



EU: A sovereign power for the XXIst Century?

**SOVEREIGNTY OF THE EU, ITS ENERGY POLICY,
AND THE STRATEGIC COMPASS PROCESS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How effective have EU policies been in addressing the threat of energy insecurity so far? What role do the unready common defense, security, and foreign affairs policies play? Could Europeans make it without changing the EU institutions and relations among them and Member States legislative and executive bodies? There is a need to link the defense and security questions with climate change mitigation demands, and to define a possible leading role of the United Nations Organization in such a process meant to put into practice the Paris Agreement goals. A common council based on the UN Security Council permanent members' representatives and delegates nominated by regional significant groups of states could operate such issues through a High Authority of some sort, where all the delegates are expected to be assigned by ecological, civic or expert organizations, with a global representativeness, privately or publicly owned.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) 26 in Glasgow from November 2021 showed a deep interdependence among nations mainly in topics such as: suitable energy sources; the security of energy supply, and actions towards climate change mitigation in the long-term vision up to 2100 with the goals of achieving net zero climate-altering emissions in 2050 (China and Russia in 2060 and India in 2070). The worldwide strategy must include ways leading to storage of already produced electricity in batteries or through hydrogen/ammonia circles in order to avoid electrical energy delivery failures due to “no wind” or “no sun” in some parts of the day, in order not to repeat in the energy sector the same sort of crisis generated by our lack of preparedness that we witnessed in the first months of the pandemic in 2020.

Social Media summary

Achieving an energy secure EU, with unified defence and foreign policies, that is a pillar of NATO

Keywords

#strategy #security #energy #sovereignty #climate #change

Short bio

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Introduction

How could the European Union become a sovereign power for the XXIst century?

Energy security can certainly be achieved much better at EU level than at Member State one. It is well known in Central and Eastern Europe that energy security is part of state independence (sovereignty) - the experience of the 1946 to 1989 period with the Soviet Union's raw materials policy is an unforgettable for this part of Europe and impacts to attitudes of them in a crucial way. Other parts of the EU are now gaining such an experience with the sharp increase in energy prices caused by indirectly declared dependence on the gas supply in the final solution of energy security in the coalition agreement of the German government where is a necessity to have reserve sources of gas power plants to compensate “no sun”, “no wind” status in the transmission or distribution grids. What else is the current phase-out of nuclear power stations, declared phase-out of coal power plants by 2030, and the connection to Russia via Nord Stream?

The new policy of holding a quarter of emission allowances in the European Commission's reserve fund was a good excuse for the Russian gas giant Gazprom not to be blamed for such a huge increase in energy prices. To complete the picture, it should be emphasized that Gazprom through various German companies, has leased gas storage facilities in recent years and, unlike in previous years, these were almost empty in last autumn. Coincidence? Hardly.

What is completely incomprehensible to me, and to many others in the Czech Republic, is why the wholesale price of electricity - from which prices are then derived for households and corporations in the Czech Republic - is set via trading on the Leipzig European Energy Exchange (EEX) while the Czech Republic exports its surplus electricity production (production costs are many times lower than the spot prices on this German exchange throughout the autumn of last year - 10 to 25 times). These huge discrepancies are supposed to be addressed by the Energy Union, which is also supposed to ensure the coordination of Member States' policies. Although the Energy Union was established in 2015, there is no concrete proposal agreed by all Member States on how to coordinate medium- and long-term contracts between importers from individual Member States and gas or oil suppliers from non-EU countries, how to solve the problem of production price and spot price at the EEX etc.

The interaction between an effective security and defence policy and the level of energy security is very simple and complex at the same time. Both are essential elements of genuine sovereignty. Nevertheless, there is a fear that any prospective kind of institutionalisation of above defined sectors would be postponed and delayed until the unsuccessful end of the legal framework of the European Communities built since 1950 with enormous efforts over four generations, unless a composite state such as the United States of Europe or United Europe or a Political Union within the current EU is established. I understand that the requested manoeuvre is a complex set of for at



least a decade of systematic legislative, executive activities together with an appropriate change of Treaties. However, I am convinced that if we do not start properly to plan step by step approach to re-define relations between Member States and EU institutions immediately after the re-election of Emmanuel Macron (which I strongly believe in), we would lose one of the last opportunities to come to the implementation phase in this decade.

