmir University of Economics, e-mail: efe.bireselioglu@ieu.edu.tr , ORCID: 0000-0002-5961-4088

[**]   PhD Candidate/Researcher, Sustainable Energy Division, Izmir University of Economics, e-mail: berfu.solak@ieu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-7270-2226

[***] Researcher, Sustainable Energy Division, Izmir University of Economics, e-mail: funda.savas@ieu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-2885-6922

Avrupa Yeşil Mutabakatının Etkilerinin Çerçevelendirilmesi: "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 döngüsel 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, Sınırda 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.[1] 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. [2] In 2021, global energy consumption reached 595,15 exajoules, and the European Union (EU) consumed 13.8% of the global primary energy.[3]

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

---

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

[2] 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.

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

human activities.[4] 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.[5] 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."[6]

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.[7] 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".[8] 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)[9] The climate targets of 2020 were further followed by ambitious 2030 and 2050 targets and policies.[10]

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.[11] The European Commission has set out the core principles of

---

4   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.

5   "Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022".

6   Ibid.

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

8   "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

9   "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

10 "Climate strategies & targets".

11 "A European Green Deal", *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: March 5, 2023, 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.[12] 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. [13]

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.[14] 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

---

[12] Ibid.

[13] "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/

[14] 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.
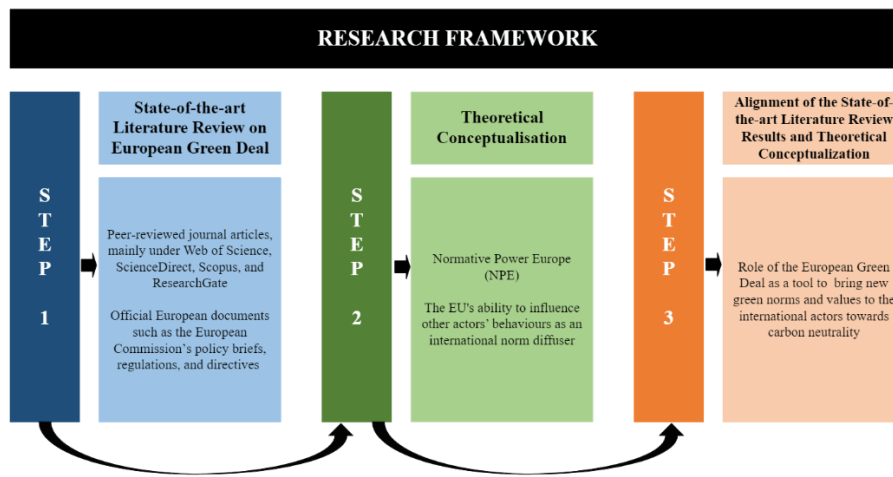

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

STEP 1	State-of-the-art Literature Review on European Green Deal	STEP 2	Theoretical Conceptualisation	STEP 3	Alignment of the State-of-the-art Literature Review Results and Theoretical Conceptualization
	Peer-reviewed journal articles, mainly under Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Scopus, and ResearchGate / Official European documents such as the European Commission's policy briefs, regulations, and directives		Normative Power Europe (NPE) / The EU's ability to influence other actors' behaviours as an international norm diffuser		Role of the European Green Deal as a tool to bring new green norms and values to the international actors towards carbon neutrality

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.[15] The Community's power has always been conceptualised as a "civilian power" based on "the civilian forms of influence and action".[16] The EU's civilian power's main elements have included non-military means such as "economic," "diplomatic" and "cultural policy" tools. [17] 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.[18]

The emergence of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) has brought a new dimension to the debate above.[19] Accordingly, the EU's

---

[15] 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.

[16] 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.

[17] Karen E.Smith, "Beyond the civilian power EU debate", *Politique européenne* 3 (2005): 63-82.

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

[19] 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. [20] However, the EU's military power has never been "complementary" to NATO to ensure the security of its members.[21] 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.[22] The EU's single voice in the economic sphere has also made it a primary actor in the world economy. [23]

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.[24] In this conceptualisation, the EU is acknowledged as a "normative power", exceeding the dichotomy between military and civilian power.[25] 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.[26]

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.

[20] "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

[21] 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/

[22] "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

[23] "EU Position in World Trade", *European Commission*, 2023, Access Date: July 14, 2021, https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/eu-position-world-trade_en

[24] Manners, "Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?", 236.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

According to Ian Manners, NPE is "the ability to define what passes for 'normal' in world politics".[27] In this conceptualisation, the EU can change others' norms and values in line with its system of norms. [28] In this sense, this term is related to Nye's "soft power",[29] Carr's "power of opinion",[30] and Galtung's "power of ideas".[31] 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".[32] Furthermore, the EU's treaty and practices accept four "minor norms", which are "social solidarity", "anti-discrimination", "sustainable development", and "good governance".[33] Accordingly, the EU represents itself internationally via these "core" and "minor" norms and "legitimate itself as being more than the sum of its parts".[34] 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".[35] 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);

---

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Joseph S. Nye, "Soft power", *Foreign policy*, 80 (1990): 153-171.

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

[31] Johan Galtung, *The European Community: A Superpower in the Making* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973).

[32] Manners, "Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?" 242.

[33] 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; Manners, "Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?", 242.

[34] Ibid, 244.

[35] 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). [36] As a significant peculiarity of these tools, the EU does not resort to any "physical force in the imposition of norms" to third parties.[37]

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.[38] In this understanding, the EU identity is constructed vis-à-vis "an image of others in the 'outside world'.[39] 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".[40] 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.[41] One of the most-known tools for Europeanization and the EU's norm diffusion capability is the "Copenhagen (accession) criteria", adopted in

---

[36] Ibid., 245.

[37] Ian Manners, "Normative power Europe reconsidered: beyond the crossroads." *Journal of European public policy*, 13(2) (2006): 84.

[38] Thomas Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering Normative Power Europe", *Millennium* 33 (3) (2005): 614.

[39] 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.

[40] 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.

[41] 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.[42] 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".[43]

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.[44] 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. [45] According to Gramscian understanding of politics, "the political […] is force and consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilta". [46] 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

---

[42] "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

[43] "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

[44] 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

[45] 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).

[46] Anne Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minesorra 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.[47] 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.

---

[47] 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.[48] As a result, primary energy consumption in Europe was 82,38 exajoules in 2021, corresponding to a 0.6% decrease between 2011 and 2021.[49] 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.[50] 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.[51]

---

[48] "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

[49] "Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022".

[50] Ibid.

[51] "Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022".
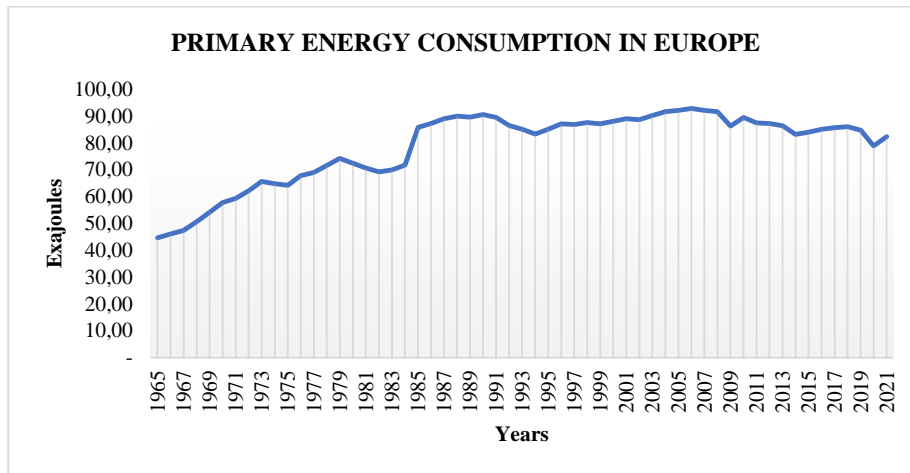
PRIMARY ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN EUROPE

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).[52] 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.[53] 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.[54] Nevertheless, renewable energy consumption increased by over 13 million tons of oil equivalent (Mtoe) in 2021, constituting the maximum annual growth since 2012.[55] One of the essential strategies of Europe to increase the share of renewable energy resources in consumption stems from Europe's efforts for

---

[52] Ibid.

[53] "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

[54] "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

[55] "Share of energy consumption from renewable sources in Europe".

climate change mitigation, carbon dioxide emissions, and ensuring energy security via decreasing energy dependence.[56]

PRIMARY ENERGY CONSUMPTION BY FUEL TYPE (EXAJOULES)

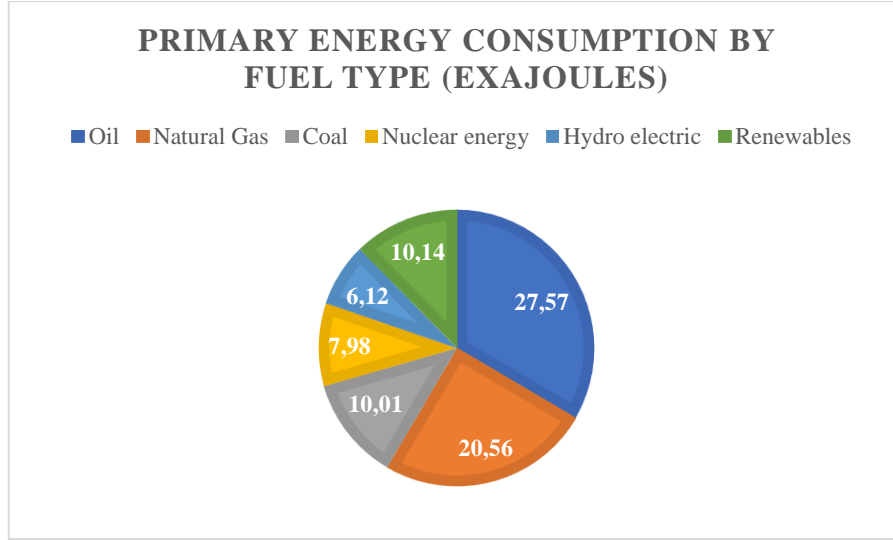■ Oil ■ Natural Gas ■ Coal ■ Nuclear energy ■ Hydro electric ■ Renewables

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.[57] Figure 4 shows the share of different fuel types in electricity generation in 2021.

---

[56] "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

[57] "Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022".

ELECTRICITY GENERATION BY FUEL TYPE (TERAWATT-HOURS)

■ Oil ■ Natural Gas ■ Coal ■ Nuclear energy ■ Hydro electric ■ Renewables ■ Other
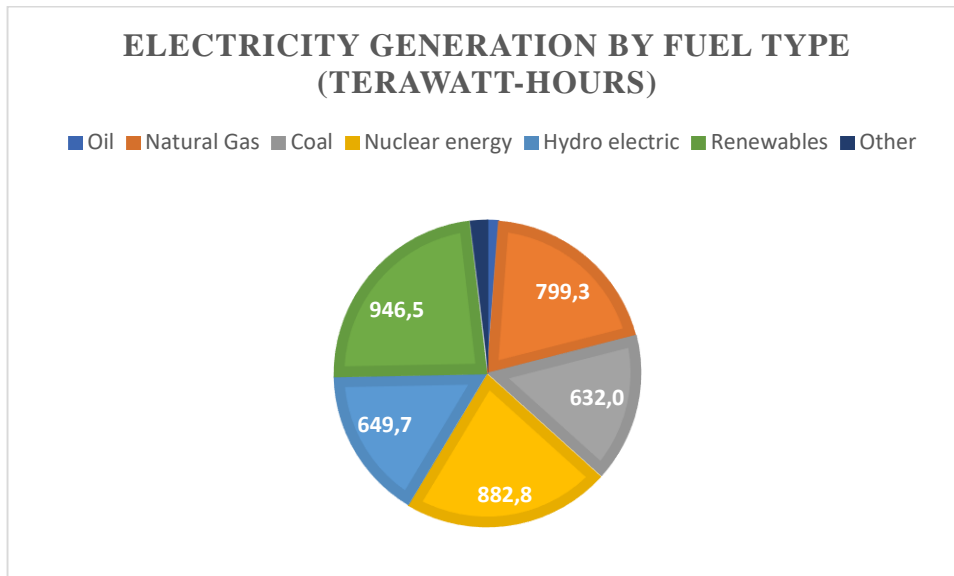

Figure 4. Electricity Generation by Fuel Type in Europe in 2021

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.[58] 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

---

[58] Ibid.

restrictions were removed.[59] However, the oil consumption growth rate was negative during 2011-2021, with a -1.1% growth rate.[60]

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.[61] Last but not least, considering nuclear energy, the consumption was 7,98 exajoules in 2021, implying a 5.8% annual growth rate.[62] According to data from the Nuclear Energy Institute, there are 443 reactors in the world with a total capacity of 393,226 megawatts.[63] Approximately 105 thousand megawatts of this capacity are in EU countries. Thus, EU countries account for 26.7% of the global nuclear energy capacity.[64] 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.[65]

---

[59] "Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022".

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] "Nuclear Energy", *NEI*, 2023, Access Date: March 12, 2023, https://www.nei.org/home

[64] "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

[65] "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
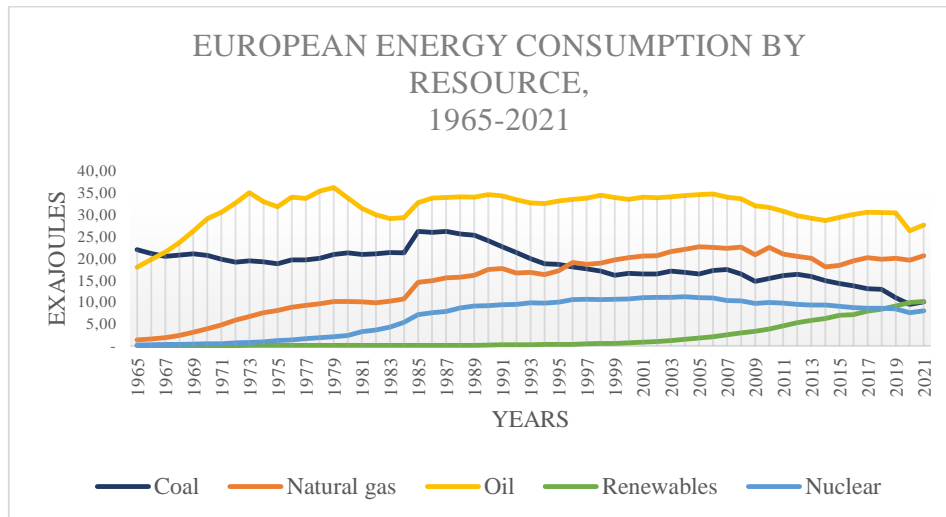
Figure 5. European Energy Consumption by Resource between 1965 and 2021

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.[66] European countries, which meet 90% of their natural gas and 97% of their oil needs through imports, aim to decrease energy dependence.[67] 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.[68] To this end, nuclear energy generation seems prominent in European countries. The statistics

---

[66] "Global Energy Crisis", *International Energy Agency*, 2023, Access Date: March 14, 2023, https://www.iea.org/topics/global-energy-crisis

[67] "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; "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

[68] "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.[69] 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.[70]
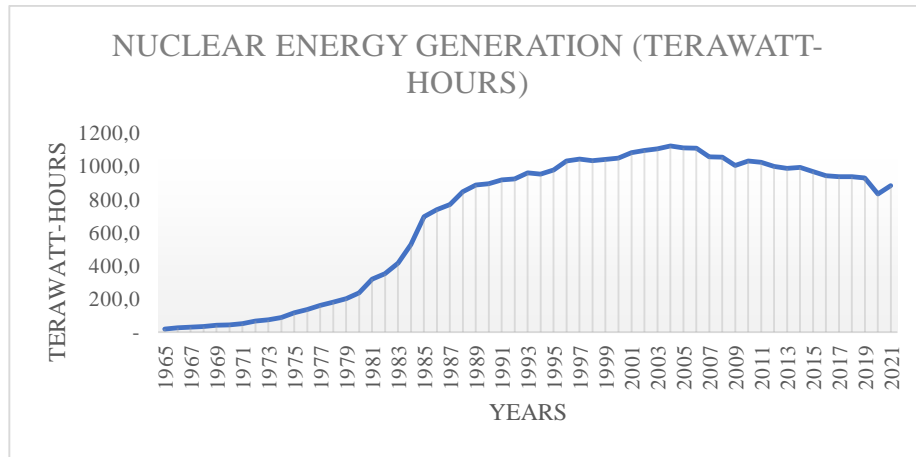

Figure 6. Nuclear Energy Generation in Europe between 1965 and 2021

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 MtCO2 to 3793,7 MtCO2 in 2021.[71] 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.[72]

---

[69] "Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022".

[70] 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

[71] "Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022".

[72] "Trends and projections in Europe 2020Tracking progress towards Europe's climate and energy targets", *European Environment Agency*, November 30 2020,
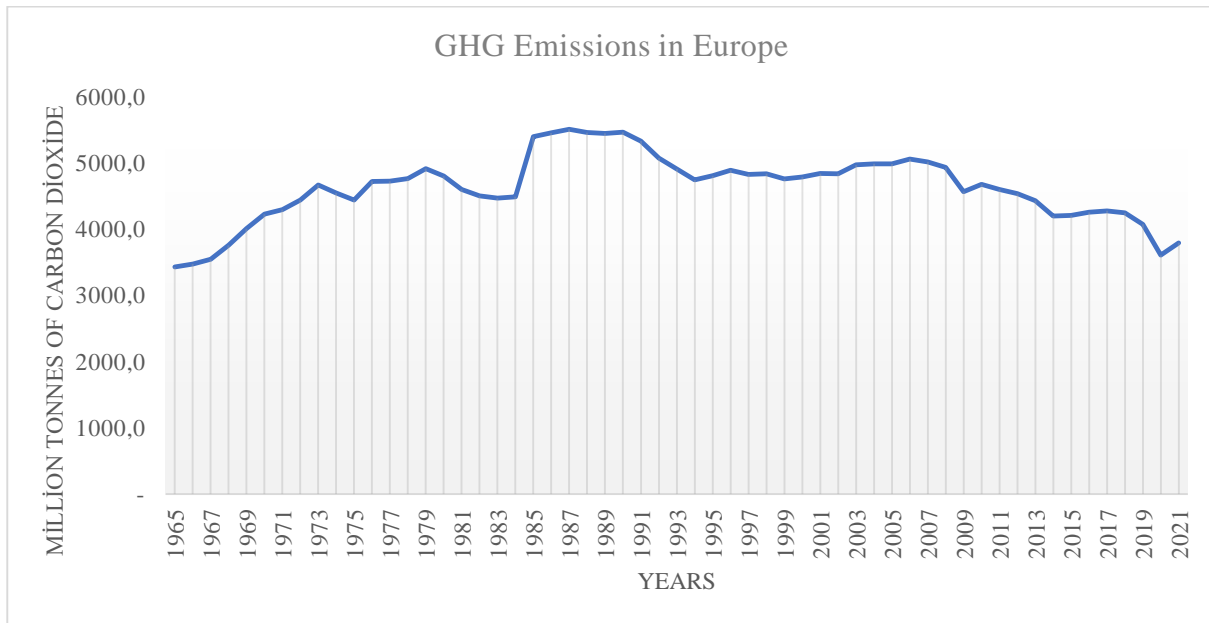
Figure 7. GHG Emissions in Europe between 1965 and 2021

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.[73] 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.[74] To increase the share of renewable energy resources by 20% and decrease carbon emissions by 20%, the EU has already achieved a

---

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

[73] " 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

[74] "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.[75] 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.[76]

"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".[77] 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. [78] 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.[79] 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

---

[75] "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

[76] "EU achieves 20-20-20 climate targets, 55 % emissions cut by 2030 reachable with more efforts and policies".

[77] "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

[78] Ibid.

[79] 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".[80] Furthermore, it seeks to transform the EU's economy into "a clean and circular economy" where economic growth is disassociated from using resources.[81]

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.[82] 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.[83] In addition, the Green Deal also aims to create a more sustainable economy and a "globally competitive and resilient industry".[84] Hence, the EU envisions its economic future as independent from energy resources, less vulnerable to external fluctuations, and environmentally and human friendly.[85]

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

---

[80] "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.

[81] Ibid.

[82] "A European Green Deal".

[83] "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

[84] Ibid.

[85] "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; 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.[86] Therefore, it involves several significant themes, including "energy efficiency", "renewable energy", "energy taxation", "EU emissions trading system", and "carbon border adjustment mechanism".[87] 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.[88] 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.[89] The EU ETS involves gases of carbon dioxide (CO_2), nitrous oxide (N_2O), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and their related sectors, including energy and aviation sectors.[90] The Commission also extended the scope of the ETS to "fuel used in road transport and buildings".[91] 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.[92]

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

---

[86] "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/

[87] Ibid.

[88] "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

[89] "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

[90] "EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)".

[91] "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 (9 March 2023).

[92] "EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)".

pricing.[93] It also aims to substitute the existing EU system to deal with the "carbon leakage" peril.[94] 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.[95]

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.[96] 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.[97] 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 administerial viability.[98]

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.[99] 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.[100] This also means that there will be additional import fees on manufactured goods imported

---

[93] "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

[94] Ibid.

[95] "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; Martijn Schippers and Walter De Wit. "Proposal for a carbon border adjustment mechanism.", *Global Trade and Customs Journal* 17, no. 1 (2022):10-18.

[96] "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

[97] , "Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: Questions and Answers".

[98] "EU carbon border adjustment mechanism"

[99] "Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: Questions and Answers".

[100] Ibid.

from countries since CBAM will guarantee that the carbon price of imported goods is the same as that of domestic goods.[101]

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.[102] 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.[103] With these initiatives, the Commission seeks to

---

[101] "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

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.

ensure that the Green Deal projects are well-financed and receive incentives and support by "leaving no one behind".[104]

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.[105] 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.[106] Similarly, the Horizon Europe program 2021-22 invested €5.8 billion in clean energy projects.[107]

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.[108] 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.[109] 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 CO2e.[110] Hence,

---

[104] Ibid; Simo Sarkki, Alice Ludvig, Maria Nijnik, and Serhiy Kopiy. "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.

[105] "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

[106] "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

[107] Ibid.

[108] "European Climate Law".

[109] Ibid.

[110] "European Climate Pact", *European Union*, 2023, Access Date: March 12,2023, 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.[111] Furthermore, in 2022, the EU's solar and wind energy generation capacity transcended 400 GW, representing a 25% rise compared to 2020.[112] 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.[113] However, due to a decrease in water levels, hydroelectricity production fell from 14% to 11% in the same year compared to the former years.[114] 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.[115]

---

[111] "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

[112] ,"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

[113] "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

[114] Ibid.

[115] "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.[116] 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.[117] 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.[118] 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.[119]

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".[120] As a result, at the height of the pandemic, the

---

Access Date: March 10, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_2013

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

[117] 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.

[118] "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

[119] "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".

[120] 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.[121] 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.[122]

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,[123] 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.[124] 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.

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

[121] Ibid.

[122] 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/

[123] "REPowerEU: affordable, secure and sustainable energy for Europe".

[124] "France reboots coal-fired power plant to boost winter electricity supplies", *RFİ,* 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,[125] 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.[126] 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.[127]

The criticisms toward the CBAM are essential for the EU's "norm diffusion" ability as it is closely related to third parties.[128] According to the critics, the CBAM mechanism does not protect neighbours with less effective and less resilient economies.[129] 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.[130] 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

---

[125] "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

[126] 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

[127] Ibid.

[128] 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.

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

[130] "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.[131] 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.[132] 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.[133] Accordingly, China, India and Brazil have criticised CBAM for adopting "green protectionism" and being discriminatory against their traded goods.[134] 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.[135] Nevertheless, the essential requirement for the

---

[131] 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

[132] "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

[133] "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; 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.

[134] 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

[135] 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.[136]

In addition, despite the EU's funding efforts to sustain the Green Deal, including the JTM[137], 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.[138] Nevertheless, the Commission committed to increasing the EU funding on the Green Deal and supporting member states in realising reforms and empowering their administerial capacity.[139] 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.

---

[136] Siddi, "Green Revolution? A Tentative Assessment of the European Green Deal", 10.

[137] 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

[138] "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".
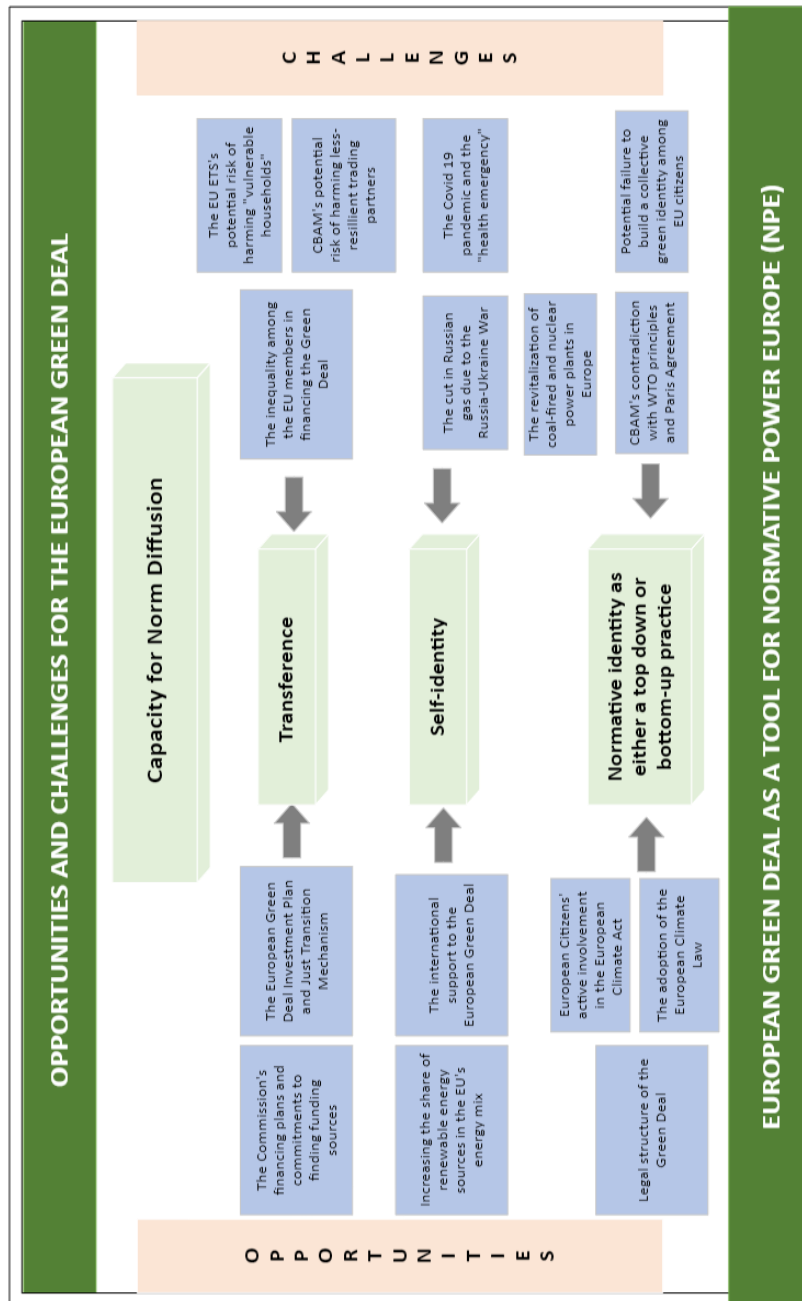
[139] Ibid.

