

The Role of the European Commission in Framing the European Union Energy Union

Master thesis (15 hp)

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyse how the Commission has managed to successfully set its EU energy policy as high priority policy on the EU political agenda. The empirical material used in this study were analysed through the lens of Multiple Stream Approach theory, the Framing Theory, and the securitization concept. Several events leading up to the EU Energy Union from 2000 and onward are discussed in chronological order. The European Commission is the key energy entrepreneur in framing the EU energy policy. The expansion of the EU to include new EU Member States from Eastern and Central European countries and the Ukraine-Russia gas crisis during that period opened a policy window for the Commission to push for its policy of the EU Energy Union. The 2009 Ukraine-Russia crisis is probably the most key event that convinced all EU Member States about the importance of the EU Energy Union for sustainable energy security in the EU.

Key words: EU, security, energy, Ukraine-Russia gas conflict, Energy Union, European Commission

Acronyms and abbreviations

ACER	Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators
Commission	European Commission
Council	European Council
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community Treaty
CEER	Council of European Energy Regulators
ERGEG	European Regulators Group for Electricity and Gas
EU	European Union
EUROSTAT	European statistics
IEA	International Energy Agency
MS	Member State
MSA	Multiple Streams Approach

Chapter 1 Introduction	5
1.1. Aim of the study	6
1.2. Research question	6
Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework	7
2.1. Multiple Stream Approach theory	7
2.2. Framing theory	8
2.3. Securitization Theory/Security concept	10
Chapter 3 Methodology	12
3.1. Qualitative research design	12
3.1.1. Case study method	12
3.2. Primary and secondary material	13
3.3. Line of approach	13
3.4. Limitations	14
3.5. Disposition	14
Chapter 4 Empirical discussion	15
Chapter 5 Discussion	29
Chapter 6 Conclusion	32
References	33

1. Introduction

In 1951 France and Germany proposed to establish “The European Coal and Steel Community Treaty” with the aim to “contribute, through the common market for coal and steel, to economic expansion, growth of employment and a rising standard of living” (EUR-LEX, 2010). That was the beginning of the energy cooperation in Europe eventhough the number of countries involved in the project was limited. The second successful European Community energy project was the formation of Euratom which was established with the aim to “pool the nuclear industry of the member states” (Europa, 2015). It was not until the mid 1980s that further cooperation in the energy field was again on the agenda. The Single European Act of 1986 proposed the ways to establish internal market by 1992. However, substantive legislation was missing to achieve that target and neither of the Maastricht, Amsterdam, or Nice treaties proposed common community action in the energy external objectives (Maltby, 2013). Nevertheless, the Treaty of Maastricht mentioned the importance of energy security when mentioning that measures in the sphere of energy constitute issue of priority to the EC (Maltby, 2013).

The primary energy sources that are available for use in the EU are substantially less than the EU energy needs for its self-sufficient energy supplies. Figure 1 shows that nuclear energy was the main primary energy produced in the EU followed by renewable energy, solid fuels, and natural gas in 2012. There is little reason to think that such share of primary energy production has changed dramatically since then.