At present, the situation in the Czech Republic is very favourable for a common security and defence policy of the European Community as part of NATO (very similar to the situation in Germany). The path to the EU pillar of NATO is absolutely open just in the Central and Eastern European countries experiencing the threat from Russia in the past.

For example, in early January 2021, an interview with the Czech Ambassador (at large) on Energy Security, Václav Bartuška, was published where he identified Gazprom as the instigator of the current energy price increases. He justified his claim by the almost empty gas storage facilities in Germany, which were mainly rented by Gazprom affiliates. One of the main tasks of the Czech Republic in the 1990s in energy and transport policy was to create sufficiently strong nodes with, among other things, the gas pipelines and transmission networks of the West, to be independent of Russia in energy matters. This was achieved almost 25 years ago in the Czech Republic, but unfortunately not in any other Eastern or Central European country except Germany, Austria, and Slovenia or Croatia.

Part 1: The energy security is a fundamental part of the sovereignty together with an effective defence, security, and foreign affairs policies

Traditionally the concept of energy security has referred to “securing adequate energy supplies at reasonable and stable prices in order to sustain economic performance and growth”. In an analysis on energy security, Ciuta points out that the concept of energy security has become highly normalized, meaning different things at different times and to different actors. As a result, bringing energy into the security domain has different political implications depending on the context. In the case of the EU, energy security refers to security of supply, and has been re-conceptualized to include sustainability along with secure and affordable energy. The EU’s energy security came to the top of the EU agenda in recent years due to increasing concerns about Russia as an unreliable supplier. The EU relies heavily on Russia for its energy, importing a large share of fossil fuels with some members relying nearly 100 percent on Russian gas. The gas disruptions in Ukraine (2006, 2009), which affected some EU members further, and the occupation of Crimea (2014) contributed to the EU’s perception of insecurity, leading to the development of a strategy to address the energy supply crisis. The EU and Russia relations were developed in the last decade from inter-dependence to dependence, and even vulnerability in the year 2021.

Russia has been a main supplier of energy (particularly gas) to the EU for a long time. While the EU relies on Russia for a large share of energy imports, Russia depends on the EU as a market for up to 70 percent of its exports. In a 2006 Communication, the European Commission



declared that “Russia seeks ways to secure energy demand presented by the EU market. The EU needs Russian resources for its energy security. There is a clear interdependence” (EC, 2006). However, in recent years, the EU increasingly saw its dependence on Russia as a vulnerability.

The Energy Security Strategy of May 2014 speaks about this fear: “Many countries are heavily reliant on a single supplier, including some that rely entirely on Russia for their natural gas. This dependence leaves them vulnerable to supply disruptions” (2014). So why does the EU not trust Russia anymore? The answer has to do with the shifting perceptions of dependence in the EU-Russia relationship. A politicization of energy took place on both sides, which helped redefine relations between the two. On the one hand, the enlargement of NATO and that of the EU in 2004 were seen as a threat by Russia. On the other hand, the nationalization of energy in Russia and the exclusion of Western companies from the Sakhalin 2 project paved the way for the EU’s feelings of insecurity, which were highlighted by the disruptions of gas supplies through Ukraine in 2006 and 2009. Moreover, as new members with high import dependence on Russia were added to the EU in 2004, its average dependence went up by approximately 20 percent, while new internal divisions within the EU appeared due to different sensitivities and vulnerabilities among Member States. This further contributed to the perception of energy as a security issue.