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.[140] Furthermore, the Green Deal rhetoric impacts energy consumption patterns within Europe. Consequently, there has been a significant increase in the share of renewable

---

[140] "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.

References

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

Anadolu Ajansı. "Enerji krizi yaşayan Avrupa'da Fransa'nın nükleer çıkışı yeni kutuplaşmalar yaratabilir", 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

Anderson, Stephanie. "The EU: From Civilian Power to Military Power?" International Studies Review 6 (2004):505-507.

Apostu, Simona Andreea, 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.

Asif, Muhammed 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.

Bacchus, James. "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

Bäckstrand, Karin, 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.

Bates, Thomas R. "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony", Journal of the History of Ideas 36, no. 2 (1975):351-366.

BP. "Statistical Review of World Energy June 2022", (2022) [dataset].

Bull, Hedley. "Civilian Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" Journal of Common Market Studies 21 no 2 (1982): 149–64.

Carević, Melita. "The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Implementation of the European Green Deal", EU and comparative law issues and challenges series (ECLIC) 5 (2021):903-925.

Carr, Edward Hallett. The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations, 2nd ed.London: Macmillan, 1962.

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

Checkel, Jeffrey T. "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory", World Politics, 50 (1998): 324-248.

Čmakalová, Kateřina, and Jan Martin Rolenc. "Actorness and legitimacy of the European Union", Cooperation and conflict 47, no 2 (2012):260-270.

Dias, Anna, 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.

Diez, Thomas. "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering Normative Power Europe", Millennium 33, no 3 (2005): 613-636.

Duchêne, François. "The European Community and the uncertainties of interdependence." In A Nation Writ Large, ed. Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager,1-21. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1973.

E. Smith, Karen. "Beyond the civilian power EU debate", Politique européenne 3 (2005): 63-82.

Eckert, Sandra, "The European Green Deal and the EU's Regulatory Power in Times of Crisis", Journal of Common Market Studies, 59, (2021):81-91.

European Commission. "A European Deal: Highlights", 2023.Access Date: March 6,2023, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

European Commission. "2050 long-term strategy", 2023.Access Date: March 15, 2023, https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/2050-long-term-strategy_en

European Commission. "A European Green Deal", 2023. Access Date. March 5, 2023, https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-green-deal_en

European Commission. "Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism", 2023. Access Date: March 10, 2023, https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/green-taxation-0/carbon-border-adjustment-mechanism_en

European Commission. "Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: Questions and Answers", July 14 2021. Access Date: March 9, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_21_3661

European Commission. "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", 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

European Commission. "Emission cap and allowances", 2023. Access Date: March 8,2023, https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-emissions-trading-system-eu-ets/emissions-cap-and-allowances_en (8 March 2023).

European Commission. "EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)", https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-emissions-trading-system-eu-ets_en#a-cap-and-trade-system (8 March 2023).

European Commission. "EU funding possibilities in the energy sector", https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/funding-and-financing/eu-funding-possibilities-energy-sector_en (10 March 2023).

European Commission. "European Green Deal Call: Commission funds 72 projects with €1 billion to boost the EU's green recovery", 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

European Commission. "Financing the green transition: The European Green Deal Investment Plan and Just Transition Mechanism", January 14 2020.Access Date: March 10, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_17

European Commission. "Green Deal: New proposals to make sustainable products the norm and boost Europe's resource independence", March 30 2022. Access Date: March 6,2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_2013

European Commission. "In focus: Reducing the EU's dependence on imported fossil fuels", April 20, 2022. Access Date: March 14, 2023, https://commission.europa.eu/news/focus-reducing-eus-dependence-imported-fossil-fuels-2022-04-20_en

European Commission. "Increasing the ambition of EU emissions trading", 2023. Access Date: March 9,2023, https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal/increasing-ambition-eu-emissions-trading_en

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

European Commission. "REPowerEU: affordable, secure and sustainable energy for Europe", 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

European Commission. "The Green Deal Industrial Plan: putting Europe's net-zero industry in the lead", February 1, 2023. Access Date: March 15, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_510

European Commission. "EU Position in World Trade", 2023. Access Date: July 14, 2023, https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/eu-position-world-trade_en

European Commission. "Sustainable Development", 2023. Access Date: July 14, 2023, https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/development-and-sustainability/sustainable-development_en

European Council. "Fit for 55", 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/

European Council. "A Strategic Compass for a stronger EU security and defence in the next decade", 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/

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

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

European Environment Agency. "EU achieves 20-20-20 climate targets, 55 % emissions cut by 2030 reachable with more efforts and policies", 2023. Access Date: March 123, 2023, https://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/eu-achieves-20-20-20

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

European Environment Agency. "Trends and projections in Europe 2020Tracking progress towards Europe's climate and energy targets", November 30, 2020. Access Date: March 14, 2023, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/trends-and-projections-in-europe-2020

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

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

European Union External Action. "European Neighbourhood Policy", July 29 2021. Access Date: March 20, 2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-neighbourhood-policy_en

European Union. "European Climate Pact", 2023. Access Date: March 12, 2023, https://climate-pact.europa.eu/index_en

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

European Union. "Eurobarometer: Climate Change", 2021. Access Date: July, 14,2023, https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2273

European Union. "Facts and figures on the European Union economy", 2023. Access Date: July 13, 2023, https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/key-facts-and-figures/economy_en

Eurostat. "EU energy mix and import dependency", May 31 2023.Access Date: March 14,2023, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_energy_mix_and_import_dependency

Eurostat. "EU gas consumption decreased by 19%", February 21, 2023. Access Date: March 12, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20230221-1

Eurostat. "Renewable energy statistics, January 2023.Access Date: March 14, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Renewable_energy_statistics

Fleming, Ruven C.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.

Foucault, Michel. Discipline and punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Pantheon, 1977.

Frost, Rosie. "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

Fusiek, Dawid Aristotelis. "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

Galtung, John. The European Community: A Superpower in the Making. London: Allen & Unwin, 1973.

Golasa,Piotr, 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.

Gramsci, Antonio. The Gramsci reader: selected writings, 1916-1935, ed. David Forgacs. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung. "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):1-15.

Hoffmann, Nils, and Arne Niemann. "EU actorness and the European Neighbourhood Policy." In The Routledge Handbook on the European Neighbourhood Policy, editors Tobias Schumacher, Andreas Marchetti, Thomas Demmelhuber, 28-38. Oxon: Routledge, 2017.

Hoijtink, Marijn, 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.

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

International Energy Agency. "Global Energy Crisis", 2023. Access Date: March 14,2023, https://www.iea.org/topics/global-energy-crisis

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

International Energy Agency. "Renewable Energy Market Update - May 2022", May 2022. Access Date: March 12, 2023, https://www.iea.org/reports/renewable-energy-market-update-may-2022

Johnstone, Injy "The Global Green New Deal: The New Norm?" Environmental Sciences Proceedings, 15(1) (2022): 1-10.

Kalantzakos,Sophia, 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.

Leonelli, Giulia Claudia. "Export rebates and the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: WTO law and environmental objections", Journal of World Trade 56, no 6 (2022): 963-984.

Liboreiro, Jorge. "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

Lim, Byeongho, 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.

Manners, Ian. "Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?" Journal of common market studies 40, no 2(2002): 235-258.

Manners, Ian. "Normative power Europe reconsidered: beyond the crossroads", Journal of European public policy 13, no 2 (2006): 182-199.

Marcu, Ionuț-Mircea. "How can the European Union act as a normative power in the green transition?" Institute of European Democrats, (2021) 1-16.

NEI, "Nuclear Energy", 2023. Access Date: March 12, 2023, https://www.nei.org/home

Nye, Joseph S."Soft power", Foreign policy, 80 (1990): 153-171.

Olsen, Johan P. "The many faces of Europeanization." JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies 40, no 5 (2002): 921-952.

Ossewaarde, Marinus and Roshnee Ossewaarde-Lowtoo. "The EU's green deal: a third alternative to green growth and degrowth?" Sustainability 12, no. 23 (2020): 1-15.

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

Paleari, Susanna. "The Impact of the European Green Deal on EU Environmental Policy", The Journal of Environment & Development 31, no. 2 (2022): 196-220.

Pitsoe, Victor and Moeketsi Letseka. "Foucault's discourse and power: Implications for instructionist classroom management", Open Journal of philosophy 3, no 1 (2013): 23-28.

RFİ, "France reboots coal-fired power plant to boost winter electricity supplies", 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

Risse,Thomas, Maria Green Cowles and James Caporaso. "Europeanization and domestic change: Introduction" in Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change, editors Maria Green Cowles, James Caporaso, Thomas Risse. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.

Samper, Juan Antonio, 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.

Sapir, André, "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

Sarkki, Simo, Alice Ludvig, Maria Nijnik, and Serhiy Kopiy. "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.

Sassoon, Anne, S. Gramsci's Politics. Minneapolis: University of Minesorra Press, 1987.

Sato, Sakuya Yoshida. "EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: Will It Achieve Its Objective (s)?" Journal of World Trade 56, no 3 (2022):1-19.

Schippers Martjin and Walter De Wit. "Proposal for a carbon border adjustment mechanism," Global Trade and Customs Journal 17, no 1 (2022):10-18.

Siddi, Marco. "Green Revolution? A Tentative Assessment of the European Green Deal", International Organisations Research Journal 16, no 3 (2021): 85-107.

Simon, Frédéric. "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/

Sjursen,Helene. "What kind of power?" In Civilian or Military Power? European Foreign Policy in Perspective editor Helene Sjursen, 1-13. Oxon, Routledge, 2007.

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

Taebi, Behnam and Azar Safari. "On effectiveness and legitimacy of 'shaming' as a strategy for combatting climate change." Science and Engineering Ethics 23 (2017): 1289-1306.

The European Security and Defence Union. "EU Cohesion Policy: Leaving no one behind in the green transition", 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/

The European Union External Action. "Common Security and Defence Policy: The shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy", August 10 2021. Access Date: July 13, 2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/shaping-common-security-and-defence-policy_en

The Guardian. "Germany to delay phase-out of nuclear plants to shore up energy security", 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

The Local. "Italy may reopen coal plants amid concerns about energy supply, PM says", 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/

The United States Senate. "The Inflation Reduction Act", 2022. Access Date: March 10, 2023, https://www.democrats.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/inflation_reduction_act_one_page_summary.pdf

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

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

VOA News. "In Germany, the Stuttering Bid to Jumpstart Coal Plants", August 28, 2022. Access Date: March 10, 2023, https://www.voanews.com/a/6719878.html

Wendt, Alexander E. "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory", International Organization 41, no 3 (1987): 335-370.

Wolff, Guntram B. "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

Wolfgang Wagner. "The Democratic Control of Military Power Europe" In Civilian or Military Power? European Foreign Policy in Perspective, editor Helene Sjursen, 32-48. Oxon, Routledge, 2007.

World Nuclear Association. "Nuclear Power in France", February 2023. Access Date: March 13, 2023, https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-a-f/france.aspx

World Trade Organization. "DDG Paugam: WTO rules no barrier to ambitious environmental policies", September 16, 2021. Access Date: March 13, 2023, https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news21_e/ddgjp_16sep21_e.htm

Yang, Chuxiao, Yu Hao, and Muhammad Irfan. "Energy consumption structural adjustment and carbon neutrality in the post-COVID-19 era." Structural Change and Economic Dynamics 59 (2021): 442-453.

DIGITAL EUROPE PROGRAM: NURTURING TECHNOLOGICAL SOVEREIGNTY FOR A RESILIENT EUROPEAN DIGITAL ECOSPHERE

Salih BIÇAKCI[*]
Research Article

Abstract

The Digital Europe Program (DIGITAL) is a European Union program aimed at accelerating the continent's digital transformation, increasing global digital competitiveness, and establishing technological sovereignty. It focuses on vital digital technologies such as HPC, broadband Internet access, Artificial Intelligence (AI), cloud services, cyber security, the digital single market, and advanced digital competencies. DIGITAL is regarded as critical for Europe's strategic autonomy in the digital sphere, and it is more than a project; it represents a massive transition that initiates socioeconomic change. The program develops a European data economy and a digital single market, influencing the EU's socioeconomic dynamics. The achievement of technical sovereignty is dependent on exemplary implementation, finance, and management initiatives.

Keywords: *Cyber Security, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Single Market, Technological Sovereignty, Semiconductors*

Dijital Avrupa Programı: Esnek-Dayanıklı Avrupa Dijital Ekosferi İçin Teknolojik Egemenliğin Geliştirilmesi

Dijital Avrupa Programı (DIGITAL), kıtanın dijital dönüşümünü hızlandırmayı, küresel dijital rekabeti artırmayı ve teknolojik egemenliği kurmayı amaçlayan bir Avrupa Birliği programıdır. Yüksek Performanslı Bilgi İşleme (HPC), Geniş Bant İnternet erişimi, Yapay Zekâ (AI), Bulut hizmetleri, siber güvenlik, Dijital Tek Pazar ve gelişmiş dijital yetkinlikler gibi hayati dijital teknolojilere odaklanmaktadır. DIGITAL, Avrupa'nın dijital alanındaki stratejik

özerkliği için kritik olarak kabul edilmekte olup, sadece bir proje değil; aynı zamanda sosyoekonomik değişimi başlatan büyük bir geçişi temsil etmektedir. Program, Avrupa veri ekonomisi ve dijital tek pazarı geliştirmekte olup, AB'nin sosyoekonomik dinamiklerini etkilemektedir. Bu süreçte gözetilen teknolojik egemenliğin başarısı, iyi bir uygulamaya, finansa ve yönetim girişimlerine bağlıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Siber Güvenlik, Yapay Zeka, Dijital Tek Pazar, Teknolojik Egemenlik, Yarı iletkenler.*

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic underlined the essence of digital transformation to survive in extreme conditions. The pandemic highlighted the rising digitalization trend and added a remarkable load to digital services. Most countries have noticed that their infrastructure needs to be designed to meet the current demand. Even before the pandemic, the states appreciated the opportunities of globalism but felt threatened by increasing dependency in almost all fields. Friedman formulated this dualistic as "globalization is everything and its opposite[1]." Technology plays an essential role in promoting globalization on various levels. As Väyrynen highlighted,

> "Technology is a tool for collaboration and competition. The growth of 'techno-globalism' does not imply that collaboration between governments or corporations is without political repercussions, as demonstrated by the US' relations with Japan and China. For obvious reasons, technology tends to diffuse from the stronger to the weaker side, who benefits more from the relationship.[2]"

The utilization of technology and science to spread globalization also makes the techno-globalization concept emerge. The industrial revolutions and technological improvements expedited the process. With the end of the Cold War, the existing limitations regarding technology transfer have mostly disappeared. The foci mainly switched to inexpensive production and expanding market capacity. The fading political restraints on technology transfer also introduced Asian countries as promising candidates for lower

---

[1] Thomas L Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, (New York SE -: Anchor Books, 2000), 406.

[2] Raimo Väyrynen, "Global Interdependence or the European Fortress? Technology Policies in Perspective," *Research Policy* 27, no. 6 (September 1998): 627–37, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-7333(98)00059-6.

labor costs. The erroneous idea in the production sector is that know-how is required to create certain technologies. Between 1995 and 2014, the US, Japan, Germany, France, and the UK accounted for three-quarters of all patented innovations worldwide. From 1995 to 2014, other large countries, most notably China and South Korea, started to significantly contribute to the global pool of knowledge, joining the top five leaders in several industries[3]. These countries are playing a more prominent role than before. The newcomer Asian countries' inexpensive and diligent production capacity also created a sweet spot for the technology-leading countries to make investments and carry their production line there. Meanwhile, technology's dissemination capacity has prepared the path for specialized forms of techno-nationalism, interdependence, and deglobalization.

The increasing logistics costs, technological copyright issues, and supply chain dependency make innovative countries contemplate possible outcomes. The EU countries are not representing a homogenous trend and are also concerned about the rise of Asian countries. The increasing dependency on the new global and inexpensive producers is also building a deep interdependency with the innovation-leading countries.

The expansion of globalization and deglobalization is also a repetitive trend. Prosperity promotes globalization in several ways. Globalization can also have complicated and uneven effects on wealth. Technology can potentially improve economic possibilities and growth, but it can also aggravate income inequality, disrupt existing sectors, and have negative social and environmental consequences. The deglobalization is partially observed during crisis times in several contexts[4]. The COVID-19 pandemic emerged when some EU bodies started to discuss technological power and sovereignty concepts in context to the converging normative approach of the EU with emerging technologies. Even in a deglobalized society, technological innovation is a potent force. Digital technologies and worldwide connectivity continue to transcend physical borders, facilitating global cooperation, driving economic opportunities, and stimulating innovation. However, the precise impact of technical innovation in a

---

[3] Aqib Aslam et al., "Globalization Helps Spread Knowledge and Technology Across Borders," *IMF*, 2018, accessed August 21, 2023, https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2018/04/09/globalization-helps-spread-knowledge-and-technology-across-borders.

[4] Douglas A. Irwin, "The Pandemic Adds Momentum to the Deglobalization Trend | PIIE," April 23, 2020, https://www.piie.com/blogs/realtime-economics/pandemic-adds-momentum-deglobalization-trend.

deglobalized world will be determined by several factors, including national policy, international relations, and the ability of enterprises and institutions to adapt to new circumstances. The value of DIGITAL has to be understood within this framework.

The rising AI trends also present a new benchmark for states to adopt and build a new type of consciousness regarding their data regime. Digital transformation is the new normal for staying competitive and innovative in the global digital landscape. Amid this, the EU invested in cutting-edge technology to empower citizens, businesses, and public institutions to fully realize the digital age's potential.

> "We do have in Europe a long history of technological success and innovation. We have big businesses; we have a robust industry. And in Europe, we are caring very much for individual rights and our values. And the digital strategy we put forward today is connecting all these dots and putting it into a concept. We want the digital transformation to power our economy and we want to find European solutions in the digital age." [5]

Digital transformation goals of the EU are summarized with these words by President von der Leyen to encapsulate the essence of the Digital Europe Program. As technology continues to shape how we live and work, this aspiring initiative promises to drive digital innovation, foster collaboration, and ultimately affect the daily lives of millions of Europeans. It is also vital to emphasize that the dynamics defining technology and innovation policy can thus be viewed as complementing features of European (or national) internal policies and foreign policy considerations, such as trade and economic competitiveness[6].

The EU is trying to leave no stone unturned to obtain technological sovereignty. Primarily to be superior in the technology competition to sustain its political position. Secondly, to build some degree of control and independence for technologies in the EU with consideration to the crisis times. Thirdly, building a socio-technical innovative ecosystem in the EU to

---

[5] European Commission, "Press Remarks by President von Der Leyen on the Commission's New Strategy: Shaping Europe's Digital Future," February 19, 2020, accessed August 21, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_20_294.

[6] Josephine Anne Stein, "Science, Technology and European Foreign Policy: European Integration, Global Interaction," *Science and Public Policy* 29, no. 6 (2002): 463–77.

sustain its production. Finally, to homogenize the innovation idea among all EU members to maintain the digital single market. The EU initiated the Digital Europe Program (DIGITAL) to achieve these goals.

A decade ago, the European Commission discussed the issue in a communication titled "A Digital Agenda for Europe," pointing to fragmented digital markets, a lack of interoperability, rising cyber-crime and the risk of low trust in networks, insufficient research and innovation efforts, a lack of digital literacy and skills, and missed opportunities in addressing societal changes[7].

To overcome such problems, the EU initiated the DIGITAL as part of the EU's grand strategy to create a digital single market, which seeks to enhance Europe's competitiveness and foster innovation and growth[8]. The DIGITAL has several goals, including promoting digital infrastructure, developing digital skills and competencies, deploying digital technologies in key sectors such as healthcare, transport, and energy, and enhancing digital public services. Such loaded goals prove that the DIGITAL intends to do a paradigm shift, which also brings doubts and fears when the capacity of the EU is considered. Furthermore, the DIGITAL aims to promote ethical and trustworthy AI, improve cyber security, and foster digital inclusion, ensuring that all citizens have access to the benefits of digital transformation while strengthening Europe's digital sovereignty by supporting the development of European digital capabilities and technologies, reducing reliance on foreign providers, and ensuring that European values and standards are incorporated into developing and deploying digital technologies. The EU tries to minimize its interdependence on foreign providers regarding energy, digital, cyber security, semiconductors, and industrial policy related to the supply chain[9]. The recent supply chain attack (e.g., the SolarWinds incident[10]) in the cyber security sector also underlined the EU's policies and actions.

---

[7] European Commission, "A European Strategy for Data' (2020) COM/2020/66 Final", accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0066&from=EN.

[8] European Commission, "A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe," in *A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1–20.

[9] Sabrina Korreck, "Exploring Prospects for Digital Europe in the Age of the US-China Technology Race," *ORF Occasional Paper*, 159, (2021), accessed August 21, 2023, https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ORF_ Occasional Paper_303_DigitalEurope.pdf.

Technological sovereignty is the critical concept primarily depicting the EU's current stance on digital technology. "Technological sovereignty can be defined as the ability of a country (or a group of countries) to generate autonomously technological and scientific knowledge to use technological capabilities developed outside or through the activation of reliable partnerships"[11]; conceptualization is underlying the approach that the EU considers its international partners considerably less dependable for various reasons. It is also vital to underline possible friction between technological sovereignty and globalization in the age of neoliberalism.

After the pandemic, the EU allocated approximately €7.5 billion for the DIGITAL in 2021-2027, and it is part of the EU's broader multiannual financial framework. It seeks to create a more competitive and inclusive European digital economy and society by supporting various initiatives and investments.

In this essay, I will explore the DIGITAL program in depth, including its aims, focus, pillars, efforts, realization, and the institutions it establishes concurrently. Given the program's complexity, including the concurrent development of various entities and processes, capturing it within a single article is a daunting endeavor. Nonetheless, we hope to present an enlightened viewpoint. I will also address two critical issues: Has the EU met its DIGITAL program objectives, and what constraints have surfaced during implementation?

I. Conspectus of DIGITAL

The roots of the digital agenda of the EU go back to 2010[12]. Later, the European Commission launched the Digital Single Market Strategy in 2015, the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition in 2016, and the Digital Education Action Plan in 2018[13]. These steps are forming the background of such

---

[10] Sean Peisert et al., "Perspectives on the SolarWinds Incident," *IEEE Security & Privacy* 19, no. 2 (March 2021): 7–13, https://doi.org/10.1109/MSEC.2021.3051235.

[11] Francesco Crespi et al., "European Technological Sovereignty: An Emerging Framework for Policy Strategy," *Intereconomics* 56, no. 6 (2021): 348–54, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10272-021-1013-6.

[12] European Commission, "A Digital Agenda for Europe," *Communication*, vol. 5, 2010, accessed August 21, 2023, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0245:FIN:EN:PDF.

[13] Steph Hazlegreaves, "Building a Digital Future for All in Europe," *Open Access Government* (blog), September 11, 2018, accessed August 21, 2023, https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/digital-future/51932/ .

massive planning. The increasing data usage and GDPR accelerated the EU to understand the demands of the technology, data market, and data brokers. The program also demonstrates the shift in the EU's broader strategy to promote digital transformation, which has several effects on the European economy and society[14].

A. Objectives of the Digital Europe Program

The DIGITAL has several critical goals for realizing the program:

- Promoting the digital infrastructure is foundational to building other stages. The DIGITAL initiative seeks to strengthen Europe's digital infrastructure by fostering the development of high-speed broadband and 5G networks. The connectivity improvement also underpins advanced technologies such as AI, cloud computing, and cyber security.

- The program focuses on developing individuals' digital competencies, notably within the EU. The DIGITAL project aims to improve EU citizens' digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and workforce skills. Notably, there is a substantial skill shortage in cybersecurity and coding. According to LinkedIn, demand for cybersecurity knowledge has increased by an average of 22% in the last year across 12 European regions, with Poland (36%), Germany (32%), and Romania (31%) leading the way. To meet demand next year, at least 60,000 additional cyber experts are needed across all 12 European countries[15]. At the 2022 Munich Cyber Security Conference, European Commission Vice President Schinas stated:

> "As Vice-President responsible for coordinating the EU's work both in the areas of skills and security, I see the urgent need to boost the number of specialists in cyber security in Europe. For this reason, I call on all of you to join forces and make concrete pledges to train professionals on cybersecurity skills. Time is of the essence[16]."

---

[14] European Commission, "Decision (EU) 2015/2240 - Establishing the Digital Europe Programme and Repealing," *Official Journal of the European Union* L 166, no. March (2021): 1–34.

[15] Microsoft, "The Urgency of Tackling Europe' s Cybersecurity Skills Shortage," 2022, accessed August 21, 2023, https://blogs.microsoft.com/eupolicy/2022/03/23/the-urgency-of-tackling-europes-cybersecurity-skills-shortage/.

[16] Margaritis Schinas, "Keynote Speech by Vice-President Schinas at the Munich Cyber Security Conference (MCSC) 2022," accessed August 21, 2023 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_22_1163.

Coding skills, particularly in the cybersecurity industry, are critical in the EU. This phase of the DIGITAL program needs more time and effort, but it is critical to fulfilling other program goals. The digital competencies program aims to enable all EU citizens to participate in and realize the benefits of digital transformation.

- The DIGITAL aims to promote the deployment of digital technologies in key sectors, such as healthcare, transport, and energy, to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance the quality of services. The program also seeks to promote the development of digital public services that are accessible, user-friendly, and secure.

- The rise of AI implementation in several products and services also forms a concern point for the EU. In addition to the AI competition between several states, the EU AI patent filings are less than those of China and the US[17]. The DIGITAL is designed to support innovation and research in AI technologies to increase the presence of the EU in the AI competition. Another concern for the EU is tackling biases and ethics in AI technologies. The DIGITAL seeks to promote the development of AI technologies that are ethical, trustworthy, and respect fundamental rights and values. The program aims to ensure that the development and deployment of AI technologies are transparent, explainable, and subject to human oversight.

- Cyber security is essential to European security and the DIGITAL. The EU's Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade has underlined that EU citizens have the right to use or visit connected devices, electricity grids, banks, aircraft, public administrations, or hospitals with the assurance that they will be protected from cyber threats. The strategy also emphasized how the EU's economy, democracy, and society rely more on secure and dependable digital tools and connectivity than ever[18]. Within this context, the DIGITAL aims to strengthen the cybersecurity of EU institutions, businesses, and citizens by promoting cybersecurity research, developing cybersecurity capabilities, and supporting the development of cybersecurity standards and certification schemes.

---

[17] Daniel Zhang et al., "The AI Index Report 2022," (Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI), 2022), 230.

[18] European Commission, "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of The Regions Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 Resetting Education and Training for the Digital Age," September 30, 2020, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT /PDF/?uri =CELEX :52020DC0624.

- The DIGITAL program seeks to promote inclusive digital transformation, particularly among vulnerable communities. It supports projects that increase digital literacy, access to services, and skill development. This entails installing digital services and improving citizens' digital competencies to fully utilize services.

