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## ЕВОЛЮЦІЯ ПІДХОДІВ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО СОЮЗУ ДО ФОРМУВАННЯ ЕНЕРГЕТИЧНОЇ ПОЛІТИКИ (2014-2023 рр.)

### EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S APPROACHES TO ENERGY POLICY-MAKING (2014-2023)

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**Annotation.** *This paper provides a research the specifics of strategic planning for energy security within the European Union (EU) during the period from 2014 to 2023. The analysis of adopted strategies, the identification of problems and challenges encountered during their implementation, and the determination of opportunities and prospects for forming a unified concept to ensure sustainable and reliable energy security in the EU are highly relevant for the European community today, aimed at further risk mitigation. The impact of geopolitical factors, climate change, and energy dependence on the formation of the EU's energy security strategy is examined. The research findings make a significant contribution to understanding contemporary challenges and the prospects for the development of EU energy policy.*

**Keywords:** *energy security, energy and climate policy, European Union, energy security strategy, energy transition, European Green Deal, REPowerEU.*

**Анотація.** *Дана стаття присвячена дослідженню особливостей стратегічного планування енергетичної безпеки Європейського Союзу (ЄС) упродовж 2014-2023 років. Аналіз прийнятих стратегій, виявлення проблем та викликів, що виникали під час їх реалізації, та визначення можливостей та перспектив формування єдиної концепції для забезпечення стійкої та надійної енергетичної безпеки ЄС є актуальним на сьогоднішній день для європейської спільноти з метою подальшої мінімізації ризиків. Досліджено вплив геополітичних факторів, змін клімату та енергетичної залежності на формування стратегії енергетичної безпеки ЄС. Результати дослідження надають важливий внесок у розуміння сучасних викликів та перспектив розвитку енергетичної політики ЄС.*

**Ключові слова:** *енергетична безпека, енергетична і кліматична політика, Європейський Союз, стратегія енергетичної безпеки, енергетичний перехід, Європейський «зелений курс», REPowerEU.*

**Вступ.** The priority of energy security, in particular its high-quality regulatory and legal support, is becoming increasingly important among actors in international relations. Given the emergence and escalation of not only regional but also global threats, such as climate change and an increase in average annual temperature due to significant carbon emissions, it remains important for states and international organisations to develop a set of rules that could serve as a regulatory guideline. However, certain political and economic issues stand in the way of formulating a high-quality, practical and long-term strategy to ensure energy security, which is currently key to preserving our ecosystem. By consciously assessing the current situation, risks and opportunities, the

European Union is striving to take on the role of a leading exporter of energy efficiency technologies and become a world leader in terms of quality rather than quantity.

Diversification of electricity sources, energy transition, energy efficiency, increasing the share of renewable energy sources and multilateral energy diplomacy - this is how the European Union's priorities in this area can be described today. The Common Energy Policy, which began its formation in the last century and later evolved into the single energy market project in 2015, required a solid conceptual framework that would allow supranational institutions and EU member states to develop a coherent vision. However, academic circles are still asking the question: what is EU energy security, what are its mission, goals, and value system? This has prompted more careful planning of energy policy, communication with partners, and the consolidation of strategic priorities in this area. In fact, the catalyst for these processes was the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014, which disrupted energy supply chains. The European Union has realised its main problem in the energy sector: excessive dependence on Russian energy resources.

The new energy crisis that began during the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted countries around the world to seek new or strengthened approaches to shaping the energy agenda. For some, it has become important to develop cooperation and expand the range of partners, while for others it has become important to exert pressure in order to maintain or increase benefits. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 was also a turning point in the EU's history in the context of rethinking its common foreign and security policy and, accordingly, its own energy security strategy. That is why it is important for the European community to demonstrate solidarity, resilience and prudence in all areas. Energy is becoming more critical than ever, and it may become a factor that will continue to influence the theses and positions of European politicians. Continued support for Ukraine, its integration into the unified energy system and the provision of everything necessary to prepare for the winter season and possible attacks on energy infrastructure is now a key goal of the European Union in the context of ensuring comprehensive security on the continent.