As Casier (2011) pointed out, interpreting EU-Russia relations in competitive geopolitical terms affects the way in which energy security policies are laid out. In the Third Internal Energy Package (2011) the European Commission pushed strongly towards the liberalization of the internal EU market, aiming to keep energy cheap and secure through the creation of a single internal market and restricting the power of Gazprom (which was seen as a threat) in EU markets. The 2020 and 2030 energy policies were affected as well by the perception of dependence as vulnerability. The European Energy Security Strategy (2014) which acts as guidance for these policies emphasizes the need to become less dependent on Russian imports: “We need to pool our resources, combine our infrastructures and unite our negotiating power vis-à-vis third countries [Russia]. We need to diversify our energy sources and reduce the high energy dependence of several of our Member States” (Jean-Claude Juncker, 2014).

We have seen that the “high politics” dimension of energy is a result of the politicization of energy in recent years. By the time the EU leaders were agreeing on a new framework for energy and climate (October 2014) to replace the old package that is coming to an end in 2020, substantial progress has been made towards the targets related to greenhouse gas emissions reduction, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. While the targets are important in order to address the problem of climate change, the environmental factor was not the only one the EU leaders had in mind when they designed the framework back in 2007. Neither was it the case when they translated the three targets into the new package for 2030.

Using climate change arguments to advance energy security objectives is part of the EU strategic plan for energy security; by developing indigenous renewable energy and reducing energy demand through energy efficiency, the EU could decrease its vulnerability and advance diversification away from Russia. On the one hand, energy saving is important for the cause of energy security because for every 1 percent of saving in energy, a 2.3 percent cut in gas import



can be made. On the other hand, decarbonization, along with the diversification of suppliers and the implementation of a fully integrated internal market, helps to decrease demand on imports of fossil fuels, advancing the EU's objective to ensure sustainable, secure, and affordable energy for all its members. On October 20, 2015, the EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy was proud to announce that the EU is on track towards the 2020 greenhouse gas target, reaching the lowest levels on record. "Europe succeeded in cutting emissions by 23 percent between 1990 and 2014 while the European economy grew by 46 percent over the same period. We have shown consistently that climate protection and economic growth go hand in hand" (Cañete, 2015). The EU bloc is also expected to achieve energy savings of around 18 to 19 percent, with Denmark leading the way. Also, the renewable target is expected to remain within reach, with most countries expected to perform "well" and some to exceed their targets.

Along with the completion of the internal energy market, the Energy Security Strategy (2011) stresses the diversification of suppliers and routes as a long-term measure for energy security. This is particularly important as Russia is looking to diversify its markets to ensure the security of demand through new deals with China and India. To avoid disruptions of energy supply, the EU has developed the Southern Gas Corridor project, aiming to develop new pipelines connecting suppliers from the Caspian Sea and possibly the Middle East. The Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) began its construction in March 2015 and is expected to transport 16 billion cubic meters of gas from Azerbaijan to Turkey and Europe at its completion in 2019 to get the so-called "South Stream". The EU has also announced plans for tapping unexploited reserves in Algeria, as part of a "diplomatic energy action plan" to diversify supply sources. Part of the plan is also the development of an LNG strategy that will deal with imports of LNG from the US and Australia what perfectly play a role in the return of gas prices around Christmas 2021 and further would be a strong argument in hands of the West

The International Energy Agency (IEA) sums up the Third Energy Package achievements of the package already in 2014 in three main points:

- 1) more harmonized cross-border trade and network rules.
- 2) greater independence of national regulators and transmission system operators and their co-operation through newly created European bodies – the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) and the European Networks for Transmission System Operators – Gas and Electricity.
- 3) the enforcement of competition in the energy sector, following the sector inquiry of 2006, supporting further market opening.