- The DIGITAL initiative seeks to strengthen Europe's digital sovereignty by fostering the development of European digital capabilities and technologies. From the standpoint of technological sovereignty, the EU wishes to reduce its reliance on foreign providers, critical suppliers for several European digital infrastructures. The chip and semiconductor industries are global market choke points and critical dependencies[19]. The more advanced chips are made in Taiwan and South Korea. The US' intellectual property in chip design automation, Japanese wafers, and Chinese chip assembly is also a source of dependence for various sectors of the EU industrial production. Europe has extensive research and manufacturing capabilities and some capacity for producing (less advanced) chips with larger transistors, frequently destined for the automotive industry and (chemical) inputs[20]. The semiconductor supply shortages that emerged during the pandemic are unlikely to disappear anytime soon because surging production requires massive amounts of capital and knowledge. Another challenge for the EU is maintaining the European values and standards incorporated into developing and deploying these digital technologies.

B. Emphasis of the Digital Europe Program

The primary goal of the DIGITAL is promoting the digital transformation of the EU economy and society. On the one hand, the DIGITAL program seeks to encourage the advancement of digital technologies and infrastructure within the EU to increase the EU economy's competitiveness. HPC (Supercomputing), AI, cyber security, and the development of digital skills are significant areas of attention. Through several projects, the DIGITAL strives to foster innovation, productivity, and growth in the EU's digital economy. On the other hand, the DIGITAL aims to ensure that the benefits of digital transformation are felt by all citizens, regardless of their socioeconomic background or geographic location. It seeks to promote the development of digital public services, such as e-

---

[19] For further details, see; Chris Miller, *Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology*, First Scribner hardcover edition (New York: Scribner, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2022).

[20] See, the Chips Act section.

government, e-health, and e-learning, to make these services more accessible and user-friendly. This move also supports the governance stance of the EU countries in the neoliberal age. Additionally, the use of these platforms could produce several data points that could be utilized for further automatization.

At the root of its spirit, the DIGITAL is more than a project; a monumental shift that will initiate a socioeconomic change by altering the *habitus* and interaction of European society. Since production technologies are rooted in social systems, introducing new technologies will first encounter resistance from the existing organizational structures, cultural attitudes, vested interests, and institutional settings (consistent with the pre-existing production technologies). When the resistance has ended, these same structures, interests, and institutions can underpin the spread and further development of these introduced new technologies.

The DIGITAL invests in HPC to assist researchers and businesses in more efficiently tackling complex scientific and engineering problems. It also supports the development and deployment of AI to assist businesses and government agencies in making more data-driven decisions, improve operations, and provide better services to customers and citizens. Parallel to this understanding, HPC has been identified as a strategic investment priority by the European Commission, underpinning its entire digital strategy, from big data analytics and AI to cloud technologies and cybersecurity. These infrastructural preparations strategically build necessary environments to boost innovation, productivity, and accelerated communication.

Furthermore, the DIGITAL emphasizes cybersecurity investments to protect these processes, recognizing that digital technologies are vulnerable to cyber-attacks. The program encourages adopting best practices and standards to improve cybersecurity across the EU and invests in cybersecurity research and innovation. The evolution of the EU's digital economy methodology may have specific consequences for European society's daily practices and interactions with states. The DIGITAL also ensures that all citizens, regardless of socioeconomic status or geographical location, reap the benefits of digital transformation. To that end, the program emphasizes the importance of digital inclusion, particularly for underserved populations such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and those living in rural areas. Improving digital competencies is also considered within this framework. But demographic statistics present a particular challenge that the EU administration should have to address. The population of those 65 and older in the EU will grow significantly, from 90.5 million at the beginning of 2019 to 129.8 million by 2050. The number of people in the EU aged 75-84 years is expected to increase by 56.1% during this period, while the number

of people aged 65-74 years is expected to increase by 16.6%. According to the most recent projections, the EU will have 13.5% fewer people under 55 by 2050[21]. With these aging population figures, the EU should develop other projects to support the human component within the DIGITAL.

II. DIGITAL Pillars and Initiatives

The DIGITAL has four pillars: Digital skills, digital infrastructure, digital public services, and digital single market. Each of these pillars is crucial to the DIGITAL's overall goal of promoting the digital transformation of the EU economy and society.

The *first pillar*, digital skills, ensures that all EU citizens have the necessary digital skills to participate fully in the digital economy. This includes promoting digital literacy and providing training and education programs to help individuals acquire digital skills. The need to address the digital skills gap by improving the quality and relevance of digital skills education and training programs across the EU is eminent. The human component is very critical in digitalization projects. In the global market, there is a remarkable talent gap in the digital market, from software development to cyber security experts. Therefore, the human component comes first in the achievement of such a project. However, since the local sources of the EU are not enough to fill the gap, a comprehensive talent visa program and a new migration process for the EU is needed. Germany's recent talent visa program is becoming a forerunner to this understanding.

The *second pillar*, digital infrastructure, is focused on improving the quality and accessibility of digital infrastructure across the EU including investment in high-speed broadband and 5G networks and development of a pan-European network of supercomputers. Improving the cybersecurity of EU institutions, businesses, and citizens by promoting the adoption of best practices and standards for cybersecurity is also part of the program.

The *third pillar*, digital public services, focuses on developing digital public services that are user-centric, secure, and accessible to all EU citizens. This includes promoting the development and deployment of AI technologies that are ethical and trustworthy, as well as the use of digital technologies in key sectors such as healthcare, transport, and energy.

---

[21] Eurostat, "Ageing Europe - Statistics on Population Developments," 2022, accessed August 21, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/.

The *fourth pillar* is the digital single market. Previous pillars are preparing the necessary infrastructure to operate the DIGITAL; the digital single market is building its content. It focuses on innovation and productivity, aiming to increase efficiency and form an innovative ecosystem in the EU. To sustain innovation, the digital single market is promoting digital entrepreneurship to boost the number of startup companies in the EU. The principal idea behind this step is to produce the necessary hardware and software to compete with leading market countries. On the other hand, this approach also intends to decrease dependency and build a robust structure that could be affected less by global uncertainties. It hopes to achieve this by creating a more competitive and innovative EU better prepared to face the challenges of the digital age.

III. Major Initiatives and Their Process

The program has a budget of €7.5 billion for 2021-2027, supporting various initiatives to accelerate Europe's digital transformation. The EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), which establishes the EU's long-term budget for the seven-year period from 2021 to 2027, funds the Digital Europe program including research and innovation, infrastructure, and social policies[22].

A. Digital Skills

The main programs under this pillar provide young people with digital skills training and work experience. The EU has allocated €700 million for the digital skills chapter and started three significant initiatives to achieve these goals.

1- **The Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition**[23]

This is an EU initiative that promotes digital skill development and employment throughout Europe bringing together diverse stakeholders,

---

[22] European Commission "Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council Establishing the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform ('STEP') and Amending Directive 2003/87/EC, Regulations (EU) 2021/1058, (EU) 2021/1056, (EU) 2021/1057, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) 2021/1060, (EU) 2021/523, (EU) 2021/695, (EU) 2021/697 and (EU) 2021/241," June 20, 2023, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52023PC0335 .

[23] European Commission, "Digital skills and jobs coalition", accessed August 21, 2023, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-skills-coalition

including businesses, industry associations, educational institutions, and government agencies, to work toward improving digital skills and closing the digital skills gap in Europe. It was established in 2016 as part of the New Skills Agenda for Europe[24] and it operates at the EU and national levels, with member organizations collaborating to identify and address their respective countries' and regions' digital skills needs.

Its ambitious targets for digital skills development in Europe, include:

-Training 1 million Europeans in coding and other digital skills by 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic hindered its realization. "The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2021 published by the Commission states that even before the COVID-19 pandemic Union businesses, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), struggled to find information and communications technology (ICT) professionals in sufficient numbers25."

-Facilitating recognizing and validating digital skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

-Supporting the development of digital skills for all citizens, including the elderly, the unemployed, and those in low-skilled jobs.

-Promoting the uptake of digital skills in all sectors and industries, including the public sector, healthcare, and education.

To realize these goals, the Coalition offers resources and support services, such as training materials, networking opportunities, and funding for digital skills projects and initiatives. The coalition aims to create new job opportunities across Europe to drive economic growth by bringing together key stakeholders from across Europe.

---

[24] European Commission, "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions A new Skills Agenda for Europe", October 6, 2016, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT /PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0381 .

[25] European Commission, "Decision (EU) 2022/2481 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 establishing the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030 (Text with EEA relevance)" , December 14, 2022, accessed August 21, 2023 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2022/2481/oj

2- EU Digital Competence Framework (DigComp)[26]

DigComp is a framework in Europe that promotes digital skills and competencies establishing a common reference framework for describing and assessing European digital skills and competencies. It was created in collaboration with experts from across Europe by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. DigComp and updated version DigComp 2.2 can continue to play a critical role toward achieving determined EU goals for digital upskilling of the entire population - 80% of the population to have basic digital skills by 2030, which is also supported by the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. The update considers developing technologies such as AI, the Internet of Things information literacy, datafication, and new phenomena such as new teleworking conditions, which have resulted in new and increasing digital competence needs for citizens[27]. The framework comprises five critical digital competencies: information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety, and problem-solving.

3- The Digital Education Action Plan[28]

The action plan contributes to the EU's goal of promoting economic growth and social inclusion by developing a digital economy and society since it is a comprehensive harmonization strategy designed to improve digital skills and competencies in education across Europe. The plan was launched in January 2018 to improve the quality and accessibility of digital education, promoting the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning and is constructed on three main priorities:

The *first priority* is creating a framework for digital education that supports the development of high-quality digital skills and competencies among learners and educators. This priority aims to create a framework for digital education that supports the development of high-quality digital

---

[26] European Commission "DigComp Framework", accessed August 21, 2023, https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp/digcomp-framework_en

[27] Riina Vuorikari, Stefano Kluzer, and Yves Punie, *DigComp 2.2 - The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens* (Publications Office of the European Union, 2022), accessed August 21, 2023, https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128415.

[28] European Commission, Digital Education Action Plan (2021 – 2027), accessed August 21, 2023, https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan

abilities and skills among learners and educators. It includes initiatives to promote the use of digital technologies in education, as well as to support the development of digital pedagogy and the use of open educational resources.

The *second priority* aims to ensure that all Europeans have the digital competencies and skills necessary to participate in the digital economy and society. It emphasizes the DIGITAL's human component including includes initiatives to promote digital literacy and skills among students and educators and to encourage the development of new digital skills to meet the digital economy's demands.

The *third priority* encourages the use of digital education technologies for innovation and creativity including initiatives to encourage the creation of new digital tools and resources for teaching and learning and to improve digital technologies for collaborative learning and co-creation[29].

B- Digital Infrastructure

The specific highlight of the DIGITAL is to improve European infrastructure by enlarging the coverage of broadband Internet access in cities and rural areas. The broadband concept includes several technological categories. Most of the EU's Internet infrastructure is formed by Digital Subscription Lines (DSL), which provide Internet connections over traditional telephone lines. The EU tries to develop better connection technologies with the support of DIGITAL. The Internet coverage with DSL technology was 89.9 % in 2020. Another technology is Fiber to the Premises (FTTP), which utilizes fiber optic cables for Internet access. That was 42.5% in 2020. Up to the final report on Broadband Internet access, at the end of June 2020, 56.1% of EU households had access to Fixed Wireless Access (Wi-Fi, WiMAX, 4G LTE-TDD, and 5G FWA)[30]

---

[29] European Commission "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 Resetting Education and Training for the Digital Age," September 30, 2020, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/ ?uri= CELEX:52020DC0624.

[30] European Commission, "Digital Single Market Broadband Coverage in Europe: Final Report", 2021, accessed August 21, 2023, https://doi.org/10.2759/27414.

-The European Gigabit Society[31] is based on the idea that digital connectivity is critical for economic growth, social cohesion, and innovation in the digital age and it aims to provide reliable universal access to gigabit connectivity capable of up to 1 gigabit per second. This necessitates the construction of new, high-speed networks, such as fiber-optic broadband and 5G wireless networks, capable of providing the bandwidth required to support advanced digital services and applications. To achieve this goal, the EU also has pledged to invest in deploying high-speed networks such as fiber-optic broadband, 5G wireless networks, and other advanced technologies. For 2025, the EU has set high connectivity goals (by 2025) such as all European households having access to 100 Mbps networks, with the option of upgrading to much faster speeds, gigabit broadband being available to all major socio-economic drivers, uninterrupted 5G coverage being accessible in all urban areas and key terrestrial transportation corridors connecting people and objects, mobile data access being available including places where people live, work, travel, and congregate[32].

The EU tries to eliminate several bureaucratic and administrative hurdles to realize these high-speed networks while coordinating between public and private entities, especially bringing broadband Internet connection to rural and remote areas.

-The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)[33] is a funding program designed to assist in developing trans-European infrastructure networks in the transportation, energy, and digital sectors. The initiative, which began in 2014, set aside €1.05 billion for trans-European networks in the telecommunications industry between 2014 and 2020. The recent budget for 2021-2027 is approximately €30 billion. The CEF seeks to promote sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe by financing cross-border infrastructure projects that improve connectivity, increase efficiency, and reduce carbon emissions. The initiative will also help the EU achieve its broader policy goals, such as the Digital Single Market, Energy Union, and

---

[31] European Commission, "Connectivity for a European Gigabit Society – Brochure", accessed August 21, 2023, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/connectivity-european-gigabit-society-brochure

[32] European Commission, "EU 2025 Connectivity Objectives", accessed August 21, 2023, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/connectivity-european-gigabit-society-brochure

[33] European Commission, "Connecting Europe Facility", accessed August 21, 2023, https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/connecting-europe-facility_en

Trans-European Transport Network. The Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) was under the authority of the CEF, which ceased its operations on 31 March 2021. To replace the similar functionality, The European Climate, Infrastructure, and Environment Executive Agency[34] was established on 1 April 2021 to inherit the INEA's functionality. The CEF has three main areas of interest: Transportation, Energy, and Telecom. Also, the CEF Telecom legacy portfolio and additional EU funding program were taken over by the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA)[35]. The CEF in Telecom is a key EU instrument to facilitate cross-border interaction between public administrations, businesses, and citizens by deploying digital service infrastructures (DSIs) and broadband networks. The CEF also supports several projects to create a European ecosystem of interoperable and interconnected digital services that sustain the Digital Single Market.

-European Alliance for Industrial Data, Edge, and Cloud[36] The Commission proposed a Regulation on harmonized regulations on fair access to and use of data (Data Act) on February 23, 2022 which is an essential component of the European data strategy. Its primary goal is to position Europe as a leader in the data economy by leveraging the potential of the ever-increasing volume of industrial data to benefit the European economy and society. The Data Act is positioned at the core of this alliance[37]. The Digitizing European Industry initiative of the European Commission, which aims to assist European industry in entirely using the advantages of digital technologies, included the Alliance in its debut in 2019. is a critical initiative for advancing the European digital economy. By encouraging collaboration between industry, academia, and policymakers, the Alliance targets to create a solid and innovative industrial ecosystem that can support the needs of European businesses by considering European citizens' benefits. The data

---

[34] Commission, "Connecting Europe Facility"

[35] European Commission, "European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA)", accessed August 21, 2023, https://hadea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/connecting-europe-facility_en

[36] European Commission, "European Alliance for Industrial Data, Edge and Cloud", accessed August 21, 2023 https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/cloud-alliance

[37] European Commission, "Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Harmonised Rules on Fair Access to and Use of Data (Data Act)" February 23, 2022, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022PC0068.

edge and cloud technologies are also assisting the green economy targets. The Alliance intends to accelerate the development and adoption of industrial data, edge, and cloud technologies in Europe by constructing common architectures and standards, investing in research and innovation, cultivating skills and talents, and forming partnerships among various stakeholders. In contrast, the alliance empowers private and public partnerships and prepares SMEs for industry 4.0 standards. It is also critical to note that the alliance is arranging the necessary background for the digital single market concept.

The functionality of the alliance focused on four key areas; to develop common architectures and standards for the industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), edge computing, and cloud computing to ensure interoperability and compatibility across various systems and technologies, to foster technological advancement in industrial data, edge, and cloud technologies to create a European-wide innovation environment, to develop training programs and educational initiatives to support the development of industrial data, edge, and cloud technologies and to foster collaboration and partnerships between industry, academia, and policymakers to drive innovation.

- The European High-Performance Computing Joint Undertaking (EuroHPC JU)[38] is responsible for selecting and deploying HPC systems, creating applications, and providing user training and support. It was established in 2018 as a joint venture between the European Union (EU), European countries, and private stakeholders to make Europe a world leader in HPC technologies and applications. The Commission framed the role of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking as to develop, deploy, extend, and maintain a world-class supercomputing and data infrastructure in the Union. The Commission also underlined the importance of a new mission and objectives for the EuroHPCJU to ensure its continuation concerning the analysis of the critical socioeconomic and technological drivers affecting the future evolution of HPC and data infrastructures, technologies, and applications in the Union and globally, as well as the lessons learned from the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking's current activities[39].

---

[38] EuroHPC, "The European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking (EuroHPC JU)", accessed August 21, 2023, https://eurohpc-ju.europa.eu/index_en

[39] Official Journal of the European Union, "Council Regulation (EU) on Establishing the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking and

The EuroHPC Joint Undertaking is a public-private collaboration that funds and resources the development of a pan-European HPC infrastructure, including the deployment of pre-exascale and petascale supercomputers. Now, the EuroHPCJU has acquired eight supercomputers spread across Europe[40]. The first of these systems, "Leonardo," was installed in Italy in 2020. The Joint Undertaking also funds research and innovation projects that use HPC technology to address scientific and societal concerns and training and education programs that help people learn how to use and manage HPC equipment. The EuroHPC Joint Undertaking also assists in developing HPC applications in various fields, including climate modeling, drug discovery, and engineering simulations.

-The European Processor Initiative (EPI)[41] is a project currently being carried out to design and implement a roadmap for a new family of low-power European processors for extreme-scale computing, high-performance big data, and various emerging applications. The effort was initiated in 2018 as part of the Horizon 2020 research and innovation program to design a new processor architecture to assist Europe in reclaiming its leadership in HPC. The EPI hopes to strengthen Europe's position in HPC and lessen its reliance on non-European technology suppliers. The goals of the EPI include creating a new processor design and the related software tools and programming models needed for the effective use and programming of the new processors in partnership with various European institutions, including research institutes, universities, and technology firms. Building a competitive and innovative ecosystem for HPC customized to the requirements of European applications and industries, is crucial for the growth of the European digital economy.

-The Chips Act Semiconductors are at the heart of any digital device and the digital transition of the Union, from smartphones and cars to vital applications and infrastructures in health, energy, communications, and automation, as well as most other industry areas. The COVID-19 pandemic also underlined semiconductor production and obtaining difficulty. The EU has seen unprecedented supply disruptions with major implications. The

Repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1488", accessed August 21, 2023, https://eurohpc-ju.europa.eu/system/ files/2022-03/uriserv_OJ.L_.2021.256.01. 0003.01.ENG_EN_TXT.pdf.

[40] EuroHPC

[41] "European Processor Initiative", accessed August 21, 2023, https://www.european-processor-initiative.eu

present interruptions have exposed long-standing vulnerabilities in this regard, particularly a substantial reliance on third-country manufacturing and chip design. In the mid-2000s, corporations began relocating their supply chains to East Asia in search of increasing investment prospects and reduced labor costs. Now, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and Japan are the leading countries in the production of these products. The EU also sees semiconductors as tremendous enablers of sustainability and the green transition. Additionally, semiconductor production is also perceived as the principally responsibility for the EU's solid industrial, competitive, and sustainable foundation and for supporting innovation across a broad range of chips. Semiconductor production is also emerging as a prerequisite for the success of the DIGITAL.

To create a joint European chip ecosystem, including production, the EU focused on the Chips Act, which "aims at reaching the strategic objective of increasing the resilience of Europe's semiconductor ecosystem and increasing its global market share"[42] and to facilitate the early adoption of new chips by European industry and increase its competitiveness within the framework of DIGITAL.Up to the Chips Act, the European Chips Strategy is basically organized around five major strategic goals:

-Europe should strengthen its research and technology leadership.

-Europe should build and reinforce its own capacity to innovate in the design, manufacturing, and packaging of advanced chips and turn them into commercial products.

-Europe should put in place an adequate framework to substantially increase its production capacity by 2030.

- Europe should address the acute skills shortage, attract new talent, and support the emergence of a skilled workforce[43].

---

[42] European Commission, "Proposal for a Council Regulation Amending Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 Establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe, as Regards the Chips Joint Undertaking," 2021/2085 § (2022), accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/ PDF/?uri =CELEX :52022PC0047.

[43] European Commission, "Establishing a Framework of Measures for Strengthening Europe's Semiconductor Ecosystem and Amending Regulation (EU) 2021/694 (Chips Act)" (2023), accessed September 19, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32023R1781.

However, such production ambition also requires high investment in research and development, a qualified human workforce, logistics, and sustainability. The EU reserved €45 billion for the Chips Act project[44]. While the EU member countries are in dire need of a skilled workforce, how will the EU realize such a goal and be able to compete with lower labor costs in emerging markets[45]. Germany is receiving the major share from the semiconductor support of the EU, which also forms another monopoly and creates another dependency within the union. It remains to be seen whether these investments will put an end to Europe's appetite for foreign chips, which was forming 20% of the global production. It is also critical to note that the success of the Chips Act also depends on its cooperation with the US Chips Act (2022)[46]. The experts in a report also highlighted that despite the EU Chips Act's best efforts, Europe could be a net importer of semiconductors by 2030[47].

-The European AI Alliance was established in 2018 to exchange ideas, promote best practices, and create a shared vision for the future of AI in Europe. The Alliance wants to gather diverse professionals from academia, industry, civil society, and other pertinent groups on legislative efforts relating to AI and share their knowledge and expertise on AI development. It aims to promote the development and uptake of trustworthy AI, defined as AI developed and used safely and transparently, and respects fundamental rights and values such as privacy, non-discrimination, and human autonomy. With the context of the digital Europe program, the Alliance also promotes education and training in AI and supports the development of a diverse and inclusive AI workforce. From the technological sovereignty perspective, the

---

[44] Foo Yun Chee, "EU Countries Back Billion-Euro Chip Plan Ahead of Talks with Lawmakers," *Reuters*, November 23, 2022, sec. Technology, https://www.reuters.com/technology/eu-countries-back-billion-euro-chip-plan-ahead-talks-with-lawmakers-2022-11-23/.

[45] Afiq Fitri, "The European Chips Act Has Already Failed," *Tech Monitor* (blog), November 28, 2022, https://techmonitor.ai/technology/silicon/the-european-chips-act-will-not-restore-the-continents-semiconductor-industry-to-its-former-glory.

[46] US Congress, "US Chips and Science Act," Pub. L. No. H. R. 4346 (2022), August 21, 2023, https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr4346/BILLS-117hr4346enr.pdf.

[47] "A New Dawn for European Chips," *Deloitte Insights*, accessed August 21, 2023, https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/insights/industry/technology/semiconductor-chip-shortage-supply-chain.html .

European AI Alliance aims to ensure that Europe remains at the forefront of AI innovation while protecting the rights and values of its citizens. This includes ensuring that AI is developed and deployed to benefit society. The European AI Alliance is welcoming any interested parties for participation. Members are encouraged to participate in Alliance events and support the organization's objectives by contributing their perspectives on AI-related issues. The Alliance also presents platforms for its members to interact with legislators and other key players in the European AI ecosystem.

C. Digital Public Services

The EU Commission has facilitated the DIGITAL with several services in the field of Digital Public Services. These services focus on increasing efficiency, speeding up public services, and improving the quality of management. It is also critical to note that the EU is using these services to regulate the data flow and benefit from the platforms to build a digital single market.

1. Single Digital Gateway and Your Europe Portal[48]

The single digital gateway offers online access to information, administrative processes, and help services that people and businesses of the EU may require when residing or conducting business in another EU Member State.

The Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship, and SMEs Commissioner Elbieta Biekowska summarized the essence of the service: "Today, persons and businesses desiring to relocate, work, or do business throughout Europe encounter a maze of perplexing regulations and interminable paperwork. That takes up a lot of time and money for our people. According to the promises made in the Digital Single Market Strategy, the single digital gateway would alter, simplify, improve, and speed up administrative procedures. Beginning in 2020, the Your Europe portal will direct EU people and enterprises to all the information they require regarding EU or national rules relating to employment, healthcare, education, and business setup[49]."

---

[48] "Your Europe", accessed August 21, 2023, https://europa.eu/youreurope/index_en.htm

[49] European Commission, "Commission Welcomes Adoption of the Regulation for a Single Digital Gateway," accessed August 21, 2023,

A single digital entry point supplies faster access to high-quality information, online administrative procedures, and assistance services in the future. The multilingual platform now supports 13 basic administrative processes, such as obtaining a birth certificate, registering a car, building a business, or filing for social security benefits. The gateway ensures that there will be a quick rise in the number of services for the most critical procedures. The Single Digital Gateway works with a "once-only" principle; relevant data gathered by national authorities should only be submitted once and then made available for reuse in the most critical cross-border operations activities. The Single Digital Gateway satisfies users' digital age needs. The calculation of the relevant bodies demonstrates that it has the potential to save businesses more than EUR 11 billion per year and EU residents up to 855,000 hours of work each year. The gateway will also ease the process for those relocating to or doing business in another EU country and the single digital gateway will evolve, making administrative operations easier, better, and faster[50]. The gateway also highlights and encourages Member States to develop and implement e-government programs to provide contemporary and efficient public services.

2. The European Interoperability Network

The European Interoperability Network was established to define interoperability norms and guidance among the member states to develop a European public services ecosystem[51]. Within the DIGITAL context, Member States focused on modernizing their public administrations by adopting digital public services to make the interactions more efficient, effective, timely, and of high quality, as well as to help remove barriers and minimize the cost and effort required. The major problem will emerge when each member state creates its digital public services platform. These isolated digital environments could prevent public administrations from connecting with one another and citizens and businesses from identifying and using available digital public services in countries other than their own. Kouroubali also focused on the effectiveness of such a network for the

---

https://www.pubaffairsbruxelles.eu/eu-institution-news/commission-welcomes-adoption-of-the-regulation-for-a-single-digital-gateway/.

[50] European Commission, "Daily News 03 / 10 / 2018," 2018, accessed August 21, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEX_18_6002 .

[51] European Commission, Directorate General for Informatics, *New European Interoperability Framework: Promoting Seamless Services and Data Flows for European Public Administrations.* (LU: Publications Office, 2017).

healthcare ecosystem just before the COVID-19 pandemic[52]. Therefore, the digitalization efforts of the public sector should be meticulously coordinated at the regional and national levels to minimize digital fragmentation of services and data and ensure the seamless operation of the EU's digital single market. The network published and disseminated these guiding principles:

-Subsidiarity and proportionality, which aims to give certain freedom to the members and prioritize the national specificities.

-Openness marks all public data should be freely available for use and reuse by others unless restrictions apply. The concept also promotes the use of open-source technologies and software.

-Transparency enables other government agencies, individuals, and businesses to view and comprehend administrative rules, processes, data, services, and decision-making. There is a particular emphasis on the interoperability of the data and services.

-Reusability mitigates redundancy of IT solutions. The repetitive creation of information and data is costly because information and data enable interoperability and increase quality by extending operational use while saving money and time.

-Technological neutrality and data portability focus on functionality and warning about technology dependency. The member states should prioritize functional needs and postpone technological decisions for as long as possible to reduce technological dependencies, avoid imposing specific technical implementations or products on their constituents, and be able to adapt to a rapidly changing technological environment to protect the reusability of data.

-User-centricity focuses on prioritizing the needs and feedback of the users.