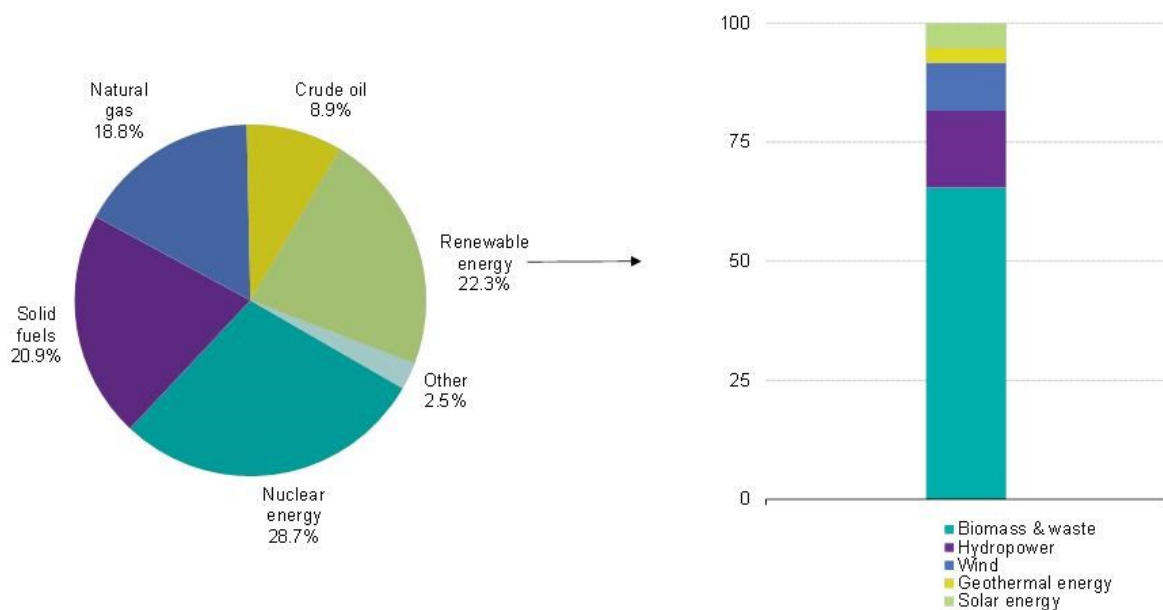


Fig.1. Shares of primary energy production in the EU in 2012 (Eurostat, 2015)

Currently, the EU imports more than half of its energy needs in form of oil and gas from outside the EU and mainly from the major oil and gas producers in the Middle East, the Russian Federation, and Norway (Eurostat, 2015). This means that more than half of the EU energy consumption depends on energy imports. The EU import dependency on oil increased from 75.7% in 2000 to 84.3% in 2010 and its dependency on gas import increased from 48.9% in 2000 to 62.4% in 2010 (Eurostat, 2012).

The European Commission (Commission) has always tried to frame energy security as a key issue to the EU security and sustainable growth and to frame the EU energy integration as essential for the energy security and economic sustainability of the EU. However, it did not have enough support from all the major EU Member States (MS) because some of them saw in that a threat to their sovereignty over their energy policies and to their independence in making their own decision over their international affairs. Nevertheless, the Commission continued its efforts taking every possibility to raise the idea on the EU political agenda. Since the beginning of the 2000s several developments inside and outside the EU have occurred giving the Commission the opportunity to further push for a common EU energy strategy. In 2015, the MS agreed on the framework policy of a common European energy strategy in what is known now as the EU Energy Union.

1.1.Aim of the study

The aim of this thesis is to discuss how and why the Commission has managed to successfully set its EU energy policy as high priority policy on the EU policy agenda.

1.2.Research question

The main research question is: How did the Commission succeed in pushing its EU energy policy agenda making it a high politics and a priority on the EU political agenda?

Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework

By using the three theoretical concepts below, I will try to discuss how the Commission managed to put the common EU energy policy high on the EU agenda. These three theories complement and reinforce each other and therefore I consider them as best fitting tools for thorough analysing of the empirical material I will use in this research to try to answer the thesis research question.

2.1. Multiple Stream Approach theory

MSA core argument is that a policy is successfully put high on the political agenda when problem streams, policy streams and political streams meet thus opening a policy window for the issue to be put high on the political agenda (Kingdon, 1995). MSA is used to view the problem at systematic level and MSA unit of analysis is the integration of the entire system. It shows how to best convert inputs into outputs while putting emphasis on the complexity of possible outputs. Therefore, it does not view outputs as linear approach. One of the strengths of MSA is in its ability to explain policy formation (Zahariadis, 2014). It considers policy making as unpredictable, irrational and dynamic (Zahariadis, 2014).

According to Zahariadis (2014), MSA explains how and why certain policy issues are regarded as of high importance to the authorities, why some policies are placed high on the political agenda while others are not. According to Kingdon (1995), the problem stream is defined as the ability to attract the attention of stakeholders, both citizens and decision makers, to a specific problem. The policy stream is when appropriate ideas for solutions are created, developed, and promoted. The politics stream is how to convince and lobby the public opinion so that they put pressure on the decision-makers to accept the proposed solutions. When all the three streams are coupled opening a window of opportunity, the proposed solution or policy would exist on the political agenda. Timing is important here and so are the policy entrepreneurs who make the most use of such window of opportunity or policy window to push their proposed policy forward. The ability of policy entrepreneurs to feel it is appropriate timing to move a framed problem high on the agenda is a key for their success (Zahariadis, 2014).