The politicization of energy brought energy security to the top of the EU agenda in recent months. The EU stands in front of a resolute decision to avoid energy insecurity after fulfilling the intention to stop using coal as an energy source in the coming 9-16 years. The EU had more success with its policies towards creating an integrated energy market and the diversification of suppliers than in harmonization of interests as well as activities of Member states in their strategies of the security of energy supply. Practically for the first time in October 2021 there was a clear conclusion



from the European Council to look for and find a common strategy in negotiation of middle-term contracts with energy suppliers from outside the EU

The principal actor of changes in approach to the prospective energy sources within the EU is Germany. On 7th December 2021 the coalition treaty among three governing political parties - which are considered as a progressive wing - was drawn up. We can quote interesting passages from this agreement which concern a climate change or energy security:

“The German government will ensure competitive electricity prices for industrial companies in Germany, while making consistent use of its own renewable energy potential, which it needs on the path to climate neutrality. In addition to expanding infrastructure, we will significantly increase electrolysis performance targets, support European and international climate and energy partnerships for climate-neutral hydrogen and its derivatives on an equal footing, and introduce green hydrogen quotas in public procurement to create leading markets. (...)

Energy infrastructure for renewable electricity and hydrogen is a prerequisite for Europe's agility and competitiveness in the 21st century. We want to diversify energy supplies for Germany and Europe. European energy law also applies to energy policy projects in Germany. We are accelerating the massive expansion of renewable energy sources and the construction of modern gas-fired power plants to meet the growing demand for electricity and energy at competitive prices in the coming years. Gas-fired power plants, which are necessary until the supply of renewable energy sources is ensured, must be built in such a way that they can be converted into climate-neutral gasses (H₂-ready). Natural gas is necessary for a transitional period. The hydrogen strategy will continue in 2022. The goal is to enter the market quickly. We want to make progress as quickly as possible in developing an efficient hydrogen economy and the necessary import and transport infrastructure. In 2030, we want to achieve an electrolysis capacity of around 10 gigawatts. We will ensure this, inter alia, through the expansion of offshore wind energy and European and international energy partnerships.”

“The price in the ETS is currently around 60 euros per ton. According to all forecasts, it will not fall structurally below this level, but rather rise. If developments in the next few years are different and the European Union does not agree on a minimum ETS price, we will decide on appropriate national measures (e.g., revocation of certificates or minimum price, etc.) so that the CO₂ price does not fall below EUR 60 per ton in the long term. (...) To compensate for future price increases and ensure the adoption of a market system, we will create a social compensation mechanism beyond the abolition of the EEG (climate money) fee. Foreign policy on climate and energy: We are strengthening multilateral cooperation under the Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement and expanding German cooperation on the environment, climate and energy. We will use the German presidency of the G7 in 2022, among other things, to take the initiative to create climate partnerships and an international climate club open to all countries. Our goals include climate neutrality, the massive expansion of renewable energy sources and their infrastructure, and hydrogen production. We are working for a global emissions trading system that will lead to a single CO₂ price in the medium term.”



On the other hand, nuclear power was at the heart of Macron's France 2030 plan for re-industrialisation, announced at the end of October 2021 just three days before the beginning of COP 26. : The French electricity supplier company EDF together with Framatome finishes development of the simplified version of the European Power Reactor (EPR) design, known as EPR2. Macron said that to keep energy costs at a "reasonable" level and reduce dependence on imports, France must continue to save energy and invest in domestic carbon-free energy production. "This is why, to guarantee France's energy independence, to guarantee our country's electricity supply and achieve our objectives, in particular carbon neutrality in 2050, we are going, for the first time in decades, to relaunch the construction of nuclear reactors in our country and continue to develop renewable energies", and definitely precisising on 9th November 2021 as follows: "These investments will allow us to live up to our commitments. As we close COP26 in Glasgow, this is a strong message from France." Then he added that the European Union must work together to build a credible strategy for reducing our CO2 emissions, compatible with industrial and technological sovereignty of the EU. The plan includes a programme to demonstrate small reactor technology and mass production of hydrogen using nuclear electricity in this decade. Introducing the plan, he said he would be able to make his decision on the potential construction of up to six large reactors "in coming weeks", anticipating the completion of a pivotal study by Prime Minister Jean Castex and the transmission network operator RTE (*Source: World Nuclear News, 10th November 2021*).