-Inclusion and accessibility recommend an inclusive stance for the users. The concept also puts people with disabilities, the elderly, and other disadvantaged groups into the spotlight to make them access public services at comparable levels to other citizens.

---

[52] Angelina Kouroubali and Dimitrios G. Katehakis, "The New European Interoperability Framework as a Facilitator of Digital Transformation for Citizen Empowerment," *Journal of Biomedical Informatics* 94 (June 2019): 103166, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbi.2019.103166.

-Security and privacy consistent with cyber security guidelines and GDPR rules.

-Multilingualism observes expected end-user languages for seamless operation.

-Administrative simplification has two points: digital-by-default encourages accessibility of at least one digital channel and utilizing a specific European public service. The second point is digital-first, which prioritizes using public services through digital media.

-The presentation of information provides a baseline for public agencies to transform their records and electronic information into new media when old media becomes obsolete.

-Assessment of effectiveness and efficiency advice to consider investment, the total cost of ownership, level of flexibility and adaptability, administrative burden reduction, efficiency, risk reduction, transparency, simplification, enhanced working techniques, and user satisfaction for building a digital public service[53].

To empower interoperability, the EU has established a legal framework for electronic identification, authentication, and signature systems, known as the eIDAS Regulation[54], which is crucial for digital public services.

D. Digital Single Market (DSM)

The market is positioned in the background of all services and underlines the socioeconomic importance of other initiatives. The EU built up the DSM to ensure the free movement of digital goods, services, and data across national borders. The market was designed to sustain the EU's leadership in the digital economy and expand the capability of European businesses. The Commission defined the DSM as "one in which the free movement of goods, persons, services, and capital is ensured and where individuals and businesses, regardless of nationality or place of residence, can seamlessly access and exercise online activities under conditions of fair competition and a high level of consumer and personal data protection[55]."

---

[53] EIF, *European Interoperability Framework*, *White Pages*, 2017, 2.

[54] European Commission, "eIDAS Regulation", accessed August 21, 2023, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/eidas-regulation

[55] Commission, "A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe."

The DSM has several goals and interacts with other digital services to achieve such goals. It emphasizes several points, but mainly:

- Promotion of free cross-border data flows by removing barriers and restrictions that impede digital trade as much as possible. Under the GDPR jurisdiction, the data flow, even within the EU, requires attention to data privacy, cybersecurity, and intellectual property rights. Protecting intellectual property rights and blueprints is critical to sustaining the EU's advantage in the digital market.

-Harmonization of laws, regulations, and practices in digital trade since each member state has distinguishing practices at specific points for digital trade. It is critical to underline that several MNCs function in the EU, and their practices should also be harmonized with the laws and regulations. The principal approach is building European standards and technical specifications to promote interoperability, EU citizens' safety, and protection of the environment. Accessibility, chemicals, construction, conformity assessment, measuring technologies, and services[56] are listed in the harmonization criteria. The standardization strategy, published in 2022, emphasizes a resilient, green, and digital EU single market and the standards are considered as a driver of European competitiveness and resilience, supporting investments in green and digital transitions, and embedding democratic values in technology applications[57]. A lucid example of such friction between the European Commission is on Apple products. The Commission decided to standardize smartphone wired charging ports as the universal USB-C port by the fall of 2024. Apple uses its own designed lightning power connector in all its products. As the media channel clarified, other electronic devices, such as tablets, digital cameras, headphones, handheld video game consoles, and e-readers, will also be subject to the rule[58].

---

[56] European Commission, "Harmonised Standards", accessed August 21, 2023, https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/single-market/european-standards/harmonised-standards_en

[57] European Commission, "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: An EU Strategy on Standardisation, Setting Global Standards in Support of a Resilient, Green and Digital" 2022, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0031

[58] Jon Porter and James Vincent, "EU sets December 28th, 2024, deadline for all new phones to use USB-C for wired charging", *The Verge,* December 8, 2022,

- Investment in digital infrastructure to provide high-speed broadband networks to all citizens and building up innovation and startup ecosystems to increase employment and growth. This is essential not only sustaining entrepreneurship culture but also for poverty reduction. In the EU context, there are still two major valid questions: why do so few people in Europe start a business, although many individuals are interested in doing so? And why do European enterprises grow at a generally modest rate [59]. Entrepreneurship is nourished by research and innovation, which require a continuous and independent research environment to sustain it. In the EU, since the entrepreneurship emerges as an SME and their competitiveness is critical in the global market, the EU tries to protect their outputs with intellectual copyright regulations.

To sustain the necessary support to the innovation and startup ecosystem, the European Commission funds the European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs)as part of the DIGITAL program, which provides funding and support for digital transformation across the EU. The goal of EDIHs is to assist businesses, particularly SMEs, in becoming more competitive through digital innovation while offering advisory services, testing, and experimentation environments for technology, funding assistance, collaboration, networking, and skill development.

-Use of data and its protection. The EU builds adequate protection with the GDPR implementation. In DSM, the EU tries to reinforce regulations on topics such as online privacy, data protection, and consumer rights.

E. Digital Services and their Protection

Certain domains are not presented as a component of the DIGITAL, but they strengthen its outputs, such as cyber security and blockchain. Cyber security is essential for several digital services' sustainability and cyber security products and solutions present an economic opportunity for the DSM, which is an indispensable part of technological sovereignty. The digital competencies and infrastructures are also associated with cyber security to sustain their services. The EU tries to maintain a value-based cyber security strategy for a digital single market. To realize this goal, the

---

https://www.theverge.com/2022/12/8/23499754/usb-c-iphone-european-union-legislation-charger-lightning-enforcement-date.

[59] European Union, *Entrepreneurship Determinants: Culture and Capabilities.*, 2012, accessed August 21, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/5748437/KS-31-12-758-EN.PDF.

GDPR, the new version of the Network and Information Systems Security Directive (NIS), and the Digital Services and Digital Markets Acts are working together to support the security of the cyber domain. The achievement of the DIGITAL depends on the availability, confidentiality, and integrity of communications, networks, and data infrastructure. The cutting-edge cyber security technology and trained human component could help to realize this goal. The resilience of EU infrastructure is also related to the cyber security crisis management capacities. Recent incidents demonstrated that supply chain attacks could easily compromise the infrastructure and profoundly affect the socioeconomic order.

The cyber security section of the DIGITAL will be managed by the future European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology, and Research Competence Centre in Bucharest. The European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC) and the Network of National Coordination Centers (NCCs) reinforce the cyber security technology and the EU's capabilities, protect socioeconomic order from cyber-attacks, maintain research excellence, and boost the EU industry's competitiveness.

The DIGITAL has set the operational objective to have an effective cyber security stance within the EU:

- to obtain advanced cybersecurity equipment, solutions, and data infrastructures developed in collaboration with the Member States.

- to build cyber security knowledge, capacity, and skills; to collect best practices; widespread deployment of effective cutting-edge cybersecurity solutions,

-to put the light on public authorities and SMEs, capabilities within Member States and the private sector to support the NIS Directive,

-to develop resilience and risk awareness approaches, and at least to synchronize the member states in fundamental levels of cyber security.

-to improve synergies and coordination between the civilian and defense cyber security spheres by facilitating knowledge exchange.

Similarly, the European Blockchain Partnership[60] was launched in 2018 to promote blockchain technology throughout the EU. The partnership comprises 27 member countries, including Norway and Liechtenstein, and promotes interoperability and the widespread adoption of blockchain-based

---

[60] European Commission, "European Blockchain Partnership", accessed August 21, 2023, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/blockchain-partnership

services. It has successfully developed a European Blockchain Services Infrastructure (EBSI)[61] to provide a secure and trustworthy method of exchanging data and transactions. The partnership delivers a regulatory-compliant infrastructure consistent with EU rules, transparent governance structures, and models to help blockchain expand and flourish across Europe.

IV. The Impact of DIGITAL

The DIGITAL is an evolving process with several projects and many stakeholders, so it is premature to evaluate the impact. From the sense of temporality, the DIGITAL has more than four years to be completed. The program's impact also depends on the number and quality of proposals and support of the European people instead of allocating the funding. Several potential challenges and possible implementation problems will change the program's impact. The successful development and deployment of new digital technologies, the expansion of digital infrastructure, and the promotion of digital skills training may result in positive social and economic outcomes. The program, in principle, promotes a gigantic transformation in the EU economy and societal dynamics. However, the DIGITAL raises concerns about implementation, funding, and management.

A. Implementation

Since the program is formed by several initiatives and projects, a careful planning process, meticulous assessment, and agile management are required for a successful implementation. The successful implementation of DIGITAL-funded projects will be a crucial challenge. Complexity is the major problem of the process. Project management theories define complexity as a characteristic of tasks that involve multiple interconnected factors that are difficult to understand, predict, or control[62]. The complex and interdisciplinary nature of many digital technologies, such as AI and cyber security, may pose challenges in coordinating projects and ensuring successful outcomes. From the structural point of view, each member state has a particular stance about its level of digital infrastructure, which also defines the budget and time frame of the implementation. To initiate

---

[61] European Commission, "EBSI", accessed August 21, 2023 https://ec.europa.eu/digital-building-blocks/wikis/display/ebsi

[62] Michael T. Pich, Christoph H. Loch, and Arnoud De Meyer, "On Uncertainty, Ambiguity, and Complexity in Project Management," *Management Science*, August 1, 2002, https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.48.8.1008.163.

infrastructural investments in several countries with diverse expertise and geographical conditions is challenging for planning and implementation. The complexity also continues with the number of stakeholders involved in the DIGITAL. Many stakeholders are involved in the program, including government agencies, private sector organizations, research institutions, and civil society organizations. Each of them had specific organizational structures and communication cultures. Effective stakeholder communication, including the DIGITAL, is critical for a successful implementation. The first step is to align with all stakeholders' needs and priorities, and all stakeholders support the program. Throughout the program, effective stakeholder communication necessitates a two-way exchange of information, ideas, and feedback. It demands that the program leads should listen to various stakeholders' concerns and perspectives throughout the implementation phase.

Organizational and sectoral dissimilarities and cultural contrasts also form barriers throughout the implementation process. One could not be able to find specific sources to assess such conditions among the publication and the Commission reports. The final problem worth emphasizing would be the interdependency between the projects and the centrality of certain actors. The DIGITAL facilitates several human groups, infrastructure, organizational, and legislative processes. For example, broadband Internet infrastructure is necessary to construct the DSM and is crucial for HPC, AI, and cloud connectivity. Raising digital competencies and skills also demands a certain degree of connectivity to access online learning platforms. Therefore, handling complexity and interdependency requires more agile and flexible implementation strategies, which will test the EU's organizational capacity limits.

B. Funding

DIGITAL has made substantial investments in digital transformation. However, ensuring that funding is distributed equitably across sectors and countries and accessible to various organizations, including SMEs and non-profits, may pose challenges. While the DIGITAL has been given a substantial budget, it may not be enough to meet its lofty objectives. The level of investment required to develop digital technologies and infrastructure across Europe and whether the program's funding is commensurate with this need is a critical consideration. One of the most challenging aspects of the Digital Europe project is obtaining the necessary financing. The project aims to invest €9.2 billion in digital innovation,

infrastructure, and skills development, but this amount may not address all the EU's digital challenges.

Another problematic strategy would be examining the degree of funding coordination between the Digital Europe Program and other EU funding initiatives like Horizon Europe and the European Structural and Investment Funds. This would entail evaluating if the funding stream for the program is compatible with other funding programs and whether there are chances for cooperation and synergies with other funding streams. However, redundant, and repetitive investments in the different chapters would also shake the funding streams and goals of the program.

The balance of public and private sector investment is another point of contention in the DIGITAL. One should oversee whether the program's funding strategy is overly dependent on private sector investment, which could limit public sector influence and control over digital technologies and infrastructure development. Some member states could use this advantage to reinforce their position rather than supporting the SMEs or private actors. The DIGITAL also provides support to SMEs. This would entail determining whether the program's funding measures are aimed at removing financial barriers that SMEs face in the digital economy and allowing them to compete with larger firms. Returning the investment and building a platform to compete with more prominent companies are additional delicate issues that can be seen in the upcoming years. The increasing inflation in the EU, political uncertainties, and energy crises could also affect the funding or slow down the process, which might cause delays in the time frame.

C. Management

The primary discussion point in the management category is building a zero-sum game with stakeholders from diverse cultural backgrounds and different interests and specifications. Throughout the process, the DIGITAL needs a very qualified orchestration to manage the program and a sophisticated toolbox to deal with uncertainties that might appear in different stages. From this perspective, another research could answer whether this orchestration requires a vertical or horizontal hierarchy to touch its stakeholders.

The balance between encouraging innovation and ensuring that digital technologies are used for the good of society is a critical challenge in this category. The EU can contribute to ensuring that the advantages of digital technologies are realized while reducing the possible risks and negative impacts by encouraging clear and consistent laws and regulations. However,

ensuring that technologies developed with DIGITAL funding adhere to ethical and legal standards (such as do not harm citizens or the environment) may present challenges.

The EU member states have different digital strategies and priorities; some may not quickly align with the DIGITAL objectives which may hinder DIGITAL's goal of standardization. Complying with complicated standards can be difficult for businesses, especially smaller ones with fewer resources. This can push up business expenses and obstruct the creation and uptake of new digital technology. These standards could also affect the cooperation of EU corporations with their non-EU partners, which could require substantial changes in their business practices. Some contend that companies operating in the EU may be at a competitive disadvantage compared to businesses operating in other regions with less onerous laws. This might inhibit investment in digital innovation in the EU or cause a brain drain of companies and individuals from the EU to other areas. The Digital Europe project must navigate challenging regulatory landscapes, especially cyber security and data protection. Implementing some program components can be challenging because of potential conflicts between EU legislation and those of other jurisdictions. While the program supports innovation and business competitiveness, it is critical to emphasize that consumer trust is crucial for the digital sector's long-term growth.

Conclusion

The DIGITAL is an ongoing initiative with the possibility of future developments, alterations, and initiatives which will likely continue prioritizing emerging technologies, partnerships, digital skills, cyber security, green initiatives, and digital regulation to promote digital innovation, infrastructure, and skills development in the EU. It demonstrates the EU's unwavering commitment to defining its own path in an increasingly digitalized world. Recognizing and effectively minimizing its possible flaws are essential preconditions for maintaining its status as an expression of innovation, wealth, and inclusivity for every European citizen in an ever-changing digital context. The DIGITAL's goals are critical to Europe's future and achieving them will be a significant challenge for policymakers and stakeholders.

The implementation of DIGITAL is inextricably linked to the EU's reliance on foreign technologies and providers. The program's ambition to position Europe as a digital powerhouse requires it to negotiate delicate international ties and dynamic economic landscapes deftly in the face of severe global competition. Diplomatic savvy and adaptable policies will be

critical in sustaining Europe's competitiveness in the global digital sphere. The program performs a sophisticated dance of collaboration and rivalry, establishing alliances while protecting its strategic interests. To achieve technological sovereignty, Europe must reduce its dependence on foreign providers and invest in critical areas such as cyber security, cloud computing, AI, chips, and semiconductors.

The DIGITAL is also responsible for promoting the adoption of European standards and norms and supporting the development of European technologies and infrastructure. Ethical quandaries emerge as the curriculum grapples with challenges such as data ownership, algorithmic transparency, and protecting vulnerable populations in the digital age. Striking an appropriate balance is a continuing ethical dilemma that necessitates constant awareness and adaptation in the face of changing technological paradigms. The need to constantly improve legal frameworks, as exemplified by the GDPR, emphasizes the commitment to competently handling evolving ethical challenges. Aside from legislative compliance, the EU's moral compass directs its efforts to guarantee that digital advancements are founded on principles of fairness, transparency, and respect for individual rights. This ethical foundation serves as a beacon, guiding the program's way across the digital age's complicated moral terrain.

Furthermore, the initiative works in tandem to further the goals of the EU's ambitious Green Deal. As the EU seeks for a more sustainable future, the DIGITAL's initiatives are inextricably linked to environmental concerns. Utilizing digital technologies for sustainable practices, such as energy-efficient solutions and smart infrastructure, is critical to meeting the ecological aims of the Green Deal. The fusion of digital innovation and environmental sustainability constitutes a harmonious combination that strengthens the EU's commitment to responsible and ethical progress. Expectations for a rapid result would almost certainly fall short.

The DIGITAL covers a wide range of technology applications and ensuring that the program's objectives align with broader national and regional policy objectives will be critical. In most cases, the magnitude of the implementation increases the risk of fragmentation. This size of undertaking, in most cases, increases the risk of fragmentation. Fragmentation may occur if stakeholders pursue different priorities or the program's objectives are unclear or poorly communicated. To avoid fragmentation, policymakers should collaborate with stakeholders to ensure that the program's goals are aligned with broader policy objectives and that the program's implementation is coherent and integrated.

The program's skill gap and human component are also critical issues. The effectiveness of education and training efforts emerges as a critical tool for preparing the workforce with the essential skills required to thrive in the digital age. Europe must develop a highly skilled workforce capable of developing and implementing cutting-edge technologies to achieve technological sovereignty. However, there is a risk of a skilled worker shortage to meet the digital economy's demands. The Commission is developing several programs to address this challenge, but the population's interests and demographic conditions significantly impact the process. Rapidly changing working conditions and an effort-reward imbalance, particularly after the pandemic, are unappealing to the next generation.

Understanding the program's inherent potential weak points, including coordination issues, bureaucratic complexities, economic allocation, and technical adaptability, is critical for the program's success. To resolve these complications, persistent vigilance, administrative flexibility, resilient governance, and active participation of stakeholders at all levels are required. Navigating this complex landscape necessitates constant monitoring, adaptive strategies, and smart governance. Financial sustainability, situated against the backdrop of post-pandemic political uncertainty and economic weaknesses, emphasizes the program's multidimensional challenge. Overcoming these external limits needs strategic forethought and the ability to change quickly. The persistence of policy objectives will determine the program's success, the prudent measurement of progress, the creation of a dynamic innovation ecosystem, and active worldwide engagement.

Furthermore, resilience and adaptation to the ever-changing technology landscape, active citizen involvement, solid cyber security provisions, and the promotion of digital inclusion are critical components of the program's journey. Furthermore, the initiative has transformative power within technological marketplaces. Its initiatives can change digital marketplaces, encouraging innovation and the expansion of European technology firms. This effect, however, raises serious concerns about market competitiveness, regulatory monitoring, and the convergence of state-driven initiatives with free-market ideals. A significant problem is striking a harmonic balance between promoting local innovation and sustaining a competitive technological sector.

Despite these obstacles, the DIGITAL has the potential to advance Europe's technological sovereignty significantly. The DIGITAL will necessitate extensive coordination and collaboration among various stakeholders to achieve its goals. Policymakers should collaborate closely

with businesses, research institutions, and civil society to ensure that the program's objectives are aligned with broader policy objectives and that the program's implementation is coherent and integrated. The DIGITAL management's hierarchical design and agility are critical success factors for the program. The political uncertainties in Europe, post-pandemic economic fragility, and energy crises are changing most of the calculations. To fund the programs and dividing the steps into projects is naturally the most striving phase of the program, but these are not enough for the achievement. The coming years will show us if the DIGITAL is categorized as a failure or success story of the century.

Bibliography

Aslam, Aqib, Johannes Eugster, Giang Ho, Florence Jaumotte, Roberto Piazza. "Globalization Helps Spread Knowledge and Technology Across Borders," IMF, 2018, accessed August 21, 2023, https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2018/04/09/globalization-helps-spread-knowledge-and-technology-across-borders.

Chee, Foo Yun. "EU Countries Back Billion-Euro Chip Plan Ahead of Talks with Lawmakers," Reuters, November 23, 2022, https://www.reuters.com/technology/eu-countries-back-billion-euro-chip-plan-ahead-talks-with-lawmakers-2022-11-23/.

Crespi, Francesco, Serenella Caravella, Mirko Menghini and Chiara Salvatori. "European Technological Sovereignty: An Emerging Framework for Policy Strategy," Indtereconomics 56, no. 6 (2021): 348–54, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10272-021-1013-6.

Deloitte, "A New Dawn for European Chips," Deloitte Insights, accessed September 23, 2023, https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/insights/industry/technology/ semiconductor -chip-shortage-supply-chain.html.

EIF. European Interoperability Framework, White Pages, 2017.

EuroHPC, "The European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking (EuroHPC JU)", accessed August 21, 2023, https://eurohpc-ju.europa.eu/index_en.

European Commission. "A European Strategy for Data' (2020) COM/2020/66 Final," European Commission, 2020, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0066&from=EN.

European Commission. "A Digital Agenda for Europe," Communication, vol. 5, 2010, accessed August 21, 2023, http://eur-

lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ. do?uri=COM: 2010:0245: FIN: EN:PDF.

European Commission. "A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe," in A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1–20.

European Commission, "Decision (EU) 2015/2240 - Establishing the Digital Europe Programme and Repealing," Official Journal of the European Union L 166, no. March (2021): 1–34.

European Commission. "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions A new Skills Agenda for Europe", October 6, 2016, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT /PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0381 .

European Commission. "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of The Regions Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 Resetting Education and Training for the Digital Age," September 30, 2020, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT /PDF/?uri =CELEX :52020DC0624.

European Commission. "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: An EU Strategy on Standardisation, Setting Global Standards in Support of a Resilient, Green and Digital" 2022, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0031

European Commission. "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 Resetting Education and Training for the Digital Age," September 30, 2020, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0624.

European Commission. "Commission Welcomes Adoption of the Regulation for a Single Digital Gateway," 2023, accessed August 21, 2023, https://www.pubaffairsbruxelles.eu/eu-institution-news/commission-welcomes-adoption-of-the-regulation-for-a-single-digital-gateway/.

European Commission. "Connecting Europe Facility", accessed August 21, 2023, https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/connecting-europe-facility_en

European Commission. "Connectivity for a European Gigabit Society – Brochure", accessed August 21, 2023, https://digital-

strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/connectivity-european-gigabit-society-brochure

European Commission. "Decision (EU) 2022/2481 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 establishing the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030 (Text with EEA relevance)", December 14, 2022, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2022/2481/oj.

European Commission. "Digital skills and jobs coalition", accessed August 21, 2023, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-skills-coalition

European Commission "DigComp Framework", accessed August 21, 2023, https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp/digcomp-framework_en

European Commission. "Digital Education Action Plan (2021 – 2027)", accessed August 21, 2023, https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan

European Commission. "Digital Single Market Broadband Coverage in Europe: Final Report", 2021, accessed August 21, 2023, https://doi.org/10.2759/27414.

European Commission. "Press Remarks by President von Der Leyen on the Commission's New Strategy: Shaping Europe's Digital Future," February 19, 2020, accessed August 21, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_20_294

European Commission. "EU 2025 Connectivity Objectives", accessed August 21, 2023, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/connectivity-european-gigabit-society-brochure

European Commission. "European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA)", accessed August 21, 2023, https://hadea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/connecting-europe-facility_en

European Commission. "European Alliance for Industrial Data, Edge and Cloud", accessed August 21, 2023 https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/cloud-alliance

European Commission. "Establishing a Framework of Measures for Strengthening Europe's Semiconductor Ecosystem and Amending Regulation (EU) 2021/694 (Chips Act)" (2023), accessed September 19, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32023R1781.

European Commission. "European Blockchain Partnership", accessed August 21, 2023, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/blockchain-partnership

European Commission. "EBSI", accessed August 21, 2023 https://ec.europa.eu/digital-building-blocks/wikis/display/ebsi

European Commission. "eIDAS Regulation", accessed August 21, 2023, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/eidas-regulation

European Commission. "Daily News 03 / 10 / 2018," 2018, accessed August 21, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEX_18_6002

European Commission. Directorate General for Informatics., New European Interoperability Framework: Promoting Seamless Services and Data Flows for European Public Administrations LU: Publications Office, 2017

European Commission. "Harmonised Standards", accessed August 21, 2023, https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/single-market/european-standards/harmonised-standards_en

European Commission. "Proposal for a Council Regulation Amending Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 Establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe, as Regards the Chips Joint Undertaking," 2021/2085 § (2022), accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/ PDF/?uri =CELEX :52022PC0047.

European Commission. "Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council Establishing the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform ('STEP') and Amending Directive 2003/87/EC, Regulations (EU) 2021/1058, (EU) 2021/1056, (EU) 2021/1057, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) 2021/1060, (EU) 2021/523, (EU) 2021/695, (EU) 2021/697 and (EU) 2021/241," June 20, 2023, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52023PC0335.

European Commission. "Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Harmonised Rules on Fair Access to and Use of Data (Data Act)" February 23, 2022, accessed August 21, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022PC0068.

European Processor Initiative, "European Processor Initiative", accessed August 21, 2023, https://www.european-processor-initiative.eu.

European Union. Entrepreneurship Determinants: Culture and Capabilities, 2012, accessed August 21, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/5748437/KS-31-12-758-EN.PDF.

European Union, "Your Europe", accessed August 21, 2023, https://europa.eu/youreurope/index_en.htm.

Eurostat. "Ageing Europe - Statistics on Population Developments," 2022, accessed August 21, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/.

Fitri, Afiq. "The European Chips Act Has Already Failed," Tech Monitor (blog), November 28, 2022, https://techmonitor.ai/technology/silicon/the-european-chips-act-will-not-restore-the-continents-semiconductor-industry-to-its-former-glory.

Friedman, Thomas L. The Lexus and the Olive Tree, New York SE -: Anchor Books, 2000, 406.

Hazlegreaves, Steph. "Building a Digital Future for All in Europe," Open Access Government (blog), September 11, 2018, accessed August 21, 2023, https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/digital-future/51932/.

Irwin, Douglas A. "The Pandemic Adds Momentum to the Deglobalization Trend | PIIE," April 23, 2020, https://www.piie.com/blogs/realtime-economics/pandemic-adds-momentum-deglobalization-trend.

Korreck, Sabrina. "Exploring Prospects for Digital Europe in the Age of the US-China Technology Race," ORF Occasional Paper, 159, (2021), accessed August 21, 2023, https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ORF_Occasional Paper_303_DigitalEurope.pdf.

Kouroubali, Angelina and Dimitrios G. Katehakis. "The New European Interoperability Framework as a Facilitator of Digital Transformation for Citizen Empowerment," Journal of Biomedical Informatics 94 (June 2019): 103166, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbi.2019.103166.

Microsoft. "The Urgency of Tackling Europe' s Cybersecurity Skills Shortage," 2022, accessed August 21, 2023, https://blogs.microsoft.com/eupolicy/2022/03/23/the-urgency-of-tackling-europes-cybersecurity-skills-shortage/.

Miller, Chris. Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology, First Scribner hardcover edition, New York: Scribner, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2022.

Official Journal of the European Union. "Council Regulation (EU) on Establishing the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking and Repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1488", accessed August 21, 2023, https://eurohpc-ju.europa.eu/system/files/2022-03/uriserv_OJ.L_.2021.256.01.0003.01.ENG_EN_TXT.pdf.

Peisert, Sean, Bruce Schneier, Hamed Okhravi and Fabio Massacci. "Perspectives on the Solar Winds Incident," IEEE Security & Privacy 19, no. 2 (March 2021): 7–13, https://doi.org/10.1109/MSEC.2021.3051235.

Pich, Michael T., Christoph H. Loch, and Arnoud De Meyer. "On Uncertainty, Ambiguity, and Complexity in Project Management," Management Science, August 1, 2002, https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.48.8.1008.163.