**The purpose of this article** is to analyse the strategies related to ensuring the energy security of the European Union for the period from 2014 to 2023, and to identify the problems that arose in their implementation, opportunities and prospects for creating a unified concept for ensuring sustainable and reliable energy security of the EU at the present stage.

**Literature review.** The reviewed scientific sources include the works of both foreign and Ukrainian researchers of the European Union's policy, in particular in the energy sector.

Yuriy Kohut analysed in detail the evolution of the EU's energy policy in the twenty-first century, identifying the role of institutions in decision-making [Kohut, 2022]. Ivan Yakoviuk and Maksym Tselik examined the impact of Russian aggression on the European Union's energy security and the initiatives that followed, including REPowerEU [Yakoviuk and Tselik, 2022].

Daniel Yergin, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, in his book "The New World Map", highlighted the negative consequences of decarbonisation for the European continent [Yergin, 2022]. Kateryna Domorenok and Paolo Graziano highlighted the necessity and pragmatism of the European Union's Green Deal [Domorenok, Graziano, 2023]. Benjamin Schmitt and Aura Sabadus provided recommendations for further EU measures in the field of energy security, in particular in the context of protecting Ukraine's energy infrastructure [Schmitt, Sabadus, 2023].

The study also analysed certain legal acts, in particular the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), as well as the EU energy policy strategies approved in the period from 2014 to 2023 and in 2006 (the so-called Green Paper of the European Commission).

**Main research results.** Speaking of the supranational level of policy-making, the traditional triangle of European institutions (Commission, Parliament, Council) is the engine for shaping the concepts of the mission, vision and goals of the common energy policy and improving the security of the relevant sector. According to Article 194 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU shall implement measures necessary to achieve such objectives as a free energy market, security of supply, energy efficiency and interconnection, with the Member States having the possibility to choose the energy sources they will use to supply their consumers [Eur-Lex, 2012].

At the same time, it can be stated that in the 2000s, supranational institutions were united in their definition of the main threat to the EU's energy security, namely a significant increase in import

dependence, in particular at the expense of Russian energy resources [Kohut, 2022]. In particular, the European Commission's Green Paper "A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy" states that the first steps to address the above problem are to increase energy efficiency and gradually switch to renewable energy sources, which in turn creates opportunities for creating new jobs [European Commission, 2006].

Since the Green Paper of 2006, which was approved against the backdrop of the Russian-Ukrainian gas conflict, the Russian Federation has been seen not as a potential partner with whom the EU seeks to develop long-term energy relations, but as a potential threat to energy sovereignty and an actor that benefits from Europe's import dependence for its own gain. That is why, after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the European Union approved a new document and, at the same time, a roadmap for reforms - the European Energy Security Strategy. Among the main priorities outlined in the strategy are the diversification of energy supplies and cooperation with exporting countries, with the latter coming second to the expansion of ties. The action plan of the EU member states, which was based on the principle of solidarity, also included the development of mechanisms for coordinating risk assessment, demand monitoring, building a high-quality and integrated internal energy market, developing technologies and domestic production, digitalisation, infrastructure development, and "unanimity" of the member states in the context of energy policy making [European Commission, 2014].

At the same time, at the European Council summit in October 2014, the leaders of the member states proposed to formulate an ambitious climate and energy policy with an action plan that would last until 2030. Among the goals set by the heads of government were a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, a 27% share of renewable energy sources, further reduction of energy dependence, and the formation of an energy market [European Council, 2014], which was later implemented in 2015.

The next step towards establishing and consolidating a common energy security policy was the EU Strategy for a Sustainable Energy Union. In particular, it clearly defined the vision and goals of the energy union. Among its important parameters were the interdependence of member states, security, competitiveness, decarbonisation, energy efficiency, employment, investment in consumer confidence, and the inclusion of citizens in the formation, as they take responsibility for the energy transition, use the latest technologies to "reduce bills", participate in market development, and receive additional protection [European Commission, 2015]. According to Yakovliuk and Tselik, the plan proposed by this strategy was primarily to develop eco-friendly technologies, ensure affordable energy prices, create all conditions for foreign and domestic investment in alternative energy sources, and find the least financially affordable way to climate neutrality [Yakovliuk and Tselik, 2022].