According to a report published by Irish Radio Television RTE (Raidió Teilifís Éireann) in late-October, the cheapest way for France to achieve its net-zero emissions target by 2050 would be through the construction of 14 large new reactors, plus a fleet of small modular reactors, as well as significantly investing in renewables. "Our economic situation still needs to be consolidated in a world where tensions over supplies and the costs of raw materials and energy generate shortages and inflation".

Nuclear energy is a part of the solution, it is not a salvation *per se*. The substantial procrastination of the West for more than three decades in the implementation of new technologies in this sector allowed the Russians and the Chinese to become equally strong or even better equipped than our allies. So, the challenge lies not only with its uses in the civilian sector. Nevertheless, nuclear power energy needs strategy and political consensus between leadership and citizens, distribution of roles, planning and patient people with a conviction that we are going in the right direction.

The definite solution will be the transformation of the economy into a hydrogen based one. This change needs roughly 20% of the electricity production capacity increase, due to electrolysers' consumption at least, which must be supported by pump-storage power plants. These powerplants, with bigger or smaller capacities, should be set up everywhere, where reasonable from an ecological and economic point of view. Batteries still have technological problems with cooling and waste management, so producing hydrogen stored in form of ammonia look much more auspicious in the next two- or three-decades horizon.



As declared among others in the coalition treaty of the new German government the price of emissions allowances in the level of 60-euro per ton of CO₂ reflects the right amount, which has the potential to motivate corporations and banks to finance low-carbon new installations. Further discussions need to lead to some consensus on the carbon tax or fix minimum carbon price as proposed in Glasgow's COP 26 in the final declaration undersigned on 13th November 2021.

Interrupting the Energy Trade System amounts to resigning of everything that concerns the climate goals. What is possible is to demand the recalculation of the offer/enquiry ratio to adjust the quantity of emissions allowances. We, as Europeans, need a concrete plan with tools and methods which describe the pathway of decreasing the fossil fuel needed for production of the electricity in the following twenty years (German coalition promises year 2023) for making a qualified estimate of the electricity production installations from other energy sources.

Part 2

The EU Strategic Compass Process

Any climate change could become a main security risk. There are solutions at the continental and global levels. One of these solutions may be the creation of an institution with a global impact on measures leading to the effective mitigation of climate change. The High Authority from the European Community of Coal and Steel could be a very good model for such a global body.

The EU can be seen as a dwarf from the point of view of having a single will in foreign policy. To amend this there is a process reflecting on the Strategic Compass which aims to cement the foundations for a shared vision for EU security and defence among European Union Member States. This Member States led process was initiated in June 2020, during which the first ever threat analysis was completed. Strategic dialogues among Member States are ongoing in 2021 to shape the content of the Compass on key issues grouped in four interconnected 'baskets'. Its goals are to operationalise the EU's strategic autonomy, a debated term, to refine the EU's level of ambition, and to better link the EU's strategic, operational and capability needs, e.g., looking for unified weapon systems platforms developed step by step at the EU level. In order to optimize costs of platforms and prepare suitable models of financing from public and private means, including an involvement of the EU funds, and the PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) process. An inter-connectivity, and a common operational ability of all the armed forces in air, sea and on the ground shall be systematically built, of course.

French president Emmanuel Macron (in his annual speech on 7th February 2020 which focused on the French defence and deterrence strategy delivered at the École de Guerre in Paris) proposed to develop a strategic dialogue with France's European partners on the role of the French nuclear deterrence in Europe's collective security. Countries which are willing to take part in it can be associated with the exercises of French deterrence forces. According to Macron, such strategic dialogue could contribute to developing a true strategic culture among Europeans, which



- in academic literature - is understood as a cluster of norms, ideas and ways of behaviour, that are anchored in the identity and that shape the choice of possible options for action (*Centre for Eastern studies, Warsaw* published on 21st February 2020).