Porter, Jon and James Vincent. "EU sets December 28th, 2024, deadline for all new phones to use USB-C for wired charging", The Verge, December 8, 2022, https://www.theverge.com/2022/12/8/23499754/usb-c-iphone-european-union-legislation-charger-lightning-enforcement-date.

Schinas, Margaritis. "Keynote Speech by Vice-President Schinas at the Munich Cyber Security Conference (MCSC) 2022," accessed August 21, 2023 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_22_1163.

Stein, Josephine Anne. "Science, Technology and European Foreign Policy: European Integration, Global Interaction," Science and Public Policy 29, no. 6 (2002): 463–77.

Väyrynen, Raimo. "Global Interdependence or the European Fortress? Technology Policies in Perspective," Research Policy 27, no. 6 (September 1998): 627–37, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-7333(98)00059-6.

US Congress. "US Chips and Science Act," Pub. L. No. H. R. 4346 (2022), https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr4346/BILLS-117hr4346enr.pdf.

Vuorikari, Riina, Stefano Kluzer, and Yves Punie. DigComp 2.2 - The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (Publications Office of the European Union, 2022), accessed August 21, 2023, https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128415.

Zhang, Daniel, Nestor Maslej, Erik Brynjolfsson, John Etchemendy, Terah Lyons, James Manyika, Helen Ngo, Juan Carlos Niebles, Michael Sellitto, Ellie Sakhaee, Yoav Shoham, Jack Clark, and Raymond Perrault. "The AI Index Report 2022," Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI), 2022

EU'S ACTORNESS IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS: UNEASY ALLIANCE OF NORMATIVE POWER WITH CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE-BUILDING

Ayça ERGUN [*]
Anar VALIYEV[**]
Research Article

Abstract

The success of the EU in the South Caucasus region is limited due to the lack of insufficient commitment, inefficient tools, lack of comprehensive policy design taking into account the needs and priorities of the regional actors. The EU seems to restore its image and increase its visibility in the region after the II. Karabakh War in 2020. Post-war geopolitical context necessitates a durable security-building as a result of a peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The EU's efforts show that it is in the process of re-defining a pro-active role in shaping the meditation and peace-making processes. The outcome will not only determine the nature of the EU's involvement into the region but also the efficiency of its normative power in the future.

Keywords: The EU, South Caucasus, Conflict Resolution, Peace-building, Good Governance.

Güney Kafkasya'da Bir Aktör Olarak Avrupa Birliği: Normatif Güç ile Çatışma Çözümü ve Barış İnşasının Zorlu Birlikteliği
Öz

Avrupa Birliği'nin Güney Kafkasya'daki başarısı yetersiz ilgisi, etkisiz araçları ve bütüncül bir siyasa yapımının olmaması sebebiyle sınırlı kalmaktadır. Bölge ülkelerinin ihtiyaç ve önceliklerinin dikkate alınmaması ile siyasal seçkinlerin farklı beklentileri de bu başarısızlığı etkilemektedir. AB, Azerbaycan ve Ermenistan

---

[*] Professor, Middle East Technical University, Department of Sociology, E-mail: ayer@metu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0001-8186-7850

[**] Associate Professor, ADA University, Jean Monnet Chair, E-mail: avaliyev@ada.edu.az, ORCID: 0000-0003-0625-5568

arasındaki 2. Karabağ Savaşı sonrasında bölgedeki imajını iyileştirme ve görünürlüğünü arttırma çabası içindedir. Savaş sonrası süreç, Azerbaycan ve Ermenistan arasında barış antlaşmasının imzalanması ile bölgede sürdürülebilir bir barış ortamı ve güvenliğin sağlanmasını gerektirmektedir. Bu süreçte AB'nin girişimleri hem de arabulucu ve barış kurucu rolünü yeniden tanımlama hem de bölgedeki rolünü yeniden tanımlama sürecinde olduğunu gösterir niteliktedir. Bu girişimlerin sonucu sadece AB'nin bölgedeki politikalarının niteliği ve içeriğini değil aynı zamanda normatif gücünün de etkinliğini belirleyecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Avrupa Birliği, Güney Kafkasya, Çatışmaların Çözümü, Barış İnşası, İyi Yönetişim.*

Introduction

The EU is not fully successful in designing its policy towards the South Caucasus which resulted in its relative ineffectiveness, invisibility and lack of credibility. This overshadowed its normative power which could have strong potentials to have a transformative effect on both political and civil society in the region after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It envisaged partnership and cooperation agreements which included the South Caucasian countries to the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) first and then to the Eastern Partnership. While doing so, the region is treated as a holistic and homogenized entity instead of initiating tailor-made policies towards the individual countries, i.e. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The outcome and the implications of its policies are also determined by the perceptions of political leadership at the local level. In cases where, the EU is not particularly welcomed or Europeanization with reference to its normative principles are not necessarily in the agenda of the domestic actors, transformative impact of the EU remains extremely limited. Consent is the precondition for extending web of the relations that individual countries have with the EU; and commitment is essential for the implementation of the EU-designed policies. In a geographical setting like the South Caucasus security and stability are the main priorities of the foreign and domestic politics whereas the political reforms for the consolidation of democracy in the post-Soviet transformation are not necessarily considered as emergent needs.

As of 2023, the EU seems to be eager to restore its image and role in the South Caucasus particularly with reference to conflict resolution and peace-making in the region. The aim of this article is to discuss the potential role of

the EU in peace and security-building in the region with reference to the Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia by questioning its actorness not only in terms of mediating between the two parties but also by exploring its ability to assert its normative power for democratic governance. It argues that after the 2nd Karabakh War in 2020, the EU is in the process of converting an already regionalized peace-building process to an internationalized one for future security building in the region. EU re-defines and restores its actorness as a mediator between Azerbaijan and Armenia challenging if not confronting with Russia and Turkey whose engagement in regional matters are much more pro-active during and after the 2nd Karabakh War. Moreover, both countries are very much enjoying regionalization of the conflict sealed by their "competitive cooperation" [1]. In this re-definition and restoration, the EU seems not having a direct consultation with these two regional actors; reluctant to have their inclusion yet keen on not very much disturbing Russia who is occupied with its war with Ukraine. The EU, which remained rather timid but "concerned" with regards to the Karabakh conflict since its beginning reacts quite anxiously towards the Russo-Ukrainian war, shows a real engagement and strong commitment to end the Russian aggression. This resulted in the re-definition of its role in the South Caucasus through increased visits and activities of the Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia; providing roof for holding up meetings with leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia. One should also add that the success of the EU in its attempt of restoring its actorness is largely dependent to the willingness of and consent shown by the ruling elite of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Their commitment will not only provide a ground for peace-making and sustain stability in the region but also may have an impact on the positionality of Russia and Turkey whose moves and attitudes have a significant impact in regional matters.

The first part of the article discusses the concept of Normative Power Europe. The second part of the article provides an overview of the EU's policies in the South Caucasus while analyzing the content and implications of the Eastern Partnership, European Neighborhood Policy and Actions Plans. In the third part, the EU's policies after the 2nd Karabakh War will be analyzed in terms of its outcomes. The final part explores the potential impact of these policies in building up peace and sustaining security and stability in the region and concludes with policy recommendations.

---

[1]   Mustafa Aydın, "The Long View. On Turkish-Russia Rivalry and Cooperation," *GMF,* June 08, 2020, Last Updated Date: October, 10, 2023, https://www.gmfus.org/news/long-view-turkish-russian-rivalry-and-cooperation.

I. Normative Power Europe

The concept of "normative power Europe" introduced by Ian Manners[2] offers an answer to the fundamental questions of what (distinctive) role is to be defined for the European Union (EU) in the world[3] and whether the EU has strong potentials to become an effective actor in international politics.[4] Accordingly, it attributes a norm diffusor/changer role to the EU, and this role characterizes its identity, capabilities, agenda, and actorness in the international society. Most scholars tend to find the origins of the conceptualization of the EU as normative power or of the term "normative power Europe" in François Duchêne's description of the European Community (EC) as a "civilian power".[5] Duchêne suggests that the EC has differed from the two superpowers of the Cold War; it has projected a civilian form of power, which has been replacing traditional military power to exert influence in international politics. Several others later rest on Duchêne's description, found it promising yet "unsystematic" and "vague",[6] to conceptualize the role of Europe in world politics. Instead, Manners identifies three primary elements in the operationalization of the term "civilian power" in the works of Kenneth J. Twitchett[7] and Hanns W. Maull[8] which are "the centrality of economic power to achieve national goals; the primacy of diplomatic co-operation to solve international problems; and the

---

[2] Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no.2 (2002): 235-258.

[3] Jan Orbie, "Civilian Power Europe: Review of the Original and Current Debates," *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association* 41, no. 1 (2006): 123.

[4] Thomas Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 3 (2005): 615

[5] François Duchêne, "Europe's Role in World Peace," in *Europe Tomorrow: Sixteen Europeans Look Ahead*, ed. Richard Mayne (London: Fontana), 32-47; François Duchêne, "The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence," *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign Policy Problems Before the European Community*, eds. Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager (London: Macmillan), 1-21.

[6] Orbie, "Civilian Power Europe," 123-128.

[7] Kenneth J. Twitchett, *Europe and the World: The External Relations of the Common Market* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976).

[8] Hanns W. Maull, "Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers," *Foreign Affairs* 69, no. 5 (1990): 91-106.

willingness to achieve international progress".[9] His concept of "normative power Europe" revolves centrally around the normative or ideational capabilities of the EU. He states that the EU is constructed on a normative basis, characterized by the five core norms of peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and by the norms of social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good government. All can be considered as the basis of the good governance. He argues that "this predisposes it to act in a normative way in world politics", and the EU behaves and should behave as a norm diffusor/changer in the international system/society through contagion, informational diffusion, procedural diffusion, transference, overt diffusion, and cultural filter.[10] Furthermore, Manners later examines the relationship between the EU's strategy of militarization and its normative power. He argues that while its militarization has undermined the normative claims and power of the EU, the former does not necessarily lead to the weakening of the latter. In his account, if the EU acts like a great power, such as the US and China, and prioritizes "military intervention over non-military conciliation", its militarization decreases the receptiveness of its addressees to its norm diffusion. He concludes that the sustainability of its normative power under and through militarization can only be achieved "under a UN mandate, in a critically reflexive context, on a clear, normative basis".[11]

Several others follow Manners' work in operationalizing the concept of "normative power Europe". Simon Lightfoot and Jon Burchell, for instance, employ sustainable development, one of what Manners calls four minor norms of the EU, in explaining the EU's foreign policy. Examining how the EU acted at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the authors show that the EU effectively championed its norm of sustainable development even in the case of other states' harsh opposition while it did not integrate this norm and policy into a broader sustainability perspective.[12] Similarly, Storey examines the presence of a normative agenda in the EU's economic partnership agreements with a set of African countries,

---

[9]   Manners, "Normative Power Europe," 236-237.

[10] Ibid., 238.

[11] Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe Reconsidered: Beyond the Crossroads," *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (2006): 195.

[12] Simon Lightfoot and Jon Burchell, "The European Union and the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Normative Power Europe in Action?," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 43, no. 1 (2005): 75-95.

and conclude that "normative power Europe" is in action in the negotiations of economic partnership, particularly in relation to the minor norm of good governance. He also highlights the simultaneous prioritization of neo-liberal, commercial goals of the EU, which may not "correspond to the developmental needs of African economies".[13] In a similar vein, examining the processes of the institutionalization of the International Criminal Court and of the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, Sibylle Scheipers and Daniela Sicurell argue that "the EU is able to fulfil its role as a normative power in a successful and credible way even if it falls short of possessing a reflexive dimension".[14] In so doing, they also show that the US as the "other" substantially defines the EU's projection of its identity as a normative power.

On the other hand, several scholars criticize the concept and policy of "normative power Europe". In the first place, a group of scholars question the empirical existence and consistency of the EU's normative power. Michelle Pace pays attention to the constructed nature of "normative power Europe".[15] In her analysis of the performance, legitimacy and production of the EU's normative power in the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Pace shows that the EU's construction of normative power "has disempowered the EU's political role as a global actor"[16] due to the its ineffectiveness. In other words, if we employ Diez's distinction, the EU may *act* as a normative power, but "whether it *has* normative power"[17] is questionable. Pace does not devalue the concept of "normative power Europe" in that she argues that its successful construction would "secure a role for the EU globally and deliver ensuing gains in legitimacy for its liberal values and norms".[18] In a similar vein, Tuomas Forsberg and Graeme P. Herd do not find consistency in the exercise of the EU's normative agenda.[19] In their examination of the European-Russian relations in the case of Chechnya, the authors claim that

---

[13] Andy Storey, "Normative Power Europe? Economic Partnership Agreements and Africa," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 24, no. 3 (2006): 343.

[14] Sibylle Scheipers and Daniela Sicurell, "Normative Power Europe: A Credible Utopia?," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 45, no. 2 (2007): 439

[15] Michelle Pace, "The Construction of EU Normative Power," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 45, no. 5 (2007): 1041-1064.

[16] Ibid., 1043.

[17] Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others," 616.

[18] Pace, "The Construction of EU Normative Power," 1059.

[19] Tuomas Forsberg and Graeme P. Herd, "The EU, Human Rights, and the Russo-Chechen Conflict," *Political Science Quarterly* 120, no. 3 (2005): 455-478.

although the EU has insistently underscored a normative dimension, particularly human rights, in its external relations, it "has sacrificed a coherent and systematic advancement of its normative agenda in favor strengthening its relations with the Russian Federation".[20]

Some other scholars pose a set of questions regarding the "side-effects" of "normative power Europe". Beyond the empirical question of whether the EU is a normative power, Thomas Diez questions what this discourse does.[21] He employs a poststructuralist lens to show the discursive mechanisms of "normative power Europe", which generate an exclusive benign identity for the EU and construct third parties as "others". While defining the identities of both the EU and its "others", this representation leads European actors "to disregard their own shortcomings".[22] In this sense, the othering strategy may include the representation of the "other" as an "existential threat", "inferior", "violating universal principles", and "different".[23] In a similar vein, building on a Foucauldian approach to norms and power, Michael Merligen demonstrates the double-edged effect of the EU's normative power.[24] On the one hand, "normative power Europe" seeks to protect, promote and strengthen "the basic exercise of human agency",[25] and is aimed at humanizing and improving the life of local populations. On the other hand, its projects also "subject local orders to Europe's normativizing universalist pretensions", and includes superordination, subordination and subjection by generating "patterns of arbitrary domination between internationals and locals".[26]

Finally, Adrian Hyde-Price builds his critique of the concept on the mainstream realist-liberal debate in International Relations.[27] From a neorealist perspective, Hyde-Price argues that the EU is a collective vehicle or instrument of its member states, primarily its most influential powers, to shape its external milieu or near abroad by "a combination of hard and soft

---

[20] Ibid., 455.

[21] Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others," 613-636.

[22] Ibid., 627.

[23] Ibid., 628-629.

[24] Michael Merligen, "Everything is Dangerous: A Critique of 'Normative Power Europe'," *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 4 (2007): 436-453.

[25] Ibid., 443.

[26] Ibid., 449.

[27] Adrian Hyde-Price, "'Normative' Power Europe: A Realist Critique," *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (2006): 217-234.

power" under the structural conditions of "a unipolar world and a multipolar Europe".[28] In this sense, Hyde-Price develops an instrumentalist understanding of the concept. Similarly, Richard Youngs criticizes the analytical prioritization of the normative dimension of the EU's external relations, and emphasizes how strategic calculations and normative elements inform each other.[29] Building on his examination of the EU's human rights policies abroad, he argues that "instrumentalist security-oriented dynamics persist within the parameters set by norms defining the EU's identity".[30]

The EU's policies in the South Caucasus provide a good case for analysis in order to explore the potential of its normative power in a context where security and stability are main concerns of domestic actors.

II. The EU's Policies in the South Caucasus

The EU's engagement to the South Caucasus with varieties of policies and instruments provides a good case to question its actorness. The EU's actorness can be assessed not only in terms of its performance as an inter-governmental organization promoting good governance through its normative power but also in terms of its role in peace-making and security-building in the region. It can be analyzed with reference to its effectiveness and responsiveness of the regional actors to address to the frames of reference provided by the EU. As of 2023, one can observe a great shift in the EU's policies in the region. From being an actor with a need for energy resources and transportation corridors for trade and communication; it now becomes an active promoter of regional peace and security targeting post-war peace-making negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia after the Second Karabakh War in 2020.

The EU initiated its first encounters with the South Caucasus through Cooperation and Partnership Agreements (1999). This has been followed by the appointment of the special representative for South Caucasus (2003). It later provided a more concise tool by designing Action Plans (2006). The region was then included to Eastern Partnership (2009) and to European Neighborhood Policy (2010). The major criticism to the EU's policies in the region was the fact it rather offered a "one-size-fit-all" approach rather than

---

[28] Ibid., 217.
[29] Richard Youngs, "Normative Dynamics and Strategic Interests in the EU's External Identity," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 42, no. 2 (2004): 415-435.
[30] Ibid., 415.

"tailor made policies" which neglected the special concerns of the regional countries[31] not only in terms of security but also in terms of their commitment to the goals of the EU's normative power, namely democratization, good governance and promotion of human rights. For Simao and Freire, "regional labeling does not reflect considerably distinct realities of each country"[32] and "reasoning for regional cooperation with multi-dimensional and multi-level format" should be such designed in a setting instead of using "artificial labeling of the South Caucasus" as a "cohesive regional group"[33]. Delcour and Duhot suggest that the "EU should avoid a one size fits all approach to South Caucasus, pay increased attention to each countries' specificity and primarily focus on the bilateral relations"[34]. In addition to the EU's weakness and ineffectiveness in its approach to the region; the attitudes of the regional countries to the EU should not neglected. According to Delcour and Wolczuk "… the EU's engagement with those countries needs at least to certain extend to reflect what they want from the EU"[35] particularly taking into account that "some of the norms and policies are regarded as unsuitable to partner countries' needs and expectations"[36]. Due to the lack of country-based needs assessment for developing bilateral ties; reluctance in taking account national priorities and more importantly varying degrees of commitment and responsiveness on part of the ruling elite to address to the normative principles, the EU's actorness remained rather contested.

The appointment of EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus by the Council of the European Union on the 7th July 2003 showed that the EU paid a special attention to the region.[37] Delcour and Duhot argues that

---

[31] Delcour, Laure, and Hubert Duhot, "Bringing South Caucasus Closer to Europe: Achievements and Challenges in ENP Implementation," *College of Europe Natolin Research Papers* (2011): 48.

[32] Licínia Simão and Maria Raquel Freire, "The EU's Neighborhood Policy and the South Caucasus: Unfolding New Patterns of Cooperation," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 2, no. 4 (2008): 225.

[33] Ibid., 226.

[34] Laure and Duhot, "Bringing South Caucasus Closer to Europe: Achievements and Challenges in ENP Implementation," 46.

[35] Delcour, Laure, and Kataryna Wolczuk. "Mind the Gap: Role Expectations and Perceived Performance of the EU in the South Caucasus." in *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 62, no. 2 (2021): 157.

[36] Ibid., 161.

[37] "Council Joint Action 2003/496/CFSP of 7 July 2003 concerning the appointment of an EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus" Last Updated Date: October, 06, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/joint_action/2003/496/oj.

such appointment "can be considered as promising act in the improvision of the region-based policy[38]. Moreover, it was a good move to increase the EU's visibility in the region. As a "security strategy"[39], it was not only important to show the EU's commitment for security-building in the region but also facilitated face-to-face contact through an interlocutor. The role attributed to the Special Representative was "to contribute to the implementation of the policy objectives of the EU in the South Caucasus" including assistance to carry out political and economic reforms to foster the EU's normative power in the "fields of rule of law, democratization, human rights, good governance, development and poverty reduction"[40]. It was also remarkable to observe the EU's willingness to promote regional cooperation in the fields of "economic, energy and transport issues"[41] and more importantly its commitment to engage in conflict resolution and peace building.[42] This was a multi-level strategy aiming at ensuring the contact with "governments, parliaments, judiciary and civil society"[43]. Frequent visits of the Special Representatives in the early years of the appointment were well received by the individual countries hoping that such initiative could make the EU as a security provider through its efforts of mediation. Yet lack of success in conflict resolution in a way discredited the potential role which has been later revived after the 2nd Karabakh War.

The Action Plans for regional countries of the South Caucasus can be considered as remarkable initiatives to overcome "one size fits all" bias and showed the commitment of the EU to develop bilateral relations with Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. Each plan was "a political document laying out the strategic objectives of the cooperation" between individual countries and the EU and "its implementation will help fulfil the provisions in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) and will encourage and support" their objectives "of further integration into European

---

[38] Laure and Duhot, "Bringing South Caucasus Closer to Europe: Achievements and Challenges in ENP Implementation," 115.

[39] Paul, Amanda. "The EU in the South Caucasus and the Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War." *The International Spectator* 50, no. 3 (2015): 32.

[40] See Article 2 of "Council Joint Action 2003/496/CFSP of 7 July 2003 concerning the appointment of an EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus", *Official Journal L 169 , 08/07/2003 P. 0074 – 0075, Last Updated Date: October 11, 2023,* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX: 32003E0496&from =EN

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., Article 3.

[43] Ibid.

structures".[44] The main focus in all three texts promote the EU's actorness in good governance and security building and envisage its normative power in the region. The main priority areas addressed to the need for political and economic reforms particularly in the fields of democratic governance and economic development as well as in security building. The priority areas were identified as "peaceful resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict"; "strengthening of democracy through free and fair elections in line with international standards", "protection of human rights and respect to the rule of law", "initiation of economic reforms" and "strengthening regional integration. The action plans were followed by the inclusion of all three countries to the ENP which underlines "a clear link between democracy and security"[45].

The inclusion of the South Caucasus to the ENP (2010) aimed at "advocating political and economic reform, supporting conflict prevention and resolution and enhancing intra-regional cooperation" without necessarily offering a prospect for membership[46]. According to Alieva, the South Caucasian countries were included to the ENP due to the region's oil and gas resources since the EU found the region "convenient" due to "its location on the crossroads of major East West transportation roots"[47]. In other words the EU's energy dependency and its need for a transportation corridor made the region attractive for trade, stability and security are the main priorities[48] since "energy represents one of the most important aspects of growing

---

[44] "EU/Azerbaijan Action Plan," https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/au-az_action_plan_azerbaijan.pdf ; "EU/Armenia Action Plan," https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/pdf/action_plans/armenia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf; "EU/Georgia Action Plan," https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/georgia_enp_ap_final_en_0.pdf. Last Updated Date: October, 06, 2023.

[45] Licínia Simão, "The problematic role of EU democracy promotion in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 45, no. 1-2 (2012): 169.

[46] Tracey C. Gelman, "Visibly Invisible: EU Engagement in Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus," *European Security* 16, no 3-4 (2007): 360.

[47] Leila, Alieva, "EU and South Caucasus." in *The Bertelsmann Foundation and the Center for Applied Policy Research*, (2006), 1.

[48] Sinem Ünaldılar Kocamaz, "The EU's Promotion of Good Governance and Democracy in the South Caucasus: Reigonal Strategies and Domestic Constraints" in *EU Good Governance Promotion in the Age of Democratic Decline*, ed. Soyaltin-Colella, D. (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham., 2022), 115.

significance of the region and the EU has a keen self interest in stability and security"[49].

Both ENP and EaP promote regional cooperation[50], through addressing political and economic issues in order "to promote EU norms within the neighborhood" albeit providing "the attractive membership perspective"[51]. Inclusion of the region to the framework provided by the EU, "is supposed to reinforce and encourage further developments of regional networks by designing various cross border initiatives which include local and regional authorities and non-governmental actors[52]. According to Simao and Freire, "the EU sought to stabilize the South Caucasus through economic integration, institutional cooperation and by playing a growing role as a security actor in the region" through the ENP[53]. Although support for economic and political assistance is remarkable, the EU remained "as an observer"[54]; addressed to conflict resolution "indirectly"[55].

To conclude, the sake of the European countries in the fields of energy and transportation provoked the EU's engagement in the South Caucasus. The need for security and stability to secure the EU's interests in the region where it remained rather reluctant to show a concern and active engagement in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, resulted in the EU's willingness to establish a presence. The already existing frames such as Partnership and Cooperation agreements were utilized to build up rapport and relationship with the regional countries through providing them with technical assistance. The appointment of special representative and then the action plans can be considered as initiatives with a regional focus and they were followed by their inclusion to Eastern Partnership first and The ENP next. In all policies the promotion of the principles of good governance and

---

[49] Gelman, "Visibly Invisible: EU Engagement in Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus," 359.

[50] Nelli Babayan, "Fear or Love Thy Neighbour"? The EU Framework for Promoting Regional Cooperation in the South Caucasus" Journal of the Contemporary European Research 8, no 1 (2012): 40.

[51] Ibid., 41.

[52] Ibid., 48.

[53] Simão and Freire, "The EU's Neighborhood Policy and the South Caucasus: Unfolding New Patterns of Cooperation," 228.

[54] Ibid., 228.

[55] Simão, "The problematic role of EU democracy promotion in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh," 169.

conflict resolution and security building were the main concerns. Yet the ineffectiveness of the EU to promote its actorness and the varying degrees of responsiveness on part of the regional states created a gap among the involved actors resulted in the decreasing credibility of the EU in the region. However, the new geopolitical context after the Second Karabakh War offers to the EU a good chance to restore its image and its role in the region whereas its actorness as a normative power will probably remain contested since its success is heavily dependent to the willingness of the regional countries.

III. The EU is back to the South Caucasus: A Peace-Broker after the II: Karabakh War?

In the post-war situation and a potentially peace-building process in the South Caucasus, the EU's engagement to the negotiation between Armenia and Azerbaijan seems to be a test case for its restoration as a reliable and efficient actor in conflict resolution.

The South Caucasus has been a turbulent region in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Territorial conflicts in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia were particularly challenging in the context of simultaneous regime change, nation- and state-building, and the restructuring of the economic system. It was not an easy task for respective governments to handle the situation due to the fact that conflicts which started as bilateral went on to draw in regional, and later international interventions. International involvement was crucially important, and necessary for stability and security, yet proved to be unpromising and widely discredited through the failure of the OSCE Minsk Group in dealing with conflict resolution in Karabakh conflict.

After almost three decades of occupation of the Karabakh region, Azerbaijan has successfully managed to re-consolidate its territorial integrity with its victory in July 2020 as a result of the Second Karabakh War. During the war, Turkey acquired a more pro-active stance through continuously providing political and moral support to Azerbaijan and Russia as the main peace broker led mediation resulted in the signing of the Trilateral Statement between Armenia and Azerbaijan on 10 November 2020. Until the end of 2021, the post-war setting was rather a regional one rather than international where peace and security building seem to be based on how the bilateral relationship between Azerbaijan and Armenia evolves and the sustainability of the cooperative relationship between Turkey and Russia. The main themes

that have dominated discussions in the year following the war have been a new format for regional cooperation, confidence-building, recovery, dialogue, and normalization of the relationships (if not reconciliation). The core ideas are establishing regional connectivity, promoting economic cooperation, underlining the importance of and necessity for transportation projects, building up trade relations, demining of conflict-affected territories, and ensuring the stability and well-being of the countries concerned.