With the signing of the Paris Climate Agreement in 2016, the European Union focused on a package of necessary reforms to ensure the development of green energy, and environmental issues were raised more actively. In particular, the 2021-2027 EU budget allocates about 1/3 of the funds for the development of innovative technologies and support for projects related to renewable energy and climate protection [European Commission, 2021c]. However, the EU, as a "technological powerhouse," was required to engage more globally and set an example for other powerful actors. According to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the environmental situation is becoming increasingly dramatic, and the G20 countries continue to increase the costs of extracting minerals and their widespread use [Chernetska, 2020]. Moreover, the goal of preventing the average annual temperature from rising by more than 2 degrees at the Climate Conference was far from being achieved. Thus, according to the World Meteorological Organisation, already in 2018, the world showed a tendency that the average annual temperature could increase by 3.3 degrees Celsius [World Meteorological Organisation, 2018].

Unfortunately, subsequent documents of supranational institutions, in particular the EU Council, were purely declarative and described intentions to achieve certain goals. The action plan in the 2014 strategy, which was urgent and contained steps to ensure energy security, was not implemented to a large extent. It is worth noting that due to the EU's high dependence on imports, in particular from Russia, production volumes did not grow, but even decreased. This also applied to natural gas production, which fell by 40% in 2020 (which can also be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic) and by 11% in 2021 [European Commission, 2021a]. There was also a decline in coal

production between 2014 and 2019, by about 65%. The reason for this was a shift in priority in favour of renewable energy sources and biomaterial fuels [*Publication Office of the European Union, 2021*]. The energy transition required certain concessions in the extraction of mineral resources, so this process was quite vulnerable for some EU member states that could be completely dependent on energy from external actors. Speaking about the first months after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Germany remained the second largest importer of energy resources from the aggressor country for the time being. In total, between 24 February 2022 and 31 August 2023, the European Union purchased about €95 million worth of oil from Russia and more than €64 million worth of gas [*CREA, 2023*].

Nevertheless, the European community has made a number of attempts to improve strategic planning in the energy sector. Among such documents and ideas proposed by the European Commission, the following are worth highlighting. First, the concept of an "energy transition", which entails the comprehensive use of renewable energy sources, integration of innovations, digitalisation and reduction of extraction and use of fossil fuels. It has become a key pillar of the new climate change initiative, the European Green Deal. Among the other main goals set were to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 and reduce carbon emissions by 55% by 2030 [*European Commission, 2019*]. A number of sectoral strategies have also become part of the EU's green course, including the hydrogen strategy (use of hydrogen as a fuel), the strategy for processing biological waste into biofuels, improving food quality, etc. A separate Just Transition Fund was also created, with a volume of €18 billion. These funds were to be used primarily by countries with a significant share of the fuel mix made up of coal [*European Commission, 2021b*].

However, such a promising idea has its downsides. For example, according to Daniel Yergin, in the long run, such a policy of decarbonising the industrial complex in Europe, where carbon emissions began to fall at record levels during the COVID-19 pandemic [*IEA, 2022*], will guarantee an economic boom. However, over the next 5-10 years, decarbonisation may reduce the economic opportunities of European countries, which is more likely to lead to a "green recession" [*Yergin, 2020*]. Nevertheless, this approach, which is based on the European Climate Law, aims to consolidate sustainable development and gradual economic growth in the long term, while taking on specific political commitments [*Domorenok and Graziano, 2023*].

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 was also a turning point in the European Union's strategic planning in the field of security and energy. In this context, three initiatives are worth highlighting that still play a significant role in ensuring that supranational institutions and member states maintain energy security and adhere to previous action plans. Firstly, a new EU programme to ensure security of energy supply, increase the role of energy transition, search for new supplier countries and, accordingly, fill storage facilities to prepare for the winter season called REPowerEU was approved. The expediency of its development was justified in the Commission's communication to supranational bodies and institutions entitled "EU External Energy Engagement in a Changing World". It noted that despite the measures taken by the EU after 2009, member states still depend on Russia as a supplier of natural gas, which it uses as an instrument of pressure. The EU's main foreign policy goals in the energy sector included:

- Strengthening energy security, resilience and strategic autonomy to diversify energy sources and fill reserves;
- Accelerating a global green and equitable energy transition to ensure sustainable, secure and affordable energy for the world;
- Providing support to Ukraine and other countries directly or indirectly under pressure from Russia;
- Developing long-term international relations and promoting energy efficiency and clean energy [*European Commission, 2022*].