Discourse framing is usually used to “influence the interpretation of the problem, thereby pre-determining possible solutions” (Bauer, 2002, p.383). Therefore, in order to influence the interpretation of the problem in focus, discourse framing is used by the policy entrepreneurs to offer already pre-determined possible solutions or policy to the problem of concern. To enable policy entrepreneurs to be successful in doing so, a profound concern of the citizens about that issue is one of the main conditions for that problem to be positioned as “high politics” in the political agenda. Policy entrepreneurs shall be able to frame the problem and also propose appropriate solution or the policy well enough to the public and also to the decision-making authorities as well and by this create the environment for a “policy window” to open. Then policy entrepreneurs use the policy window effectively to increase the possibility of their proposed policy to be placed high in the decision makers debate agenda (Zahariadis, 2014).

2.2. Framing theory

Framing theory considers framing as a key tool for policy actors who try to promote a policy of multiple dimensions. This is because framing allows the policy actors to select and put more emphasis on issues they are keen to promote (Baumgartner and Mahoney, 2008). According to Goffman, frames are “schemata of interpretations” that assist individuals or group of individuals “to locate, perceive, identify, and label events and occurrences, thus rendering meaning, organizing experiences, and guiding actions” (Goffman, 1974, p.21). According to another prominent scholar, Entman, to frame “is to select some aspect of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p.52). Framing is a process in which actors conceptualise an issue at hand in a certain way or redirect their views on that issue (Chong and Druckman, 2007). These frames not only influence the different positions of the actors but also influence the policy outcomes (Daviter, 2009). According to Rhinhard, “a frame projects a subjective image of a policy issue in a way that biases outcomes in certain directions” (Rhinhard, 2010, p.39). Moreover, frames help to promote more understanding of a complex situation in a conflicting context and also to empower some actors over others (Dudley and Richardson, 1999; Harcourt, 1998). According to (Rhinhard, 2010, p.40), “frames allow actors to make connection between new and existing facts, information, and

analysis, as well as with values and interests in the policy process” and that “this function is particularly valuable during periods of uncertainty, ambiguity, or crisis”. In such situations, frames help actors to make a connection between generic interests with specific policy alternatives (Barletta, 2007).

Policy frames provide problem formulation or diagnosis. In other words policy frames provide problem definition thus giving a prognosis to the problems and also offer specific solutions of what should be done (Eising *et al.*, 2015). Additional to having the ability to shape the policy outcomes, policy frames have also the ability to shape the policy process (Rhinard, 2010). Moreover, they provide a justification and motivation of why certain action must be taken (Rhinard, 2010). According to Rein and Schon (1991), policy outcomes may to a large extent be explained as outcome of policy framing. Therefore, policy frames does not only assist the actors in interpreting the situations but also help them to take the action needed to cope with such situation.

Prevailing policy principles may be challenged by crisis situation thus creating windows of opportunities and make it possible for paradigm shifts to take place (Surel, 2000). According to Bojn *et al.*,” the aftermath of a crisis and its outcomes can be usefully understood in terms of ‘frames contests’ between the various actors that seek to exploit the crisis-induced opportunity space. Crisis typically generates a contest between frames and counter-frames concerning the nature and the severity of a crisis, its causes, the responsibility for its occurrence, or escalation, and implications to the future” (Bojn *et al.*, 2009, p.82).

Frame entrepreneurs are individuals, groups of individuals, or organizations that make efforts to create frames with the purpose of changing policy outcomes. They use metaphors, rhetoric, scripts, and other strategies such as the ones based on the understanding of cause-effect relationship to create frames that shall be adaptable enough to be adjusted, frames that are used by actors to create coalitions and networks, actor based networks, which guide actions and call for a policy change (Rhinard, 2010). Advocacy coalitions are formed around frames since among the main roles of frames is to integrate beliefs and interests of the actors cooperating to call for a policy change. They actors involved in the advocacy coalition share some similar values, perception about the problem in focus, and causal beliefs. This advocacy coalition usually uses long term strategies that may take years of coordinated efforts and lobbying to change policies and to create institutions for that purpose. Advocacy coalitions

and policy makers use frames to push forward a policy idea that has prevailing public sentiment thus reflecting the values and opinions of large number of people hence connecting policy goals with already existing popular understanding (Rhinard, 2010). With times, frames become embedded in the policy domain shaping interests, attracting new actors while reforming old ones to form a coalition. Frames become so embedded in the policy domain that even new actors will have to interpret a policy through the lens of that dominating frame thus leading to “thick sedimentation of perspective over time” (Rhinard, 2010, p.62). Uncertainties and crises create conditions for information asymmetries that frame entrepreneurs use to push further for their policy making it high on the politician agenda.