The suggested '3+3' format – the six-party cooperation platform with pacts among Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Russia, Turkey, and Iran, seemed to be the only proposed option, although to what extent its realization would be possible remained unknown. Moreover, the substance, terms, and conditions of the format should be presented in detail. No Western initiative, either on the part of the EU or the USA, was on the table up until the end of December 2021. Yet, there was an emergent need for a new vision for the South Caucasus to ensure post-conflict stability and security in the region.

This section provides an analysis of the EU's involvement to the post-war peace building process by particularly focusing on its actorness, the content of the mediation through providing a common platform by setting up the principles to regulate stabilization and then to determine the principles of a peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia. It will then discuss the potential of the EU to assert itself as reliable actor as well as its possible effectiveness in issues related to regional cooperation. It argues that the EU follows a gradually evolving approach in the mediation process.

The EU's role in conflict resolution during the Karabakh conflict remained "peripheral" over the last three decades other than issuing statement of concerns during the entire process of the 2nd Karabakh War[56]. It not only decreases the reliance of the conflicting parties but also leads to question of its possible commitment with regards to the peace-making in the region. The fact that the EU does not offer any prospects for membership with the EaP and the ENP, decreases the potential role of its normative power which is not very welcomed by the reluctant leaders to initiate political reform process particularly with regards to democratization and

---

[56] Laurence Broers, "Perspectives: The EU and Karabakh: Picking up th pieces, looking for a role," *eurasianet*, January 20, 2021, Last Updated Date: October 11, 2023, https://eurasianet.org/perspectives-the-eu-and-karabakh-picking-up-the-pieces-looking-for-a-role.

principles of good governance. In the aftermath of the 2nd Karabakh War, the EU started to activate itself through revitalizing the activities of the Special Representative of the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia through regular visits to the regional countries. This smooth and easy interaction can be considered as the expression of interest by the EU to nominate itself as an international player who previously remained reluctant and inactive.

First meeting of the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia was held on 14 December 2021 at Brussels is considered to have "important outcomes" and "focusing on the economic cooperation, delimitation and demarcation of the state borders, demining and humanitarian issues including the release of the POWs"[57]. The president of the European Council, Charles Michel stated that the EU was committed to create "cooperation and an atmosphere of trust" and particularly stressed on the need for addressing humanitarian issues such as "release of further detainees and the fate of missing persons" adding that the EU continuously support humanitarian de-mining efforts"[58] With this first meeting the EU managed to create a platform to provide a milieu of interaction for the political leadership and nominated itself for a limited mediation role. The fact that President Aliyev and Prime Minister Pashinyan agreed to meet under the auspices of the EU shows that they were keen on the involvement of the Western actors to the post-war context probably due to the fact that it may decrease already existing Russian involvement in the region. It can be argued that the EU acted "cautious and low profile" in order to disturb Russia[59] with its emphasis on the humanitarian issues so that it will "minimize any perceptions of competition by emphasizing that it is not replacing but building up existing Russian brokered agreement"[60]. The

---

[57] Esmira Jafarova, "Can European Union Succeed in Facilitating Armenia-Azerbaijan Normalization?-Anlaysis," *Center of Analysis of International Relations*, October 14, 2022, Last Updated Date: October 11, 2023, https://aircenter.az/en/single/can-european-union-succeed-in-facilitating-armeniaazerbaijan-normalization--analysis-1043.

[58] "Statement of President Charles Michel following the trilateral meeting with President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan", December 12, 2021, Last Updated: October 11, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/12/14/statement-of-president-charles-michel-following-the-trilateral-meeting-with-president-ilham-aliyev-and-prime-minister-nikol-pashinyan/

[59] Broers, "Perspectives: Beyond Minsk? The remaking of the Armenia-Azerbaijani peace process."

[60] Ibid.

regular meetings during 2022 shows that the EU followed an evolving pattern in dealing with the matters regarding the peace-building policies. It also shows that in the post-war stabilization, it is in the process of setting up the principles evolved from a rather non-touchy issues such as economic cooperation and humanitarian ones to a more political ones including the recognition of the territorial integrity and the status of Nagorno Karabakh Armenians.

Second meeting was held on 6 April 2022 again in Brussels with participation of both presidents where the EU underlined its focus and intension in the amelioration of the humanitarian issues including the release of remaining detainees and the fate of missing persons along with demining and assistance to "conflict-affected populations and, rehabilitation and reconstruction"[61]. What was remarkable as an outcome was convene a Joint Border Mission to "delimit the bilateral border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and ensure a stable security situation along, and in the vicinity of, the borderline"[62]. The particular focus on the restoration of connectivity for furthering regional cooperation was also essential and desirable for both parties.

3rd meeting was held on 22 may 2022 where Brussels promoted post-conflict agenda[63]. There the EU emerged as "a significant platform for negotiations comes as Russia's role is declining"[64] where 5 points plan is formulated where both Azerbaijan and Armenia are happy to counterweight against Russia. The five-points plan suggested by the Azerbaijani side included "the recognition of each country's territorial integrity, border demarcation, open transportation links between the two territories, and an

---

[61] "Statement of European Council President Charles Michel following the Second Trilateral Meeting with President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan", April 6, 2022, Last Updated Date: October 11, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/04/06/statement-of-european-council-president-charles-michel-following-the-second-trilateral-meeting-with-president-ilham-aliyev-and-prime-minister-nikol-pashinyan/.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Jafarova, "Can European Union Succeed in Facilitating Armenia-Azerbaijan Normalization?-Anlaysis."

[64] Ani Mejlumyan, Joshua Kucera and Heydar İsayev, "Armenia, Azerbaijan agree to EU mission on border," *eurasianet*, October 7, 2020, Last Updated Date: October 11, 2023, https://eurasianet.org/armenia-azerbaijan-agree-to-eu-mission-on-border.

agreement to abstain from threats"[65]. This 3rd meeting can be considered as an important achievement in the EU's policies since a minimum basis for the EU designed a peace treaty. Charles Michel particularly promoted the delimitation of borders and restoration of connectivity (unblocking the transport links) and more importantly a peace agreement "to advance discussion on the peace treaty governing inter-state relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia it is necessary that the rights and security of the ethnic Armenian population in Karabakh"[66].

The meeting on the 14th May 2023 as a remarkable achievement since Azerbaijan and Armenia reached unequivocal commitment to the 1991 Almaty Declaration of the respective territorial integrity and Karabakh Armenians as citizens of Azerbaijan. It also addressed to the issue of connectivity through "unblocking transport and economic links in the region" and re-opening of the railway connection to and via Nakhchivan. Dealing also with the humanitarian issues including captured soldiers, fate of missing persons and demining and "comprehensive and fair peace agreement and right of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians" was seemingly important.[67]. On 31 May 2023 Charles Michel also "stressed the need to prepare populations for peace and the paramount role of the public rhetoric plays in this regard"[68]. This call for initiating a discourse change to prepare societies

---

[65] Arzu Geybullayeva, "Armenia and Azerbaijan recognize each other's territorial integrity", October 10, 2022, Last Updated Date: October 11, 2023, https://globalvoices.org/2022/10/10/armenia-and-azerbaijan-recognize-each-others-territorial-integrity/

[66] "Press statement by President Michel of the European Council following a trilateral meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia", May 23, 2022, Last Updated Date: october 11, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/05/23/press-statement-by-president-michel-of-the-european-council-following-a-trilateral-meeting-with-president-aliyev-of-azerbaijan-and-prime-minister-pashinyan-of-armenia/

[67] "Press Remarks by President Charles Michel Following the Trilateral Meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia", May 14, 2023, Last Updated Date: October 11, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/05/14/press-remarks-by-president-charles-michel-following-the-trilateral-meeting-with-president-aliyev-of-azerbaijan-and-prime-minister-pashinyan-of-armenia/

[68] "Statement by the spokesperson of Charles Michel, President of the European Council, regarding Armenia and Azerbaijan", May 31, 2022, Last Updated Date:

can be considered as a signal to consider a peace treaty will be achievable by the end of this year. June 2023 at Moldova, normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia are discussed in a roundtable meeting with the by President Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister Pashinyan, President Emanuel Macron, Charles Michel and Scholz. Main issues were again connectivity, border delimitation and peace treaty.

To conclude, in its involvement to the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the EU has managed to achieve a considerable success in dealing with the issue regarding peacebuilding starting with rather a timid initiative to host the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Brussels showed that it could offer a platform to both parties to talk and negotiate starting with the issues that they could potentially agree including economic connectivity and humanitarian issues. The first one offers prospects for future regional cooperation initiatives whereas the second one addresses to the current and more emergent concerns. These two would potentially would not disturb neither of them and can provide strong basis for the endurance of stability and security in the aftermath of a would-be peace treaty. Within this context the only issue which should be addressed cautiously and remains contested is the rights of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians. President Aliyev openly expressed at numerous occasions that no particular status would be granted and they would be treated as ordinary citizens of Azerbaijan, Armenia seems to be keener on to the promotion of the international mechanism. It can be argued that the Azerbaijan's continuing commitment to the EU negotiated process could only be secured if the EU would not be insistent in promoting the idea of granting special status to the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians, otherwise it will be blocked. Moreover, the EU should also consider that the process also needs a blessing by Russia and Turkey who do seem to enjoy their competitive cooperation and regionalization of conflict along with the status quo in the post-war setting which seems to be more appealing for their active engagement. The need for their implicit and/or explicit approval is undeniable both for Azerbaijan and Armenia.

To what extent the pro-activization of the EU as a peace broker will result in increasing its normative power is yet to be seen since it requires not

---

October 11, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/05/31/statement-by-the-spokesperson-of-charles-michel-president-of-the-european-council-regarding-armenia-and-azerbaijan-31-may-2022/

only a comprehensive scheme by the EU but also and more importantly willingness of the domestic actors to receive it. The EU's commitment for consolidating post-treaty societal interaction seem to foster prospects for dialogue of different segments of society including civil society, academia and media. If the EU successfully manages to have a clear and well trusted mandate in the region, it can also contribute to the political reforms to a certain extent.

Conclusion

Starting from the early 2000s, the EU's interest in the South Caucasus was inspired by the region's geographical intersection of the East-West corridor; trade and transportation and oil and gas energy resources. The policies are designed on the basis of the EU's priorities including shared values of democratization, good governance, promotion of rule of law for security and stability as well as economic prosperity. Although the framework provided by the Eastern Partnership and European Neighborhood Policy had good intensions, their contents were not necessarily fit into the priorities of the regional countries. Apparently, the EU's actorness in conflict resolution and peacebuilding was expected, particularly when the only international mechanism, the OSCE Minsk Group, failed to address the conflict for about three decades and decreased the reliance to any other type of international involvement.

In its recent engagement in the regional matters of the South Caucasus with reference to the peace and security building, the EU appears to be potentially promising actor. Its success and effectiveness as well as its durable impact largely rely on its capacity as a mediator; domestic actors' receptiveness and embracement of its policies and attitudes of the two regional power, namely Russia and Turkey. The EU initiated hosting of both countries' leaders showed that it has the potential to provide a roof for communication and interaction in a relatively unbiased setting. It manages to overcome perceived biased of the individual countries through re-setting up itself as an intergovernmental organization for the sake of good governance, security and peace-building. It successfully managed not to disturb much both Turkey and Russia in its way of converting a regionalized post-war situation to an international one. It also increased its visibility and credibility and managed to distance itself to the member states' political preferences. Although the existing system is not totally tailor-made, it can be argued that a regional tailoring is one on the table.

There is yet a delicate balance to be sustained in the South Caucasus. Although Azerbaijan and Armenia are reciprocally recognized each other's territorial integrity, there are still violations of the ceasefire in the bordering regions which harm the normalization of bilateral relations and prevent the building up of trust. Moreover, The Russian troops' presence in all three countries of the South Caucasus is a significant threat for all regional countries although not explicitly expressed. Any regional cooperation initiative should accommodate the Russian factor but preferably in a more balanced way. Although Russia is heavily occupied with its war in Ukraine, it does not mean that it will distance itself when its hegemonic power as a game maker and peace-broker will be challenged or will have an alternative. Turkey on the other hand distances itself from the EU and is being distanced by the EU for quite a while. It will surely be in constant cooperation with Azerbaijan whose alliance with Turkey is well consolidated and not at all questionable. On the other hand, the future of normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey is yet be seen and also heavily dependent on the bilateral relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Last but not least, the EU's restoration of its role and image as a mediator and the consolidation of its role as a regional actor are largely dependent on the domestic ruling elite's choices and preferences. They should not feel disappointed by its ineffectiveness and will be no more satisfied with a "the EU is concerned" message which may result in making of the process regionalized one again.

To achieve a more elaborated, extensive, comprehensive cooperation for peace-making and security building in the region as well as economic development, the following recommendations can be considered. First, there should be agreed terminology on the existing situation. The territorial integrity and the principles of inviolability of the borders should be respected by all parties involved. The violation of territorial integrity of Georgia and Ukraine constitutes biggest challenge for the regional cohesion and stability. Moreover, Russia's war against Ukraine resulted in an escalated perception of threat for regional countries. Second, trade and transport appear to be the most relevant areas to initiate regional cooperation. Yet the discourses of nation and state-building as well as the definition of friends and foes will have a decisive role in the implementation of any type of joint projects. Overcoming the hatred may take much longer than expected. In this respect the EU has strong potentials to encourage societal dialogue among various actors of the respective countries including academia, civil society and media. Youth in particular should be targeted whose memories of war rather than co-existence are persistent. Third, there is a need to promote

mechanisms and tools to contribute to the peace-making and its preservation. Restoration of credibility as well as its sustainability should also be addressed to prevent Euroscepticism. The EU is still an important actor because of the values that it represents namely, democracy, human rights, economic development and modernization. It seems that restoration of peace and fostering security in the region will be a test for the EU to re-define and potentially restore its actorness in global governance as well. Therefore, it has to come up with a new and revised action plan. Last but the least, one of main preconditions of regional cooperation is the issue of the regime type. The EU successfully manage to address the political and societal transformation of East and Central European countries through internationalization of democratization in the early 1990s. Noting that democratic governments are essential for the sustainability of the stability and security, the EU's policies and projects should be revisited to contribute to democratization as well.

Bibliography

Alieva, Leila. "EU and South Caucasus." in The Bertelsmann Foundation and the Center for Applied Policy Research, (2006).

Aydın, Mustafa. "The Long View. On Turkish-Russia Rivalry and Cooperation," GMF, June 08, 2020, Last Updated Date: October, 10, 2023, https://www.gmfus.org/news/long-view-turkish-russian-rivalry-and-cooperation.

Babayan, Nelli. ""Fear or Love Thy Neighbour"? The EU Framework for Promoting Regional Cooperation in the South Caucasus." Journal of Contemporary European Research 8, no. 1 (2012): 40-56.

Broers, Laurence. "Perspectives: The EU and Karabakh: Picking up th pieces, looking for a role," eurasianet, January 20, 2021, Last Updated Date: October 11, 2023, https://eurasianet.org/perspectives-the-eu-and-karabakh-picking-up-the-pieces-looking-for-a-role.

Delcour, Laure, and Hubert Duhot. "Bringing South Caucasus Closer to Europe: Achievements and Challenges in ENP Implementation." College of Europe Natolin Research Papers (2011).

Delcour, Laure, and Kataryna Wolczuk. "Mind the Gap: Role Expectations and Perceived Performance of the EU in the South Caucasus." in Eurasian Geography and Economics 62, no. 2 (2021): 156-177.

Diez, Thomas. "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'," Millennium: Journal of International Studies 33, no. 3 (2005): 615

Duchêne, François. "Europe's Role in World Peace," in Europe Tomorrow: Sixteen Europeans Look Ahead, ed. Richard Mayne. London: Fontana, 32-47.

Duchêne, François. "The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence," A Nation Writ Large? Foreign Policy Problems Before the European Community, eds. Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager. London: Macmillan, 1-21.

European Union. "EU/ Azerbaijan Action Plan," Last Updated Date: October, 06, 2023.   https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/au-az_action_plan_azerbaijan.pdf

European Union. "EU/Armenia Action Plan," Last Updated Date: October, 06, 2023.https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/pdf/pdf/action_plans/armenia_en p_ap_final_en.pdf

European Union. "EU/Georgia Action Plan,". Last Updated Date: October, 06, 2023.
https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/georgia_enp_ap_final_en_0.pdf

EUR-Lex. "Council Joint Action 2003/496/CFSP of 7 July 2003 concerning the appointment of an EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus" Last Updated   Date: October,   06,   2023,   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/joint_action/2003/496/oj.

EUR-Lex. "Council Joint Action 2003/496/CFSP of 7 July 2003 concerning the appointment of an EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus", *Official Journal L 169 , 08/07/2003 P. 0074 – 0075, Last Updated Date: October   11,   2023,*   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32003E0496&from =EN

European Council. "Statement of President Charles Michel following the trilateral meeting with President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan", December   12,   2021,   Last   Updated: October   11,   2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/12/14/statement-of-president-charles-michel-following-the-trilateral-meeting-with-president-ilham-aliyev-and-prime-minister-nikol-pashinyan/

European Council. "Press statement by President Michel of the European Council following a trilateral meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia", May 23, 2022, Last Updated Date: october 11,   2023,   https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/05/23/press-statement-by-president-michel-of-the-european-council-following-a-trilateral-meeting-with-president-aliyev-of-azerbaijan-and-prime-minister-pashinyan-of-armenia/

European Council. "Press Remarks by President Charles Michel Following the Trilateral Meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia", May 14 , 2023, Last Updated Date: October 11, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/05/14/press-remarks-by-president-charles-michel-following-the-trilateral-meeting-with-president-aliyev-of-azerbaijan-and-prime-minister-pashinyan-of-armenia/

European Council. "Statement by the spokesperson of Charles Michel, President of the European Council, regarding Armenia and Azerbaijan", May 31, 2022, Last Updated Date: October 11, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/05/31/statement-by-the-spokesperson-of-charles-michel-president-of-the-european-council-regarding-armenia-and-azerbaijan-31-may-2022/

Forsberg, Tuomas and Graeme P. Herd. "The EU, Human Rights, and the Russo-Chechen Conflict," Political Science Quarterly 120, no. 3 (2005): 455-478.

Gelman, Tracey C., "Visibly Invisible: EU Engagement in Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus," European Security 16, no 3-4 (2007): 357-374.

Geybullayeva, Arzu. "Armenia and Azerbaijan recognize each other's territorial integrity", October 10, 2022, Last Updated Date: October 11, 2023, https://globalvoices.org/2022/10/10/armenia-and-azerbaijan-recognize-each-others-territorial-integrity/

Hyde-Price, Adrian. "'Normative' Power Europe: A Realist Critique," Journal of European Public Policy 13, no. 2 (2006): 217-234.

Jafarova, Esmira. "Can European Union Succeed in Facilitating Armenia-Azerbaijan Normalization?-Anlaysis," Center of Analysis of International Relations, October 14, 2022, Last Updated Date: October 11, 2023, https://aircenter.az/en/single/can-european-union-succeed-in-facilitating-armeniaazerbaijan-normalization--analysis-1043.

Lightfoot, Simon and Jon Burchell, "The European Union and the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Normative Power Europe in Action?," Journal of Common Market Studies 43, no. 1 (2005): 75-95.

Manners, Ian. "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?," Journal of Common Market Studies 40, no.2 (2002): 235-258.

Maull, Hanns W. "Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers," Foreign Affairs 69, no. 5 (1990): 91-106.

Mejlumyan, Ani, Joshua Kucera and Heydar İsayev. "Armenia, Azerbaijan agree to EU mission on border," eurasianet, October 7, 2020, Last Updated Date:

October   11,   2023,   https://eurasianet.org/armenia-azerbaijan-agree-to-eu-mission-on-border.

Merligen, Michael. "Everything is Dangerous: A Critique of 'Normative Power Europe'," Security Dialogue 38, no. 4 (2007): 436-453.

Orbie, Jan. "Civilian Power Europe: Review of the Original and Current Debates," Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association 41, no. 1 (2006): 123.

Pace, Michelle. "The Construction of EU Normative Power," Journal of Common Market Studies 45, no. 5 (2007): 1041-1064.

Paul, Amanda. "The EU in the South Caucasus and the Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War." The International Spectator 50, no. 3 (2015): 30-42.

Scheipers, Sibylle and Daniela Sicurell. "Normative Power Europe: A Credible Utopia?," Journal of Common Market Studies 45, no. 2 (2007): 439

Simão, Licínia, and Maria Raquel Freire. "The EU's Neighborhood Policy and the South Caucasus: Unfolding New Patterns of Cooperation." Caucasian Review of International Affairs 2, no. 4 (2008): 47-61.

Simão, Licínia. "The Problematic Role of EU Democracy Promotion in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh." Communist and Post-Communist Studies 45 (2012): 193-200.

Storey, Andy. "Normative Power Europe? Economic Partnership Agreements and Africa," Journal of Contemporary African Studies 24, no. 3 (2006): 343.

Twitchett, Kenneth J. Europe and the World: The External Relations of the Common Market. New York: St. Martin's Press, (1976).

Ünaldılar Kocamaz, Sinem, "The EU's Promotion of Good Governance and Democracy in the South Caucasus: Reigonal Strategies and Domestic Constraints" in EU Good Governance Promotion in the Age of Democratic Decline, ed. Soyaltin-Colella, D. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham., (2022), 113-132.

Youngs, Richard. "Normative Dynamics and Strategic Interests in the EU's External Identity," Journal of Common Market Studies 42, no. 2 (2004): 415-435.

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/ijeep.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," S*ustainability* 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 lexicon[6] 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 thorough 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, Vučenović, 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 security[24] 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 Černoch, "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 approach[40] 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 Wettestad, 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 Paper[45] 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 solidarity[58] 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 Partnership[64], 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 strategy[72] 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 projects[73] 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 Baconi, "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)rationales 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 priority[78] 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; Filippos 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 momentously 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.

Aydın, 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)rationales 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.

Gueldry, 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, Filippos. "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.

FUTURE OF EUROPEAN SECURITY POLICIES: IS GEOPOLITICAL EUROPE POSSIBLE?

Çiğdem ÜSTÜN[*]
Ahmet K. HAN[**]
Research Article

Abstract

Since the aftermath of World War II, the pursuit of European autonomy in ensuring its security has been a constant topic on the European agenda, however never fully realized. The Lisbon Treaty facilitated Union representation as a legal entity and introduced Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) to deepen defense ties. Geopolitical ambitions increased with von Der Leyen's 2019 call for a Geopolitical Commission, preceding the Russia-Ukraine war. Global geopolitical shifts amplify the need for a robust European role. However, the EU's historical struggle in forging a strong security policy fuels skepticism. This study assesses the EU's foreign policy in the Mediterranean and Black Sea amidst regional turmoil, employing a neo-classical realist lens and a global perspective.

***Keywords**: Mediterranean, Black Sea, EU, Neo-classical Realism, Geopolitical.*

Avrupa Güvenlik Politikalarının Geleceği: Jeopolitik Avrupa Mümkün Mü?

Öz

2. Dünya Savaşı sonrasında Avrupa'nın kendi güvenliğini sağlama çabası, Avrupa'nın hep gündeminde olsa da hiçbir zaman tam olarak hayata geçirilemedi. Lizbon Antlaşması ile AB'nin tüzel bir kimliğe sahip olması sağlandı ve savunma politikalarında işbirliğini geliştirmek amacıyla Yapılandırılmış Daimi İşbirliği (PESCO) hayata geçirildi. Henüz Rusya-Ukrayna savaşı gündemde yokken von Der Leyen'in 2019'da Jeopolitik Komisyon tanımıyla jeostratejik politikalara verilen

---

[*] Prof. Dr. İstanbul Nişantaşı University, e-mail: cigdem.ustun@nisantasi.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-4386-3231

[**] Prof. Dr. Beykoz University, e-mail: han@beykoz.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0003-4162-0014

önem attı. Küresel jeopolitik değişimler güçlü bir Avrupa rolüne olan ihtiyacı artırmaktadır. Ancak AB'nin güçlü bir güvenlik politikası oluşturma konusundaki tarihsel zorlukları, şüpheciliği beslemektedir. Bu çalışmada AB'nin Akdeniz ve Karadeniz'deki bölgesel çalkantılar ve çatışmalara karşı politikaları neo-klasik realizm perspektifi ve küresel bir bakış açısıyla ele alınmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Akdeniz, Karadeniz, AB, Neo-klasik Realizm, Jeopolitik*

Introduction

Since the 2010s, geopolitics is continuously on the rise in the EU's neighboring regions. Both in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea regions, the EU initiated its neighborhood policies to create a ring of friends around its borders and increase cooperation not only between the EU and the regional countries but also amongst the regional countries. Almost 3 decades after the initiation of the Barcelona Process and almost 2 decades after the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), this aim is not achieved and yet, one can observe the increasing tensions in both regions.

The focus of this paper is rising tensions in the EU's neighborhood since the 2010s. In the light of these changes the paper assesses the EU's role as an international actor from a neo-classical realist and worldview perspective. When Ursula von Der Leyen made her speech on Geopolitical Commission in 2019, the Russia – Ukraine war was not in the picture. As geopolitics is on the rise all around the globe, the need for a geopolitical Europe is increasing too. Yet, the poor record of the EU in the past in creating a solid security and defence policy increases sceptic voices over the future of the policy.

In the Mediterranean region, in December 2010, the then called "Arab Spring" started when Muhammad Bouazizi set himself on fire in Tunisia. The economic difficulties, political oppression and increasing social unrest led to protests in the region, profoundly affecting politics in Libya, Egypt, and Syria. The increasing number of people fleeing the region and arriving at the EU borders made migration the number one priority of the EU, especially in 2015. The following "deal" with Türkiye and controversial migration policies of the EU and its member states questioned the normative actorness of the Union itself and respect for rule of law and human rights in some of the EU member states.[1] Also, the EU's reaction to the government

---

[1] Ahmet K. Han, "An Indecent Proposal? The Issue of Syrian Refugees and EU-Turkey Relations." *ISPI Commentary* November 2, 2015. accessed September

changes and democratic practices in the regional countries damaged the credibility of the Union.

Around the same time, steps were taken by the regional countries for the new hydrocarbon exploration agreements and drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean region. In 2011, the Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement was signed between Türkiye and TRNC, and in 2013 the EastMed Pipeline was identified as a priority by the European Commission. In 2017, Italy, Greece, Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus, and Israel declared their support for the project and the agreement was signed in 2020 between Greece, Israel and Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus. Türkiye's response to this cooperation mechanism was to sign a deal with Libya creating an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which hindered the planned pipeline. The diplomatic row, followed by increasing Turkish military presence in the region, led to EU sanctions on two persons [Mehmet Ferruh Akalın, head of TPAO's Exploration Department, and Ali Coşkun Namoğlu, Deputy Director of the Exploration Department of the TPAO] "who are responsible for or involved in planning, directing and implementing offshore hydrocarbon exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean which have not been authorized by the Republic of Cyprus."[2]

In the East, the enlargement of NATO to Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) and the EU's intensified relations with the Black Sea countries such as Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova under the Eastern Partnership (EaP) increased the threat perception of Russia since the "near abroad" has been always a key priority area for Russian foreign policy.[3] In 2014, after the Russian army's occupation of Crimea, a referendum on the unification with Russia took place in March and two choices were given to the voters: either "join Russia or return to Crimea's 1992 constitution, which gave the peninsula significant autonomy"[4]. By the end of March 2014, Putin

27, 2023. https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/indecent-proposal-issue-syrian-refugees-and-eu-turkey-relations-14099.