The REPowerEU platform itself was initiated on 18 May 2022 and has since served as a hub for member states and partners to exchange information, arrange for the supply of primarily liquefied natural gas, and follow up on previous action plans and strategies, including the Green Deal. According to its resolution no. 2022/2560, the European Parliament called on member states to create common energy reserves and mechanisms for the purchase of energy resources in order to reduce external dependence and price fluctuations [*European Parliament, 2022*]. Among the first

achievements were a reduction in energy dependence on Russia, a 20% reduction in electricity consumption, the introduction of a gas and oil price floor, and a doubling of renewable energy generation. Diversification, in turn, required the conclusion of new agreements with third countries, joint purchases of liquefied natural gas by member states, and the establishment of strategic partnerships with Egypt, Namibia, and Kazakhstan to develop renewable hydrogen production and natural gas supplies. As for the filling of gas storage facilities, as of August 2023, this figure was already 90%. For comparison, the target for November 2022 was to fill the storage facilities by 80%. At that time, the target was exceeded and the storage facilities were filled by 95%. At the same time, the European Union has set a target of reducing gas consumption by 15% under REPowerEU. Finally, the last beacon of this programme is investment in renewable energy sources. The goal is to increase the share of electricity generation from wind and solar (16 gigawatts and 41 gigawatts respectively) to 39%. The sources of funding are diverse: from grants to loans and specialised funds [*European Commission, 2023c*].

Secondly, in April 2022, the EU created a separate energy platform (EU Energy Platform) under the REPowerEU programme, which aims to coordinate, integrate infrastructure and negotiate with international partners on joint purchases of gas and hydrogen. The energy platform also encourages countries to use their market and political weight to effectively diversify supplies and intensify competition to achieve the best possible conditions for all EU consumers [*European Commission, 2023b*]. This platform can prove to be of high quality and long-term value by finding new gas exporters. However, in the context of the urgency of the action plans, there are problems and risks with both short- and long-term perspectives. For example, according to Spanish Energy Minister Teresa Ribera, the EU currently lacks a short-term plan to abandon Russian liquefied natural gas. Currently, the foreign policy priority is to reduce tensions and launch a peace process [*Yevropeiska pravda, 2023*].

Finally, it is worth emphasising the nuclear security of the European Union against the background of Russia's nuclear pressure, which is related to the temporary control of the Zaporizhzhya NPP by the occupation forces. The European Nuclear Energy Forum (ENEF) is an important platform for exchanging ideas and best practices on nuclear safety. In particular, the 2023 forum is dedicated to the risks and opportunities of nuclear energy in the world and its role in the strategic planning of the European Union [*European Commission, 2023a*]. Meanwhile, Euratom continues to work closely with the IAEA, in particular in developing a common position on the development of safe nuclear energy and prevention of nuclear pressure. Nevertheless, the denuclearisation of the energy sector within the European Union is becoming more intensive, as Germany and Italy have done by shutting down their reactors.

The above-analysed strategies and action plans, which were formed by supranational and national bodies collectively, identified the main problems of energy security strategy in the short and long term, namely:

- The EU member states are still highly dependent on foreign energy carriers, in particular Russian ones;
- Tense geopolitical situation, which makes it impossible to develop an effective long-term strategy due to the changing international political environment and forces to act quickly;
- Changing threats to the EU's energy security: first and foremost, against the backdrop of the gas conflict between Russia and Ukraine, much attention was paid to the security of oil and gas supplies, followed by gas, nuclear energy and renewables;
- Recognition of the vulnerability of the European Union's energy system to various kinds of conflicts, the cornerstone of which could be energy resources;
- Developing a common position of supranational institutions, as the Parliament and the Commission focus on commonality and solidarity, and the Council on protecting the interests of member states.