Macron's proposal is another French initiative which in the long term is expected to contribute to developing European strategic autonomy in foreign and security policy and in the defence industry, under French leadership. Paris argues that Europe should strive for sovereignty in international politics in the face of an increasing strategic competition between great powers (the US and China) and of mounting differences in how Europe and the US view values and interests. Since 2016, France has been the driving force in the EU promoting the development of defence initiatives such as PESCO and the European Defence Fund. Paris (alongside Berlin) has also initiated two armaments projects which will be of key importance for the development of the European defence industry. Within the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) project a 6th generation jet fighter and complementary unmanned systems will be developed. A next generation main battle tank will be the outcome of the Main Ground Combat System (MGCS) project. Both FCAS and MGCS are to enter service by around 2040.

In 2018, France established the European Intervention Initiative outside of EU structures with the goal to develop "a shared strategic culture, which will enhance our ability, as European states, to carry out military missions and operations under the framework of the EU, NATO, the UN and/or ad hoc coalitions." Paris has begun to increasingly involve its European partners in French military operations in the EU's southern neighbourhood (Operations Barkhane and Takuba in the Sahel, the EMASOH maritime mission in the Strait of Hormuz). Islamic terrorism in Africa and the Middle East are viewed in Paris as the biggest threat to French and European security. Therefore, according to Paris, Europe should primarily counter threats coming from the southern neighbourhood and develop military capabilities for crisis management operations. Paris is ready to open a dialogue on the European dimension of French nuclear weapons while maintaining its full sovereignty over decision-making. Although France has emphasized the European dimension of its nuclear deterrence since the end of the Cold War, the strategic dialogue proposed by Macron is something new in the current international context which makes the French concept of European strategic autonomy more popular in Western Europe.

Official reactions from Germany to Macron's proposal appeared during the Munich Security Conference (14–16 February 2020). Germany's President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) and Foreign Minister Heiko Maas (SPD) supported Paris's proposal to develop a strategic dialogue on nuclear deterrence in Europe. Also, Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer (CDU) reiterated Germany's readiness to start talks on this issue. However, she also raised the question regarding the aim of such a dialogue and stressed that NATO nuclear deterrence guarantees relies on the US nuclear weapons deployed in Europe and the nuclear sharing arrangements that Germany is taking part in. In line with these arrangements, the US B61 nuclear bombs are stored in bases located on the territory of several European allies which do not have their own nuclear potential (at present these include Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, and most likely still Turkey). The decision to use these nuclear weapons remains with the US



President. The European allies provide dual-capable aircraft (DCA) for carrying B61 bombs during NATO nuclear exercises and missions.

Germany agrees with France in seeing the need to boost Europe's role in foreign and security policy in the face of changes in the US foreign and security policy and of the transformation of the international environment. However, Germany differs from France in its views on how this process should be shaped. Firstly, Berlin does not want the enhanced European security and defence policy to undermine NATO, as it is aware of the US role in guaranteeing Europe's security. At the Munich Security Conference none of Germany's representatives referred to "European strategic autonomy"; each of them mentioned strengthening the "European pillar in NATO". Secondly, Berlin views the European Union as the main framework for deepening military cooperation and is sceptical about France's unilateral initiatives outside the EU. Thirdly, Germany views inclusiveness as the overriding principle of enhancing European security and defence policy. The perspective of Central and Eastern European states should not be disregarded in this process (as emphasized by President Steinmeier in Munich) even if for Germany France is the main, albeit very difficult, partner.