2 "Turkey's Illegal Drilling Activities in the Eastern Mediterranean: EU Puts Two Persons on Sanctions List." Council of the EU, February 27, 2020, accessed September 27, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/02/27/turkey-s-illegal-drilling-activities-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-eu-puts-two-persons-on-sanctions-list/.

3 Bohuslav Litera, "The Kozyrev Doctrine - a Russian Variation on the Monroe Doctrine." *Perspectives* no. 4 (1994): 45.

4 Steven Pifer, "Crimea: Six years after illegal annexation." *Brookings,* March 17, 2020, accessed September 27, 2023, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/03/17/crimea-six-years-after-illegal-annexation/.

ratified the Treaty of Accession of the Republic of Crimea to Russia. As a response to this annexation, the US, the EU, and Canada enforced sanctions on Russia. The EU imposed sanctions that included a clause for the "travel restrictions and an asset freeze should be imposed against persons responsible for actions which undermine or threaten the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, including actions on the future status of any part of the territory which are contrary to the Ukrainian Constitution, and persons, entities or bodies associated with them."[5] The 2022 Russian attack on Ukrainian soil has been an attack on the international order based on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the states. This time, the EU was faster and more vigorous in reacting compared to the Russian annexation of Crimea and in fact surprised the students of international relations. The sanctions aim to weaken the Russian economy and deprive it of components and critical technologies. They included asset travel bans and freezes against the persons and assets of Vladimir Putin, Sergey Lavrov, Yevgeny Prigozhin, Victor and Oleksandr Yanukovych, Russian State Duma members, National Security Council members, military staff and high-ranking officials, businesspeople, propagandists, and oligarchs. Some economic sanctions in finance consist of "a SWIFT ban, restrictions on Russia's access to the EU's capital and financial markets, and a ban on transactions with the Russian Central Bank. In the transportation sector, EU airspace is closed to all Russian owned aircraft, Russian road transport operators are banned, and there is a ban on exports to Russia of goods and technology in the aviation, maritime and space sectors".[6] In addition to these restrictions, EU sanctions in energy and defense sectors as well as on raw materials, services and media are implemented.

The EU's rapid and firm response to the Russian aggression increased hopes on the possibility of a more assertive Europe in a world order in which geopolitics is on the rise. European desire to become a foreign and security actor is not new. Since Rene Pleven introduced the plan for a European Defense Community in the 1950s, establishment of a mechanism to provide European defense at a supranational level has been discussed. Over the past

---

[5] "Council Decision 2014/145/CFSP." Official Journal of the European Union, March 17, 2014, accessed September 27, 2023, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2014:078:0016:0021:EN:PDF

[6] "Infographic - EU sanctions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine", Council of the European Union, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/eu-sanctions-russia-ukraine-invasion/

seven decades, there have been several steps taken to establish a Common Foreign and Security Policy. Even in the Maastricht Treaty this policy area was identified as a pillar of the EU. However, the EU was not successful in convincing the international actors enough to be perceived as a serious security actor in world affairs. The intergovernmental character of the policy area prevented the Union from increasing its assertiveness. In 2019, Ursula von der Leyen said that she will lead a "geopolitical Commission"[7] and, in 2022, the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence was published. aiming to "make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider"[8] while the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), established in 2017, set the goal of raising cooperation on defence among the participating EU members.

Although there have been various steps in achieving the goal of a more active EU in the security field, uncertainty over the strong actorness of the EU in foreign and security policies continues. This paper analyses the impact of challenges both in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea regions on the EU since the 2010s and explores the possibility and desirability of a geopolitical Europe and its ramifications. In doing this, the paper uses Neoclassical Realist Theory's main indicators such as internal dynamics, external systemic pressure, and ideas/perceptions. In the subsequent sections, an in-depth examination of the dynamic developments in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions is undertaken, followed by a comprehensive analysis of the corresponding responses from the EU. These two regions are strategically positioned as pivotal arenas in the realm of geopolitics, thereby warranting meticulous scrutiny.

I. Neo-classical Realism: How Does It Relate to the EU?

Neo-classical realism, "incorporating external and internal variables"[9] suggests that one should analyze systemic pressures and a country's place in

---

[7] Lili Bayer, "Meet von der Leyen's 'geopolitical Commission'", *Politico* December 4, 2019, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.politico.eu/article/meet-ursula-von-der-leyen-geopolitical-commission/

[8] "A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence", European Union External Action Service, March 24, 2022, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en

[9] Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy", *World Politics* 51 (October 1998): 146

the international system, capability to reflect power, leader perception, socioeconomic structures, and national character in order to understand a country's foreign policy. As Kitchen argues[10], identifying interests of a state is "an interpretive process", in which the leadership, character, perception and consideration of both internal and external politics determine the foreign policy behavior of a state.

In the EU case, one can observe on the one hand increasing nationalist tendencies in the EU member states and on the other hand, an increasing security threat perception from outside which paves the way to strengthen the EU mechanism in foreign and security policies. However, this does not translate into a security union at the EU level. It just demonstrates that the security concerns are on the top of the member states' agenda. Today, although systemic pressure pushes the EU to be more security oriented, the internal politics of the EU member states are not yet suitable for the creation of a geopolitical EU. In the face of crisis situations, in both the Mediterranean and the Black Sea regions explained in the following sections, one can observe that the EU member states have been willing to initiate policies to protect themselves without turning the EU into a true supranational actor.

As Dyson argued, "international structure is the key source of change and convergence in the objectives and instruments of the states' defense policy"[11]. During the Cold War, the Soviet threat was the main systemic pressure for increasing cooperation among the member states, and today, once again, the Russian threat brings the member states closer to each other and as the member states "expect to benefit from expanded common funding"[12], the support for common policies increases. Thus, as Baun and Marek argues, "changes in Europe's geostrategic and security environment"[13] i.e., Russia and migration, push member states to shoulder

---

[10] Nicholas Kitchen, "Systemic Pressures and Domestic Ideas: a Neoclassical Realist Model of Grand Strategy Formation", *Review of International Studies* 36, No. 1 (January 2010): 128

[11] Tom Dyson, *Neoclassical realism and defence reform in Post-Cold War Europe*, (Basingstoke:Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 4

[12] Niklas I.M. Nováky, "Who wants to pay more? The European Union's military operations and the dispute over financial burden sharing", *European Security* 25, no 2, (2016): 222

[13] Michael Baun and Dan Marek, "Making Europe Defend Again: The Relaunch of European Defense Cooperation from a Neoclassical Realist Perspective", *Czech Journal of International Relations* vol 54, no 4 (2019): 32.

the burden collectively, within a more integrated and institutional framework, while holding on to the intergovernmental character of the policy field due to the nationalist sentiments at home. This combination of external and internal dynamics shapes the EU's foreign and security policies, preventing the EU from being a credible geopolitical actor.

II. Internal Dynamics

Especially after the 2008 economic crisis, we have seen an increasing nationalist rhetoric in Europe. Followed by the migration and COVID 19, the nationalist, more protectionist policies and the political rhetoric were widely utilized in the EU member states. The austerity measures in the aftermath of the financial crisis, the north – south divide became more visible and the changes in the attitudes among EU member states were all reflected in the public opinion polls. In 2013, PEW research showed that the percentage of people who were favorable to the EU dropped 15 points from 60 to 45.[14] In France the drop was 19% while in Spain it was 14%. The same research demonstrated that German public opinion differed highly compared to the rest of the EU member states, with 60% in favor of the EU. After the crisis was over, the PEW research also showed that the percentage who say their country's membership in the EU has been a good thing is high in western Europe, especially in Germany, when compared to the Euro crisis. In Germany the percentage went up to 74.[15] Another study focusing on economic nationalism in Europe after the Euro crisis, finds "a remarkable increase in support for the economic nationalist camp in general, and for radical-right parties in particular."[16]

Following the economic crisis, the so-called "Arab Spring" and the increasing number of migrants from the southern neighborhood put more pressure on the EU and the member states. Since 2015, migration has been

---

[14] "The New Sick Man of Europe: the European Union", Pew Research, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2013/05/13/the-new-sick-man-of-europe-the-european-union/.

[15] "Western Europeans more content with EU membership now than during euro crisis", Pew Research, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/10/14/the-european-union/pg_10-15-19-europe-values-04-010/

[16] Italo Colantone and Piero Stanig, "The Surge of Economic Nationalism in Western Europe", *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 33, No. 4 (Fall 2019): 134

one of the top priority issues in the Eurobarometer results. In 2015, migration was one of the most important issues facing the EU, at 55%, and in 2016, it went down to 45%.[17] Immigration is still regarded as an important issue, usually counted in the top 5 issues.[18] The impact of rising immigration has been immense on the EU and the rhetoric in the EU politics, emphasizing externalisation and securitisation of migration policies. In the member states, the prevention of migration has been highlighted in the election campaigns since then. In the Netherlands, the PVV and the founder of the party, Wilders, promises de-Islamization of the country, including zero asylum seekers and no immigrants anymore from Islamic countries.[19] Although Wilders does not command a large political following, his views are accepted by the mainstream parties when it comes to immigration. This can be observed in other EU member states, in which populist parties do not get the majority of the votes, but their rhetoric is highly accepted by the other political actors. For instance, in Denmark, when the anti-immigrant populist Danish People's Party became very vocal, the Social Democratic Party, although left-wing, adopted very harsh restrictive measures against refugees and immigrants. These tendencies are also observed in Central and Eastern European countries, such as Hungary. Orban stated that "in matters of immigration, Hungary's position is clear and has not changed: we do not want to become a country of immigration"[20] and in 2015, closing the Serbia – Hungary border left migrants stranded.

COVID-19 also had an impact on the changing rhetoric in the member states in 2020. In such a health crisis, the citizens turned to their states and demanded more safety. The closing of the borders and increasing national demand for more inclusive health policies but also socio-economic policies, reinforced all the national identities once more. In Europe, the ability of the

---

[17] "Standard Eurobarometer 86", Autumn 2016, accessed August 2, 2023, https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2137.

[18] "Standard Eurobarometer 99", Spring 2023, accessed August 2, 2023, https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3052.

[19] Geert Wilders Weblog, *The Netherlands Ours Again*, *Preliminary Election Program 2017-2021*, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.geertwilders.nl/index.php/94-english/2007-preliminary-election-program-pvv-2017-2021

[20] Jean Baptiste Chastand, "Behind hostile immigration propaganda, Hungary welcomes foreign workers", *Le Monde* May 20, 2023, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/05/20/in-hungary-the-reality-of-immigration-lies-behind-hostile-propaganda_6027301_4.html

northern countries to provide more in both economic and health benefits compared to the southern countries, followed by debate on aid to the southern countries increased questions over solidarity in the EU. The French and German proposals to provide loans for the EU countries in need during COVID-19 were opposed by the Frugal Four states (Austria, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands) on the grounds that the countries receiving the funds should go through structural reforms. In other words, conditionality was proposed for the EU member states to benefit from the EU. The research at the time showed that "both EU leadership endorsement (France and Germany) and elite polarization (opposition from the 'frugal four') decreased public support" for the aid to the countries hit by the pandemic - Next Generation EU (NGEU).[21] Eurobarometer results also show that citizens became more critical of the EU institutions due to the handling of the COVID – 19 pandemic and vaccine procurement. In 2021, 48% of the respondents said they were very satisfied (5%) or rather satisfied (43%) with the measures taken by the EU to fight the pandemic.[22]

All these pressures on the EU and its member states created a more introverted Europe and the people demanded more from their national states in the times of crisis, while they are concerned about the developments not only in the South but also in the East. In the latest Eurobarometer survey[23], the international situation ranked second when asked "what do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?".

III. External Pressures

A - The Mediterranean Region since the 2010s: How Did the EU Respond?

At the end of 2010, when Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire after the police confiscated his vegetable cart in Tunisia, a set of protests not only in Tunisia but also in Egypt, Libya, and Syria erupted. Bouazizi had a

---

[21] Monika Bauhr and Nicholas Charron, "All hands-on deck' or separate lifeboats? Public support for European economic solidarity during the Covid-19 pandemic", *Journal of European Public Policy* 30, No 6, (2023)

[22] "Resilience and Recovery Public opinion one year into the pandemic", Spring 2021, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/spring-2021-survey

[23] Standard Eurobarometer 99, Spring 2023

domino effect on the other countries in the region. In January 2011, Ben Ali, President of Tunisia, fled to Saudi Arabia, bringing an end to his era. Following the Tunisian example, another young man, Mohamed Saeed, became the symbol of protests in Egypt following his death under suspicious circumstances after being arrested in the summer of 2010. Mubarak had to leave his office, too. In Libya, in February 2011, protests against Gaddafi erupted, but he refused to leave, which resulted in a full-scale civil war. Unlike the Tunisian and Egyptian examples, in Libya the UN Security Council stepped in and imposed a no-fly zone and NATO intervened with air forces, and in October 2011, Gaddafi was captured and killed. Since then, the political situation in Libya has not stabilized and two governments, UN-backed Government of National Accord and House of Representatives (HoR) led by Haftar, are struggling to take control of the whole country. Although in Tunisia and Egypt the integrity of the state was protected and new governments were established, albeit with more difficulty in Egypt, in Libya neither stability nor democracy was achieved, and it has been identified as a "failed state" in the literature.[24]

In all these cases, youth unemployment, corruption, unjust political systems, authoritarian rules and lack of human rights and rule of law were some of the commonalities that led mainly the youth to the streets. In Tunisia, the youth unemployment reached 40%[25], GDP per capita decreased, as a result of the economic crisis in 2008, while the region could not attract enough FDI to create wealth. Rising food prices affected the disadvantaged groups more. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), in 2011, world food prices "surged to a new historic peak in January [2011], while increases in international prices of wheat and maize continued".[26]

One of the positive impacts of the international aid and cooperation agreements in the region, especially with the EU, has been the increasing level of education in the regional countries. However, since economic development could not reach a level to offer these educated young people

---

[24] Alan J. Kuperman, "Obama's Libya Debacle: How a Well-Meaning Intervention Ended in Failure", *Foreign Affairs* 94, no 2 (March/April 2015): 67.

[25] Andrea Ansani and Vittorio Daniele, "About a Revolution: The Economic Motivations of the Arab Spring", *International Journal of Development and Conflict* 2, no 3, (2012): 1250013-1.

[26] "World food prices reach new historic peak", FAO, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/50519/icode/.

the jobs corresponding to their education level, social and economic dissatisfaction was inevitable among the youth. The partially liberalized political systems in the regional countries, as Brumberg stated, prevented these young people expressing themselves, which increased the frustration. Brumberg also argued that "in the Arab world, a set of interdependent institutional, economic, ideological, social, and geostrategic factors has created an adaptable ecology of repression, control and partial openness."[27] and in these regimes "ruling elites could juggle competing ideas to ensure their own continued control as arbiters of such pluralistic political scenes, which they had no intention of ceding through genuine liberalization".[28] Partial liberalization or liberalized authoritarian systems may be considered worst for the young people, since they cannot expect any change through the quassi-alternative ideas and politicians. Thus, protests on the streets were left as the only option for groups such as *Kefaya, National Association for Change, 9 March Group for the Independence of Egypt's Universities* and *April 6 Youth Movement* in Egypt.

As a response to all these developments, the EU first perceived these as democratization attempts that should be supported. In Tunisia, after the change of government, the EU gave more funding to the projects working on regional imbalances, prioritized support for elections by providing technical assistance to help the authorities organize elections and "supported civil society organizations (CSOs) in raising public awareness and training domestic election observers."[29] To support the economic transition the EU provided €3.5 billion for the period 2011-13 and €700 million through the SPRING programme (Support for Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth). The European Commission launched an agriculture and rural development (ENPARD) initiative for the period between 2012 and 2018 and allocated €4 million. Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia benefitted from this initiative. In order to increase people to people contact, dialogues on migration, mobility and security were initiated. The Privileged Partnership was established in 2012 between the EU and Tunisia, followed by the 2013-2017 Action Plan.[30] For the period 2021-

---

[27] Daniel Brumberg, "The trap of liberalized autocracy", *Journal of Democracy* 13, no 4 (October 2002): 57.

[28] Brumberg, "The trap of liberalized autocracy", 61.

[29] "EU's response to the "Arab Spring": The State-of-Play after Two Years", European Commission, February 8, 2013, accessed August 2, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/de/MEMO_13_81

[30] "2013 – 2017 Action Plan", European Commission, 2012, accessed August 2, 2023, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/plan_action_tunisie_ue_2013_2017_fr_0.pdf

2024, the EU's bilateral assistance to Tunisia under the Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe initiative reaches €600 million and focuses on "promoting good governance and the rule of law; stimulating a sustainable economic growth generating employment and accompanying the energy transition and reinforcing social cohesion between generations and regions."[31] In February 2021, the Joint Communication on the renewed partnership with the Southern Neighborhood was adopted and several flagship themes – such as support to the conclusion of a Comprehensive Aviation Agreement with the EU, support to the deployment of social protection systems improving the resilience of vulnerable populations, support to the digitalization of the economy, support to the rollout of the national water strategy, securing availability and access to water – are directly linked to EU-Tunisia relations.[32] In addition to these programmes and initiatives, Tunisia has been a part of EIDHR, Horizon 2020 for Research and Development and cultural programmes such as MEDIA.

In Egypt, the political situation was more complicated than Tunisia and when the Muslim Brotherhood won the elections after Mobarak's departure, Morsi's "attempts to impose an Islamic constitution and claim maximal powers to himself alienated secularists as well as pro-democracy groups and also the army"[33]. In January 2013, just before Morsi was toppled, European Council President Herman van Rompuy visited Cairo and in his remarks after meeting with Morsi he said:

> "Mr. President, you may rest assured that on this path of enshrining democracy, the European Union will stand by your side as a friend, a neighbor and a partner."[34]

---

[31] "European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), Tunisia", European Commission, accessed August 2, 2023 https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/tunisia_en

[32] "Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood Economic and Investment Plan for the Southern Neighbours", European Commission, February 9, 2021, accessed August 2, 2023 https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_staff_working_document_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf

[33] CSR Murthy, "United Nations and the Arab Spring: Role in Libya, Syria, and Yemen", *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 5 no 2, (2018):121

[34] "Remarks by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy after his meeting with president of Egypt Mohamed Morsi", European Council, January

After Morsi was overthrown by the military coup led by General Sisi in July 2013, Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and First Vice President of the European Commission at the time, visited him and emphasized the importance of political inclusiveness for democratization in Egypt.[35] By the end of 2013, Morsi was charged with "terrorism and plotting with foreign militants against Egypt" while the Muslim Brotherhood was officially classified as a terrorist group.[36] In May 2014, General Sisi was elected president with 97%[37] of the vote and re-elected in 2018, although there were opposing views and criticism over human rights violations. On June 5, 2014, the EU stated that

> "The European Union expresses its willingness to work closely with the new authorities in Egypt in a constructive partnership with a view to strengthening our bilateral relations."[38]

The criticism over the EU's statement emphasized lack of democratic practices in the country, since the parliamentary elections were to be held before the presidential elections, but the order was reversed and the president had the right to appoint 5% of the members of the new parliament according to the law passed by the interim president, Mansour.[39] The EU continued relations with Sisi since, and in his latest visit to Brussels in March 2022, protests highlighted human rights violations in Egypt. However, European Commission President von der Leyen emphasized Egypt's strategic

---

13, 2013, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/26169/134655.pdf

[35] "Ashton Meets With Egypt's Morsi", Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, July 30, 2013, accessed August 2, 2023 https://www.rferl.org/a/eu-ashton-morsi-egypt/25060773.html

[36] Shadia Nasralla, *Egypt designates Muslim Brotherhood as terrorist group* , Reuters, December 25, 2013, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-explosion-brotherhood-idUSBRE9BO08H20131225

[37] "Egypt President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi: Ruler with an iron grip", BBC News, December 1, 2020, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-19256730

[38] "Declaration on behalf of the European Union on the presidential elections in Egypt*"*, European Council, June 5, 2014 accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/143096.pdf

[39] Andrew Gardner, "EU 'congratulates' el-Sisi", *Politico* June 6, 2014, accessed August 2, 2023 https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-congratulates-el-sisi/.

importance in the "fight against illegal migration, terrorism, and extremism".[40] In addition to its strategic importance, the economic relations between the EU and Egypt continued to grow, trade between the EU and Egypt reached €24.5 billion in 2020[41]. The biggest FDI inflow to Egypt is from the EU, 1.928.900 (USD mn)[42], and Egypt's exports to the EU reached 8 billion EUR[43] in 2022.

In the Berlin International Conference on Libya, 19 January 2020, it was decided on the Berlin Process to assist the UN "in unifying the International Community in their support for a peaceful solution to the Libyan crisis".[44] In the conclusions of this conference, governance, energy resources, respect for human rights and economic and financial recovery are some of the highlighted subheadings, which are in line with the EU's main concerns regarding Libya. In order to assist the humanitarian needs the European Commission allocated €3 Million[45] in 2011, and since 2011 the Union "has allocated €88.8 million in humanitarian aid to Libya, including €4 million in 2022"[46], imposed sanctions (28 February 2011) prohibiting the

---

[40] "EU welcomes Egypt's President al-Sisi: when human rights do not matter", Euromed Rights, March 3, 2022, accessed August 2, 2023 https://euromedrights.org/publication/eu-welcomes-egypts-president-al-sisi-when-human-rights-do-not-matter/.

[41] "The European Union and Egypt", Delegation of the European Union to Egypt, July 28, 2021, accessed August 2, 2023 https://www.eeas.europa.eu/egypt/european-union-and-egypt_en?s=95.

[42] "Egypt Foreign Direct Investment: Inflow: European Union (EU) 2021- 2022", CEIC Data, accessed August 2, 2023 https://www.ceicdata.com/en/egypt/foreign-direct-investment-by-country/foreign-direct-investment-inflow-european-union-eu.

[43] Ahmed Kotb, "Egypt's exports to European Union doubled in 2022, says head of EU Delegation", *AhramOnline* December 15, 2022, accessed August 2, 2023, https://english.ahram.org.eg/News/482653.aspx

[44] "Berlin International Conference on Libya", United Nations Support Mission in Libya, January 19, 2020, accessed August 2, 2023, https://unsmil.unmissions.org/berlin-international-conference-libya-19-january-2020

[45] "Crisis in Libya: European Commission Allocates €3 Million to Address Humanitarian Needs", European Union Press Release, Brussels, February 25, 2011, accessed August 2, 2023, http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/228

[46] "European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, Libya Fact sheet", European Commission, accessed August 2, 2023, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/libya_en# how-are-we-helping

"direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of arms," travel restrictions, and freezing of assets related to the Qaddafi government.[47] In April 2011, the EU adopted a decision on EUFOR Libya, stating that if requested by the OCHA[48], it would provide support for humanitarian assistance in the region."[49] The EU has also been funding projects on civil society, governance, health, economy, youth and education, and support to the political process, security and mediation activities via the European Neighborhood Instrument and the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace.[50]

Syrians were suffering from high unemployment, corruption and lack of political and social freedoms and demanded political-economic changes similar to the other Arab countries. In March 2011, protests erupted in Syria and as the unrest spread, foreign power involvement – financially and militarily – made things more complicated in the region, and by March 2023 more than 500,000 people had died, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The Syrian War intoxicated the whole region and became too intricate. The opposition was fragmented and as the extremist jihadist organizations became involved, the violence escalated. In 2012, a group called Jabhat al Nusra announced itself as Al-Qaeda's Syrian franchise, and in 2013 remnants of Al Qaeda in Iraq calling itself the Islamic State of Iraq "exceeded al-Nusra's brutality."[51] In order to broker a ceasefire and peace

---

[47] "Council Decision 2011/137/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Libya", 40. The Council of the European Union, Brussels, February 28, 2011, accessed August 2, 2023, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:058:0053:0062:EN:PDF.

[48] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

[49] "Council Decision 2011/210/CFSP of 1 April 2011 on a European Union military operation in support of humanitarian assistance operations in response to the crisis situation in Libya (EUFOR Libya)", 41.The Council of the European Union, April 1, 2011, accessed August 2, 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT /?uri=CELEX%3A32011D0210

[50] Mohamed Eljarh, "Is Europe Exporting Instability to the Southern Mediterranean? Libya as a Case Study", *EuroMed Survey Changing Euro-Mediterranean Lenses, IEMed,* accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.iemed.org/publication/is-europe-exporting-instability-to-the-southern-mediterranean-libya-as-a-case-study/

[51] Zachary Laub, "Syria's Civil War: The Descent into Horror"*, Council on Foreign Relations*, February 14, 2023, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.cfr.org/article/syrias-civil-war

talks, several multilateral steps were taken. One of the first examples of these multilateral efforts was creation of the Friends of Syria group, but then the Geneva Process under the aegis of the UN became the main platform for the peace talks. The Geneva Communique called for a political process beginning with the establishment of a transitional governing body formed on the basis of mutual consent.[52] After 9 rounds of talks, there was no substantial progress in the Geneva process. In 2017, Türkiye, Iran and Russia started the Astana Talks, but failed to make any progress.

From the start of the violence, the EU, the US, and the Arab League put sanctions on Syria. The Arab League cut off the transactions with the Syrian central bank, stopped funding projects in Syria, and put a travel ban on senior Syrian officials, and in 2019, the USA's Caesar Syrian Civilian Protection Act established additional sanctions and financial restrictions on institutions and individuals related to the conflict in Syria.[53] The EU sanctions were introduced in 2011 and extended until June 2023.[54] The EU's 6 key areas in relation to its strategic objectives in Syria mainly focus on inclusive political transition in line with the UNSCR 2254, promotion of democracy, human rights and freedom of speech while strengthening civil society, national reconciliation process and transitional justice, resilience of the Syrian population and society.[55]

---

[52] "Final communiqué of the Action Group for Syria", United Nations Office at Geneva, June 30, 2012, accessed August 2, 2023, https://web.archive.org /web/20140129025023/http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/%28httpNews ByYear_en%29/18F70DBC923963B1C1257A2D0060696B?OpenDocument

[53] "H.R.31 - Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019", US Congress, 116th Congress 2019 – 2020, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.congress.gov/bill/ 116th-congress/house-bill/31

[54] The EU's list of sanctioned people and entities includes 289 persons targeted by both assets freeze and a travel ban, and 70 entities subject to an assets freeze. Other measures include a ban on the import of oil, restrictions on certain investments, a freeze of the assets of the Syrian Central Bank held in the EU, and export restrictions on equipment and technology that might be used for internal repression, as well as on equipment and technology for the monitoring or interception of internet or telephone communications. "Syria: Council extends sanctions against the regime for another year", Council of the European Union, May 31, 2022 https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/05/31/ syria-council-extends-sanctions-against-the-regime-for-another-year/

[55] "EU Response to the Syrian Crisis", European Commission, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/factsheet_syria_digital-final.pdf

The EU's main contribution was in the field of humanitarian aid since the start of the civil war in Syria. ECHO[56] sets its mission as "to preserve lives, prevent and alleviate human suffering and safeguard populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises."[57] Also, FPI[58] was responsible for the ICSP[59] and since 2011 it has funded projects supporting UN peace efforts, civil society dialogue initiatives, transitional justice and countering violent extremism.[60] From mid-2021 onwards, FPI managed funds under the crisis response pillar of the new NDICI[61].[62] In addition to these initiatives, the Brussels Conference has been a platform for raising funds to support the CSOs and people in Syria. Josep Borrell[63], stated that the EU has delivered "€25 billion since the start of the crisis." In the Brussels Conference in March 2021, additional "€5.3 billion of new pledges" was generated.[64] EU Regional Trust Fund, Maddad was also used to merge various EU financial instruments and contributions from Member States into one single mechanism for fast disbursement.[65]

---

[56] European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

[57] "About", European Commission, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, accessed August 2, 2023, https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/european-civil-protection-and-humanitarian-aid-operations_en

[58] European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments

[59] Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace

[60] "Foreign Policy Instruments", European Commission, accessed August 2, 2023, https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/foreign-policy-instruments_en#:~:text=The%20Service%20for%20Foreign%20Policy%20Instruments%20is%20reporting%20directly%20to,the%20most%20coherent%20and%20effective.