Moreover, the energy security strategy adopted in 2014 has not been fully implemented, and some targets have been delayed and not met. New technologies are changing approaches to energy and climate policy making. However, cheap energy resources remain desirable for most countries that do not want to experience a "green recession" as part of the green course.

Today, the topic of energy resources has also become a subject of political manipulation in the run-up to the 2024 European elections. However, according to Joanna Pandera, President of the Polish Energy Forum, it is best for Europe to act responsibly right now and to take the past experience of forming a common energy policy and market as a "gift". It is necessary to change the perception of what energy security is and to inform the population about the necessary changes [Euractiv, 2023]. Moreover, a unified concept of energy security should be based primarily on energy efficiency, diversification of sources (but taking into account the need to supply other critical raw materials), long-term sustainability and the establishment of strategic autonomy.

According to Benjamin Schmitt and Aura Sabadus, researchers at the Centre for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), Vladimir Putin's energy gambit against Europe has failed, as the energy crisis that began in 2021 has become a catalyst for positive changes, including the construction of new liquefied natural gas terminals. In 2022, wind and solar power overtook natural gas in terms of electricity generation for the first time, so there is potential for growth. However, in the coming years, the European Union should set the following priorities in its potential new energy security strategy:

1. Restoration and protection of Ukraine's energy infrastructure, development of a decentralised energy system, export of technologies (small modular reactors, smart grids, renewable hydrogen), assessment of damage from Russian attacks, and increase of gas reserve storage capacity;
2. Protection of the European Union's energy infrastructure: development of a single energy market, cooperation with the United States in the nuclear industry, preparation and security of the GTS, attraction of foreign investment, bringing Russia to financial responsibility, blocking the emergence of a Russian gas hub in Turkey, reducing the share of Russian gas in Central and Eastern Europe;
3. Secure Energy Transition: Developing an Emissions Market, Expanding Biomethane and Electrolysed Hydrogen Production [Schmitt, Sabadus, 2023].

Thus, despite the complex nature of the energy crisis, which still prevails not only in Europe but is growing in the world, the European Union has the potential to properly assess the risks, the main anchors that hinder the further development of the energy system in accordance with the "green course", and to develop a single concept of energy security: comprehensive in nature, long-term in time and practical in goals, which will be determined in accordance with the existing legal framework and political and economic experience.

**Conclusions.** Based on the purpose of this study, we analysed the EU strategies that ensured energy security in 2014-2023. Supranational institutions, in particular the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the EU, play a key role in developing specific measures to develop common energy policies and strategies that are in line with the interests of EU member states.

The European Union's defining problem is still its high import dependence on external energy resources, in particular gas and oil, which come from Russia. Since the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, Europe has embarked on the path of developing energy security initiatives, introducing a strategy in 2014, but it has not been highly effective.

The European energy market and the signing of the Paris Agreement were further steps towards positioning the EU as a technological and economic power and establishing strategic energy autonomy through the implementation of international standards. Moreover, the member states approved the so-called "green course", the number one goal of which was to reduce gas emissions by 55% by 2030. At the same time, all subsequent documents in the energy sector contained provisions on energy transition, i.e. the prospects for wider use of renewable energy sources.

Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the European Union has embarked on a path of rethinking its energy strategy. The energy platform and the REPowerEU programme were formed, which allowed the EU to respond confidently to Russia's energy pressure and secure alternative energy supplies, including natural gas. Nuclear safety has risen higher on the agenda, and the EU is developing relevant programmes and projects in cooperation with key partners. Nevertheless, it is still important to create a comprehensive energy security strategy that takes into account current realities and considers both short- and long-term action plans. This, in turn, will position the European Union as a sustainable, ambitious player that is able to meet the needs of consumers and secure a strategic advantage. This, in turn, includes assistance to Ukraine in rebuilding its energy infrastructure and its full integration into the European energy market.

Given the findings of this study, the prospects for further research were also assessed. It is important to further study the EU's experience in responding to crises and its ability to accumulate the efforts of member states for effective strategic planning and ensuring secure energy supplies. The practical experience of the European Union in implementing energy and climate strategies is important for Ukraine in the context of its candidate status and full transition to the "green course"».

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