The European Union and NATO will develop a new joint declaration by June 2022, when the next NATO summit is due to take place. This is explicit in the statement of the President of the European Council Charles Michel following the results of the first day of the informal EU summit. "We will develop a new political declaration with NATO before the NATO summit in June 2022," Summit participants on 6th October 2021 discussed the concept of a new community defence system called the EU Strategic Compass and plans to form an EU rapid reaction force. As Michel confirmed, this strategy and plans for a rapid reaction force are due for approval in March 2022. The future development of transatlantic relations and show if there is a possibility to agree at least on medium-term solutions for the Pacific Rim Region, the Western Balkans integration, and Persian Gulf issues, respectively the crisis on the Ukraine-Russian and Belarus-Polish borders. The combination of hard and soft power is very efficient only if there is a renewed atmosphere of trust, between the EU, the UK, and the USA after disagreements provoked due to establishing the special military cooperation agreement for Indo-Pacific Region announced by Australia, the UK, and the USA (AUKUS) on 15th September 2021. France has lost, because of AUKUS, a strategic 56 billion EUR deal with Australia on the delivery of submarines.

Some backgrounds of the challenging situation could be characterized as:

1) the USA has shifted its attention from the Atlantic to the Pacific and the establishment of the AUKUS which was prepared in secret as a military alliance with only three members: Australia, the United Kingdom, and the USA to provide guarantees for Australia not to be threatened by possible actions of China in the Indo-Pacific region. This is one of the most recent and obvious signs of this attention shift.

2) the EU wants to find a proper way to understand and to develop the relations with China and Iran. It does not want to consider them as enemies but rather tries to look for some sort of



partnership at least in strategic measures needed to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the quality of life. There are many examples in the world of ambivalent approaches, for instance Australia provides huge business relations with China concerning the mining of various minerals, and on the other hand witnesses more and more assertive military exercises of China in the Indo-Pacific region year by year.

3) As Robert Schuman stated in his *Declaration* proclaimed on 9th May 1950 (*translated in English*) “... production will be offered to the world without distinction or exception, with the aim of contributing to raising living standards and to promoting peaceful achievements. With increased resources, Europe will be able to pursue the achievement of one of its essential tasks, namely, the development of the African continent.”. Africa is the essential mission, which the EU has not recognized enough for 70 years. We, as Europeans, can hope for subject change in our behaviour in the near future thanks to the emerging new technologies and climate policies in the broader sense. European and African Union cooperation is the best hope of the next generations, and the power energy sector could be a pioneer one in this relationship. The EU must be able to sustain its actions either in the African missions or in conventional territorial defense, including the deterrence of possible Russian attacks on the ground or by sea.

There are many ideas on the table varying from energy and digital transition toward creating common defence and security structures and policies, including the protection of borders. What is necessary is to further develop the EU financial sources. The interconnection between civil society, industry, deputies at local, regional, national and EU levels and Governments is an essential precondition for the success of the pathway to mitigate the climate change as much as possible through a technological revolution that is converting a historical community of coal and steel to the one of digital and environmentally neutral technologies.

A full Energy Union with its Head at the EU level, as a member of the European Council, responsible for climate change mitigation and energy security is needed. Sustainability must be an unavoidable condition for all the EU and Member States policies. The resistance of the linear thinking people is durable. We, as Europeans, need to speak to everybody (none must be left behind), explaining and showing a positive long-term cost and benefit analysis (CBA).



Conclusions

The author's assumption is that we are on the brink of a genuine Energy Union – a partnership of the EU Member States - with common goals to achieve the final structure of capacities in 2030, respectively 2040, and 2050. National plans shall be very concrete to enable planning, respectively to create the energy strategy (policy) with clear milestones going on for decades up to 2050 at the EU level. The EU may also establish some controlling mechanism like the already established European Semester in Member States budget monitoring and negotiating process, with indicators, a fixed timetable, etc.

Improving the strategic thinking in the EU Member States is also a necessary fundament to make a genuine workable defence and security policy, which can lead to proper investments in hardware, weapons systems, cybersecurity as well as intelligence. This is a way to change the EU from the current economic power to a world superpower in approximately 25-30 years.