[61] Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument

[62] "Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI – Global Europe)", European Commission, accessed August 2, 2023, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-technical-assistance/neighbourhood-development-and-international-cooperation-instrument-global-europe-ndici-global-europe_en

[63] High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission

[64] "Syria: ten years on we still need a political solution that addresses the root causes of the conflict", Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Kazakhstan, March 31, 2021, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/syria-ten-years-we-still-need-political-solution-addresses-root-causes-conflict_en?s=222

[65] "EU Response to the Syrian Crisis", European Commission.

When one looks at the policies that the EU initiated and adopted in all these cases, it is clearly seen that the EU has been rather active regarding the aid towards humanitarian causes rather than political and/or military response. The 2015 Strategy the EU adopted included the fight against IS and utilized the Counter Terrorism Agenda to disrupt IS's financial resources.[66] However, in 2017 the EU could not respond, neither to the Russian military intervention in Syria nor the ongoing battle between the regime and opposing forces. As the conflict continues, the positions of the Member States have started to differ from the EU itself; some proposed accepting the victory of Assad and starting the dialogue with him, i.e., Greece, Italy, and Poland. [67] There has been criticism over the sanctions, arguing that the sanctions increased the poverty while the war economy became "a barrier in the way for peace".[68] Pierini[69] argues that the institutional structure of the EU foreign policy prevents the EU to be effective in Syria, while the inability of the big member states – Germany, Britain and France – to have a unanimous position towards the war decreased the EU's possible positive impact. Another common criticism was the inability of the EU to be a credible actor due to its dependence on the US, which limited implementation of its policies.[70] As Bouris and Nacrour argue, the EU "reduced its margin for maneuver as a funding partner and technical assistance provider to the United Nations (UN) mediation initiatives."[71]

---

[66] "Financing of the Terrorist Organisation Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)", Financial Action Task Force (FATF), February 2015, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.fatf-gafi.org/content/dam/fatf-gafi/reports/Financing-of-the-terrorist-organisation-ISIL.pdf

[67] Charles Lister, "Is the EU Starting to Wobble on Freezing Out Assad?", *Foreign Policy* October 27, 2022, accessed August 2, 2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/10/27/eu-syria-policy-assad-migration/

[68] Rim Turkmani and Mustafa Haid, "The role of the EU in the Syrian conflict", *SiT,* (February 2016):16, accessed August 2, 2023, https://brussels.fes.de/fileadmin/public/editorfiles/events/Maerz_2016/FES_LSE_Syria_Turkmani_Haid_2016_02_23.pdf

[69] Marc Pierini, "In Search of an EU Role in the Syrian War", *Carnegie Europe,* (August 2016): 22 accessed August 2, 2023, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_284_Pierini_Syria_Final.pdf

[70] Ayşe Üstünel Yırcalı, "Europe and the Syrian Conflict: Policies and Perceptions", *PODEM,* (September 2017): 9, accessed August 2, 2023, http://podem.org.tr/en/researches/europe-and-the-syrian-conflict-policies-and-perceptions/

[71] Dimitris Bouris and Anis Nacrour, "The Ins and Outs of the EU's Shortcomings in Syria", *EuroMed Survey Changing Euro- Mediterranean Lenses, IEMed,*

It was clear from the beginning of all these crises that the EU was more interested and invested in preventing migration rather than political and/or military response. As the flux of migrants increased by 2015, the prevention of migrants entering the EU became a priority, thus EU relations with its immediate neighborhood evolving around this theme was observed. In March 2016, the EU-Türkiye Statement was announced to end the irregular migration from Türkiye to the Union. As part of this statement, a.k.a the Migrant Deal, Türkiye accepted to "take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes for illegal migration". In return the EU "will further speed up the disbursement of the initially allocated 3 billion euros under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey and ensure funding of further projects for persons under temporary protection identified with swift input from Turkey"[72]. In 2017, a Joint Statement on the Migration Situation in Libya was published, stressing "the imperative need to improve the conditions of migrants and refugees in Libya and to undertake all necessary action to provide them with the appropriate assistance and to facilitate their voluntary repatriation to their countries of origin as well as durable solutions for refugees."[73] In 2018, just a year after these statements, another framework - regional disembarkation platforms - was proposed to prevent migrants reaching EU soil. When the original idea, Regional Protection Areas near refugee origin countries to contain them[74] was leaked in 2013, the proposal was not welcomed. Only after 5 years did the European Council conclusions call for "the Council and the Commission to swiftly explore the concept of regional disembarkation platforms, in close cooperation with relevant third countries, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

---

accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.iemed.org/publication/the-ins-and-outs-of-the-eus-shortcomings-in-syria/

[72] "EU-Turkey Statement", Council of the European Union, March 18, 2016, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/

[73] "African Union-European Union summit - Joint statement on the migrant situation in Libya", Council of the European Union, December 1, 2017, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/12/01/au-eu-summit-joint-statement-on-the-migrant-situation-in-libya/

[74] Alan Travis, "Shifting a problem back to its source", *The Guardian*, February 5, 2003, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2003/feb/05/immigration.immigrationandpublicservices

(UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)"[75] Since then, controlling migration took the relations between the EU and the regional countries hostage, decreasing the normative role and actorness of the EU as well as its image as a credible benign actor in its neighborhood.

B - The Black Sea Region since the 2010s: How Did the EU Respond?

Russian aggression in its "near abroad" has been escalating since the 5-day war in 2008 in Georgia. In 2014, invasion and then annexation of Crimea and in 2022, war in Ukraine changed the whole Black Sea geopolitics. Through all these aggressions Russia's main aim has been increasing its influence not only over the Black Sea and the Caucasus but also the Mediterranean and the Middle East. In the war in Georgia and in Crimea, the EU's response when compared with the war in Ukraine in February 2022, was less forceful. In 2022, the EU's sanction plans have been tougher, and the EU has been able to act in a more united manner, rapidly.

One of the reasons for Russian aggression in the region is NATO's enlargement towards the east and the increased Russian perception of threat. After the end of the Cold War, Czechia, Hungary and Poland became members of NATO in 1999. Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined the Alliance in 2004; Albania and Croatia in April 2009; Montenegro in June 2017; and the Republic of North Macedonia in March 2020.[76] Besides, the EU became a more active and welcomed actor in the region through its Neighborhood Policy, especially after the introduction of the Eastern Partnership. With the countries in the Eastern Partnership – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine – the EU aimed to intensify its relations through Association Agreements, which include not only economic and trade relations but also cultural, political and social policies. In 2013, Yanukovych withdrew from signing the Association Agreement and the "Euromaidan" Protests started in Kiev. At the end of February 2014, Yanukovych fled the country and temporary president Turchynov was in power until Poroshenko was elected as the President of Ukraine in May 2014. The division of the

---

[75] "European Council Conclusions", Council of the European Union, June 28, 2018, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/06/29/20180628-euco-conclusions-final/

[76] "Enlargement and Article 10", NATO, July 25, 2023, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49212.htm

country between Russian speaking Eastern Ukrainians and Ukrainian speaking Western Ukrainians continued shaping the regional developments yet again.

After Russia invaded and annexed Crimea in March 2014, in his address Putin stated:

> "Do not believe those who want you to fear Russia, shouting that other regions will follow Crimea. We do not want to divide Ukraine; we do not need that. As for Crimea, it was and remains a Russian, Ukrainian, and Crimean-Tatar land."[77]

The EU's response to annexation was quick. Just after the annexation referendum, the EU issued sanctions including travel restrictions and asset freezes, bilateral talks between the EU and Russia were suspended, and Russia was expelled from the G8. An arms embargo and restrictions on technological investments followed.

Russian attack on Ukraine, in February 2022, called a special military operation by Putin, initially launched on different fronts – Belarus, Kharkiv, Luhansk and Donetsk. The EU's response was fast again, and the level of solidarity demonstrated was even surprising, considering the criticisms over the EU's actorness in its foreign and security policies. It was argued that the consensus reached in the EU was as a result of "the distrust towards Russia mobilizing the Member States with one voice" and "shifts in trusting relationships inside the EU".[78]

Since the annexation of Crimea, the EU has sanctioned 1473 individuals and 207 entities, including Vladimir Putin, Sergey Lavrov, Viktor Yanukovych, the Wagner Group and news agency RIA FAN.[79] As part of the sanctions, the list of sanctioned products includes a vast variety of products such as software, quantum computers, products related to oil refining and the energy industry, dual use goods that can be used both for

---

[77] *"Address by President of the Russian Federation"*, President of Russia, March 18, 2014, accessed August 2, 2023, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603

[78] Michal Natorski and Karolina Pomorska, "Trust and Decision-making in Times of Crisis: The EU's Response to the Events in Ukraine", *Journal of Common Market Studies,* 55 no 1, (2017): 59

[79] "EU sanctions against Russia explained." Council of the European Union, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/sanctions-against-russia-explained/#sanctions

civilian and military purposes, luxury goods, crude oil, gold, cements and so on. In addition to the sanction on Russia, economic and military support mechanisms for Ukraine were initiated by the EU since the annexation of Crimea. These support mechanisms cover capacities such as temporary protection mechanisms, the European Peace Facility, the EU Military Assistance Mission for Ukraine, macro-financial assistance, budget support, emergency assistance, crisis response and humanitarian aid.

Another impact of the Russian war in Ukraine has been on the defense budgets of the EU member states. Since the 2014 Annexation of Crimea, defense spending has been on the agenda and the need for increased spending on battle tanks, unmanned aerial systems, defense-space capabilities, and military mobility was highlighted.[80] The Strategic Compass published in March 2022, one month after Russia invaded Ukraine, aims to

> "make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider, by establishing a strong EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of up to 5000 troops, deploying 200 fully equipped CSDP mission experts, enhancing military mobility, making full use of the European Peace Facility [EPF] to support partners and conducting regular live exercises on land and at sea".[81]

Ukraine has been one of the partners benefitting from the EPF and "€5.6 billion have been mobilized to support the delivery of military equipment to the Ukrainian Armed Forces"[82] Also, the EU member states decided to create the European Defense Investment Programme.

It was argued that the EU was not an effective actor in foreign and security policies all these years because there was no existential threat[83] and now, the war in Ukraine presented such threat. However, the studies so far have not demonstrated increased supranationalism or centralized decision-

---

[80] Daniel Fiott, "The Fog of War: Russia's War on Ukraine, European Defence Spending and Military Capabilities", *Intereconomics*, 57, no 3, (2022): 154

[81] "A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence", European Union External Action, March 24, 2022, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en

[82] "EU Solidarity with Ukraine", European Commission, accessed August 2, 2023, https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/eu-assistance-ukraine_en#support-for-military-equipment-and-training

[83] Philipp Genschel, "Bellicist integration? The war in Ukraine, the European Union and core state Powers", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 29, no 12 (2022):1885

making mechanisms in the EU in this particular field. Although the importance of the security policy climbed to the top of the agenda of the EU, the intergovernmental character of the policy is still protected so far. The impact of the sanctions was contested, and it was argued that neither the sanctions imposed just after the annexation of Crimea nor invasion of Ukraine in 2022 changed the Russian behavior.[84] One significant change on the Western security structure has been the Finnish and Swedish applications to NATO membership. So, it would not be fair to say that Russian aggression in Ukraine had no impact on the European security system. However, the biggest impact which united European countries has been on NATO rather than the EU. In the Vilnius Summit of NATO, emphasis was on a collective defense based on a 360-degree approach in which Ukrainian President Zelenskyy participated. The decision to establish "the NATO-Ukraine Council, a new joint body where Allies and Ukraine sit as equal members to advance political dialogue, engagement, cooperation, and Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO"[85] demonstrate the importance given to Ukraine and its territorial integrity by the Euro-Atlantic alliance.

Conclusion

When the common foreign and security policies became the 2nd pillar of the Union in the 1990s, the international environment dictated more liberal and cooperative relations among the states. However, by the 2000s, security concerns of the states and the people changed while increasing threat perception, the need for more security and defense shaped the international system. In the EU case, at the internal milieu, the 2008 economic crisis, followed by the 2015 migrant crisis and the 2020 pandemic, put tremendous pressure on the EU and its member states. At the external front not only the southern neighborhood but also the eastern neighborhood suffers from ongoing conflicts. The civil war in Syria, Arab uprisings, economic and social devastation in the south, and Russian aggression towards especially Georgia and Ukraine increase the concerns over border security and energy security.

---

[84] For further analysis see Stephen B. Nix, "Responding to the Russian invasion of Crimea: policy recommendations for US and European leaders", *European View,* 13, (2014): 143–152; Kiegan Barron, "The Annexation of Crimea and EU Sanctions: An Ineffective Response", *The Arbutus Review,* 13, No. 1, (2022)

[85] "Vilnius Summit Communiqué", NATO, July 11, 2023, accessed August 2, 2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_217320.htm

The paper demonstrated that in the Mediterranean region, the EU focused more on humanitarian aid and prevention of migration. In the East, facing the Russian aggression, the EU was fast in responding through sanctions and later through military equipment aid to Ukraine. Also, NATO's significance for the European security structure was proved once more. The desires of Sweden and Finland to join NATO, along with Ukraine expressing interest in becoming a member of the organization, underscore the inclusive security umbrella that NATO provides for the Euro-Atlantic region. In the Vilnius Summit, the emphasis on peace and stability, coupled with the commitment to increase military spending beyond 2% of GDP, reflected the collective effort to enhance security in the Euro-Atlantic area, with the EU playing a pivotal role as a partner.

Given the increasing security concerns, the EU faces external pressures to boost joint efforts in security and defense. On the one hand, the EU finds it necessary to robust its efforts in this field, on the other hand internal dynamics among member states hinder effective power-sharing. There is a shared commitment to prioritize security and defense policies, however it has not been translated into a unified, EU-level action yet.

Bibliography

Ansani, Andrea and Vittorio Daniele. "About a Revolution: The Economic Motivations of the Arab Spring." *International Journal of Development and Conflict* 2, no 3, (2012): 1250013-1.

Barron, Kiegan. "The Annexation of Crimea and EU Sanctions: An Ineffective Response." *The Arbutus Review* 13, No. 1, (2022): 120 – 131

Bauhr, Monika and Nicholas Charron. "All hands-on deck' or separate lifeboats? Public support for European economic solidarity during the Covid-19 pandemic." *Journal of European Public Policy* 30, No 6, (2023): 1092-1118

Baun, Michael and Dan Marek. "Making Europe Defend Again: The Relaunch of European Defense Cooperation from a Neoclassical Realist Perspective." *Czech Journal of International Relations* vol 54, no 4 (2019): 27 – 46

Bayer, Lili. "Meet von der Leyen's 'geopolitical Commission'." *Politico* December 4, 2019. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.politico.eu/article/meet-ursula-von-der-leyen-geopolitical-commission/

BBC News. "Egypt President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi: Ruler with an iron grip." December 1, 2020. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-19256730

Brumberg, Daniel. "The trap of liberalized autocracy." *Journal of Democracy* 13, no 4 (October 2002): 56-68.

Bouris, Dimitris and Anis Nacrour. "The Ins and Outs of the EU's Shortcomings in Syria." *EuroMed Survey Changing Euro- Mediterranean Lenses*, *IEMed* Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.iemed.org/publication/the-ins-and-outs-of-the-eus-shortcomings-in-syria/

CEIC Data. "Egypt Foreign Direct Investment: Inflow: European Union (EU) 2021-2022." Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.ceicdata.com/en/egypt/foreign-direct-investment-by-country/foreign-direct-investment-inflow-european-union-eu.

Chastand, Jean Baptiste. "Behind hostile immigration propaganda, Hungary welcomes foreign workers." *Le Monde* May 20, 2023. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/05/20/in-hungary-the-reality-of-immigration-lies-behind-hostile-propaganda_6027301_4.html

Colantone, Italo and Piero Stanig. "The Surge of Economic Nationalism in Western Europe." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 33, No. 4 (Fall 2019): 128-151

Council of the European Union. "Infographic - EU sanctions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine." Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/eu-sanctions-russia-ukraine-invasion/

Council of the EU. "Turkey's Illegal Drilling Activities in the Eastern Mediterranean: EU Puts Two Persons on Sanctions List." February 27, 2020. Accessed September 27, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/02/27/turkey-s-illegal-drilling-activities-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-eu-puts-two-persons-on-sanctions-list/.

Council of the European Union. "Syria: Council extends sanctions against the regime for another year." May 31, 2022. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/05/31/syria-council-extends-sanctions-against-the-regime-for-another-year/

Council of the European Union. "EU sanctions against Russia explained." Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/sanctions-against-russia-explained/#sanctions

Council of the European Union. "European Council Conclusions." June 28, 2018. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/06/29/20180628-euco-conclusions-final/

Council of the European Union. "EU-Turkey Statement." March 18, 2016. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/

Council of the European Union. "African Union-European Union summit - Joint statement on the migrant situation in Libya." December 1, 2017. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/12/01/au-eu-summit-joint-statement-on-the-migrant-situation-in-libya/

Delegation of the European Union to Egypt. "The European Union and Egypt." July 28, 2021. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/egypt/european-union-and-egypt_en?s=95.

Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Kazakhstan. "Syria: ten years on we still need a political solution that addresses the root causes of the conflict." March 31, 2021. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/syria-ten-years-we-still-need-political-solution-addresses-root-causes-conflict_en?s=222

Dyson, Tom. *Neoclassical realism and defence reform in Post-Cold War Europe.* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

Eljarh, Mohamed. "Is Europe Exporting Instability to the Southern Mediterranean? Libya as a Case Study." *EuroMed Survey Changing Euro- Mediterranean Lenses*, *IEMed* Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.iemed.org/publication/is-europe-exporting-instability-to-the-southern-mediterranean-libya-as-a-case-study/

Eurobarometer. "Resilience and Recovery Public opinion one year into the pandemic." Spring 2021. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/spring-2021-survey

Euromed Rights. "EU welcomes Egypt's President al-Sisi: when human rights do not matter." March 3, 2022. Accessed August 2, 2023 https://euromedrights.org/publication/eu-welcomes-egypts-president-al-sisi-when-human-rights-do-not-matter/.

European Commission. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. "About." Accessed August 2, 2023. https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/european-civil-protection-and-humanitarian-aid-operations_en

European Commission. "EU's response to the "Arab Spring": The State-of-Play after Two Years." February 8, 2013. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/de/MEMO_13_81

European Commission. "EU Response to the Syrian Crisis." Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/factsheet_syria_digital-final.pdf

European Commission. "2013 – 2017 Action Plan." 2012, Accessed August 2, 2023. https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/plan_action_tunisie_ue_2013_2017_fr_0.pdf

European Commission. "European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), Tunisia." Accessed August 2, 2023 https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/tunisia_en

European Commission. "Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood Economic and Investment Plan for the Southern Neighbours." February 9, 2021. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_staff_working_document_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf

European Commission. "European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, Libya Fact sheet." Accessed August 2, 2023. https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/libya_en# how-are-we-helping

European Commission. "Foreign Policy Instruments." Accessed August 2, 2023. https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/foreign-policy-instruments_en#:~:text=The%20Service%20for%20Foreign%20Policy%20Instruments%20is%20reporting%20directly%20to,the%20most%20coherent%20and%20effective.

European Commission. "Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI – Global Europe)." Accessed August 2, 2023. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-technical-assistance/neighbourhood-development-and-international-cooperation-instrument-global-europe-ndici-global-europe_en

European Commission. "EU Solidarity with Ukraine." Accessed August 2, 2023. https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/eu-assistance-ukraine_en#support-for-military-equipment-and-training

European Council. "Declaration on behalf of the European Union on the presidential elections in Egypt." June 5, 2014. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/143096.pdf

European Council. "Remarks by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy after his meeting with president of Egypt Mohamed Morsi." January 13, 2013. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/26169/134655.pdf

European Union External Action Service. "A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence." March 24, 2022. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en

European Union External Action Service. "A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence." March 24, 2022. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en

European Union Parliament. "Crisis in Libya: European Commission Allocates €3 Million to Address Humanitarian Needs." Brussels, February 25, 2011. Accessed August 2, 2023. http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/228

FAO. "World food prices reach new historic peak." Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/50519/icode/.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF). "Financing of the Terrorist Organisation Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)." February 2015. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.fatf-gafi.org/content/dam/fatf-gafi/reports/Financing-of-the-terrorist-organisation-ISIL.pdf

Fiott, Daniel. "The Fog of War: Russia's War on Ukraine, European Defence Spending and Military Capabilities." *Intereconomics* 57, no 3, (2022): 154

Gardner, Andrew. "EU 'congratulates' el-Sisi." *Politico* June 6, 2014, Accessed August 2, 2023 https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-congratulates-el-sisi/.

Geert Wilders Weblog, The Netherlands Ours Again, Preliminary Election Program 2017-2021, Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.geertwilders.nl/index.php/94-english/2007-preliminary-election-program-pvv-2017-2021

Genschel, Philipp. "Bellicist integration? The war in Ukraine, the European Union and core state Powers." *Journal of European Public Policy* 29, no 12 (2022): 1885-1900.

Han, Ahmet K. "An Indecent Proposal? The Issue of Syrian Refugees and EU-Turkey Relations." *ISPI Commentary* November 2, 2015. Accessed September 27, 2023. https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/indecent-proposal-issue-syrian-refugees-and-eu-turkey-relations-14099.

Kitchen, Nicholas. "Systemic Pressures and Domestic Ideas: a Neoclassical Realist Model of Grand Strategy Formation." *Review of International Studies* 36, No. 1 (January 2010): 117-143

Kotb, Ahmed. "Egypt's exports to European Union doubled in 2022, says head of EU Delegation." *AhramOnline* December 15, 2022. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://english.ahram.org.eg/News/482653.aspx

Kuperman, Alan J. "Obama's Libya Debacle: How a Well-Meaning Intervention Ended in Failure." *Foreign Affairs* 94, no 2 (March/April 2015): 66-77.

Laub, Zachary. "Syria's Civil War: The Descent into Horror." *Council on Foreign Relations* February 14, 2023. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.cfr.org/article/syrias-civil-war

Lister, Charles. "Is the EU Starting to Wobble on Freezing Out Assad?." *Foreign Policy* October 27, 2022. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/10/27/eu-syria-policy-assad-migration/

Litera, Bohuslav. "The Kozyrev Doctrine - a Russian Variation on the Monroe Doctrine." *Perspectives* no. 4 (1994): 45-52

Murthy, CSR. "United Nations and the Arab Spring: Role in Libya, Syria, and Yemen." *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 5, no 2, (2018): 116–36

Nasralla, Shadia. "Egypt designates Muslim Brotherhood as terrorist group." Reuters, December 25, 2013. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-explosion-brotherhood-idUSBRE9BO08H20131225

NATO. "Enlargement and Article 10." July 25, 2023. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49212.htm

NATO. "Vilnius Summit Communiqué." July 11, 2023. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_217320.htm

Natorski, Michal and Karolina Pomorska. "Trust and Decision-making in Times of Crisis: The EU's Response to the Events in Ukraine." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 55 no 1, (2017): 54-70

Nováky, Niklas I.M. "Who wants to pay more? The European Union's military operations and the dispute over financial burden sharing." *European Security* 25, no 2, (2016): 216-236

Nix, Stephen B. "Responding to the Russian invasion of Crimea: policy recommendations for US and European leaders." *European View* 13, (2014): 143–152

Official Journal of the European Union. "Council Decision 2014/145/CFSP." March 17, 2014. Accessed September 27, 2023. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2014:078:0016:0021:EN:PDF

Pew Research. "The New Sick Man of Europe: the European Union." Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2013/05/13/the-new-sick-man-of-europe-the-european-union/.

Pew Research. "Western Europeans more content with EU membership now than during euro crisis." Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/10/14/the-european-union/pg_10-15-19-europe-values-04-010/

Pifer, Steven. "Crimea: Six years after illegal annexation." *Brookings* March 17, 2020. Accessed September 27, 2023. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/03/17/crimea-six-years-after-illegal-annexation/.

Pierini, Marc. "In Search of an EU Role in the Syrian War." *Carnegie Europe* (August 2016): 22 Accessed August 2, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_284_Pierini_Syria_Final.pdf

President of Russia. "Address by President of the Russian Federation." March 18, 2014. Accessed August 2, 2023. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. "Ashton Meets with Egypt's Morsi." July 30, 2013. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.rferl.org/a/eu-ashton-morsi-egypt/25060773.html

Rose, Gideon. "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy." *World Politics* 51 (October 1998): 144-172

"Standard Eurobarometer 86." Autumn 2016, Accessed August 2, 2023. https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2137.

"Standard Eurobarometer 99." Spring 2023. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3052.

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. "Syrian Revolution 12 years on | Nearly 614,000 persons killed since the onset of the revolution in March 2011." March 15, 2023. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://www.syriahr.com/en/291981/

The Council of the European Union. "Council Decision 2011/137/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Libya." Brussels, February 28, 2011, Accessed August 2, 2023. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:058:0053:0062:EN:PDF.

The Council of the European Union. "Council Decision 2011/210/CFSP of 1 April 2011 on a European Union military operation in support of humanitarian assistance operations in response to the crisis situation in Libya (EUFOR Libya)." April 1, 2011. Accessed August 2, 2023. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT /?uri=CELEX%3A32011D0210

Travis, Alan. "Shifting a problem back to its source." *The Guardian* February 5, 2003. Accessed August 2, 2023.

https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2003/feb/05/immigration.immigrationandpub
licservices

Turkmani, Rim and Mustafa Haid. "The role of the EU in the Syrian conflict." *SiT*
(February 2016):16, Accessed August 2, 2023.
https://brussels.fes.de/fileadmin/public/editorfiles/events/Maerz_2016/FES_LS
E_Syria_Turkmani_Haid_2016_02_23.pdf

United Nations Support Mission in Libya. "Berlin International Conference on
Libya." January 19, 2020. Accessed August 2, 2023.
https://unsmil.unmissions.org/berlin-international-conference-libya-19-january-
2020

United Nations Office at Geneva. "Final communiqué of the Action Group for
Syria." June 30, 2012. Accessed August 2, 2023.
https://web.archive.org/web/20140129025023/http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD
006B9C2E/%28httpNewsByYear_en%29/18F70DBC923963B1C1257A2D00
60696B?OpenDocument

US Congress. "H.R.31 - Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019." 116th
Congress 2019 – 2020, Accessed August 2, 2023.
https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/31

Yırcalı, Ayşe Üstünel. "Europe and the Syrian Conflict: Policies and Perceptions."
PODEM (September 2017): 9, Accessed August 2, 2023.
http://podem.org.tr/en/researches/europe-and-the-syrian-conflict-policies-and-
perceptions/