While climate change and energy security policies can make some people angry and violent because of fear having less jobs, increasing fuel prices etc., the common defence and security policy can unify citizens of the EU Member States to exercise being the EU citizens., However, NATO remains unavoidable in any nuclear deterrence and space activities. Having a plan does not mean having the technologies ready to achieve the objectives set. So, the only way to go ahead is a step-by-step process. The European Commission is very well prepared to balance such a process in a good manner. It needs the competences to act as such in all the environmental, social, and economic dimensions at the same time. The Horizon Europe calls and subsequent projects together with the Resilience and Recovery Fund must be used to harmonize efforts in the Member State and at the EU level.



Policy recommendations for the smooth path to the sovereignty of the EU

There is no more time for procrastination. To achieve and maintain prosperity, solidarity, and happiness in the long term we, as Europeans, need to transform ourselves, to have a new model of the society, emancipated from past prejudices. The EU taxonomy complementary delegated act is a good guide for large post-Covid-19 investments to a new quality of life without distorting again our environment through humankind activities.

To achieve the genuine energy security the Member States shall make an agreement on the Energy Union which has to be supported by a clear vision of the path to the Defence and Security Union as the EU pillar of NATO undertaking a full responsibility of those states which undersigned and ratified subject Treaties during a process lasting next two decades, which must be defined in this or the next year by indicators and milestones leading to the EU sovereignty in time. The sovereignty is recognized by others when it really come.

“It cannot suffice to invent new machines, new regulations, new institutions. It is necessary to change and improve our understanding of the true purpose of what we are and what we do in the world. Only such a new understanding will allow us to develop new models of behaviour, new scales of values and goals, and thereby invest the global regulations, treaties and institutions with a new spirit and meaning.” (Václav Havel, 2001, *Source: citatis.com*).

A progressive act should be to provide the Conference on the Future of Europe with a permanent timetable and rules of procedure for it to have a permanent status of advisory body (working for example at the same level as the European Committee of the Regions or the European Economic and Social Committee).

The EU Defence and Security Policy must have a clear orientation, based on strategic backgrounds, in order to ensure the survival of our values, and the promotion of our interests, by defining real threats by 2025 like it is going to be approved by the European Council in March 2022. Such adocument, known as the Strategic Compass, has been already issued by the European External Actions Service and undersigned by the High Representative for the Foreign Affairs and Security Josep Borrell. The Council presidencies trio, France, Czechia, and Sweden, has the capacity to provide necessary remedies on behalf of the European Union Member States under their consent at subject Councils of the EU to manage current challenges and threats in the compliance with the European Parliament resolutions and delegated acts of the European Commission aiming to the Energy Union and Defence and Security Union on the path to make the European Union sovereign in the sense being powerful enough to be admitted to the table of negotiations of the global super-powers by the end of this decade.

Without the Energy Union there is no security of supply, what could lead to the social unrest. To hold the social peace, one of the most desirable matters and pre-conditions of the successful pathway would remain as a principal challenge for the next trio of the Council presidencies, Spain, Belgium, and Hungary, up to the next round of elections for the European Parliament in 2024 and consequence nominations of European institutions' leaders.



Furthermore, to make the European Union become a sovereign power for the XXI's century, we would also need some institutional changes like:

- a) the transformation of the Council, where now-a-days ministers of Member States are members. The new form of the Council should consist of nominated members by parliaments of Member states – e.g., two for each. Reasoning, there is to have stable members for both legislative bodies to make smoother all these proceedings and legislative changes necessary to realize the twin digital and green transitions, avoiding current frequent changing of people at sessions of the Council;
- b) the simplification of relations in-between the EU institutions could be a personal union of the presidents of the European Council and the European Commission, where members of Commission Collegium become in practice a Collective Advisory Body for such a president to lead the European Council – Heads or Prime Ministers of Member States under the Qualified Majority Formula;
- c) realizing the single currency compromise to make a currency board for Czechia, Denmark and Poland, if they will not be able to overcome an emotional problem - giving up the national name of their currency - by 1st January 2030;



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