2.3. Securitization Theory/Security concept

The end of the cold war, the intensity of globalization and interdependencies have created new realities and new forms of insecurity that made it necessary to broaden the security concept to include security issues that were not considered as security concepts in themselves as socioeconomic and environmental issues. According to the 1993 Human Development Report, “the concept of security must change from an exclusive stress on national security to a much greater stress on people’s security, from security through armaments to security through human development, from territorial security to food, employment and environmental security” (Human Development Report, 1993). Since the beginning of 1990s scholars from Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI) (Copenhagen School) have significantly contributed to the broadening of the security concept in IR studies through looking at securitization concept from constructivist perspective, thus proposing that Security Studies should be broadened beyond military aspects of security to include society, environment, economic, and political aspects to the concept of security, introducing new sectors of security threats and also by adding new levels of security (Buzan *et al.*, 1998).

According to Sheehan (2005, p.43), security is considered as “socially constructed concept with a specific meaning to within a particularly social context”. Barry Buzan argues that there are different kinds of security perceptions: political, military, societal, economic and environmental. He considers political security perception as the perception about the internal and external stability of states (Buzan, 1991). Moreover, the understanding of the perception of military security may include concerns about states’ defensive and offensive capabilities. The stability of national, cultural and religious identities may represent how societal security

should be perceived while the perception of economic security may be perceived as the possibility to have access to resources and markets. Finally, the protection of ecological biosphere may be perceived as environmental security (Ibid, 1991, p.19). According to Buzan *et al* (1998), securitization is a process that includes raising an issue above ‘ordinary’ politics issue and that that issue should not be necessarily a real threat to become a security issue but also because that issue is considered as an existential threat.

In arguing the necessity to broaden the security concept, Buzan *et al.* wrote “We argue against the view that the core of security studies is war and force and that other issues are relevant only if they relate to war and force ... Instead, we want to construct a more radical view of security studies by exploring threats to referent objects, and the securitization of those threats, that are non-military as well as military” (Buzan *et al.*, 1995, p.8). Moreover, they stated that “energy policy should be securitized and has to be handled as a security matter” (Ibid, p.23).

According to Steve Smith, “Security is what states make it” (Smith, 2005, p. 87). According to the Copenhagen School, security should not be understood as a direct consequent of threat, but rather as the result of the political interpretation of the threat. Energy security is now considered as an existential threat and its importance has moved beyond the economic dimension of energy to become part of the political understanding of security. Energy security has become as “the guarantee of the ability to access the needed energy resources” and consists of security of supplies, security of demand, and also the ability to transport energy from the producing countries to the consuming ones in a secure and uninterrupted manner (Özcan, 2013, p.65).

Hypotheses

- EC is a framing and policy entrepreneur that has played an important positive role in framing the energy security as ‘high politics’ in the EU agenda-setting.
- The expansion of the EU from 2004 and onward has empowered the Commission to successfully frame the energy policy of energy union in the EU.
- The several crisis between Russia and Ukraine since 2006 have opened a policy window that the Commission has effectively utilised to promote its energy policy.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this chapter, I explain the methodological framework I will use in this thesis and also explain why I have chosen this methodological framework. I will use qualitative research method and more specifically case study as a methodological tool.

3.1. Qualitative research design

Qualitative research is used to explain the development of social phenomena. Moreover, it provides broad insights about social aspect and helps people understand the environment they live in.

According to Creswell, “qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2007, p.37).

Moreover, qualitative research “consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world the visible” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.3). According to Hancock, there are four major types of qualitative research design: case study, ethnography, phenomenology, and grounded theory (Hancock, 1998, p.4).

3.1.1. Case study method

Case study method assists the researcher in understanding complex social phenomena.

According to Yin, “the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events.” (Yin, 2003, p.1). Moreover, Yin states that “Case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 2003, p.13). It provides richness and depth of information that are not usually provided by other qualitative research methods.

According to Hancock, “as a research design, the case study claims to offer a richness and depth of information not usually offered by other methods. By attempting to capture as many

variables as possible, case studies can identify how a complex set of circumstances come together to produce a particular manifestation” (Hancock, 1998, pp.6-7). Case study can be used to study aspects of a phenomena formed through events taking place at certain period of time. According to George and Bennett “a case is an instance of a class of events. A case study is thus a well-defined aspect of a historical episode that the investigator selects for analysis, rather than a historical event itself” (George and Bennett, 2005, pp.17-18).

When the research is of small scale as is the case of this research, case study is advised to be used as empirical tool to assist in answering the research question (Yin, 2003). Therefore, the case study approach will be used in this research. Case study approach is the “detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events” (George and Bennette, 2005, p.5). Researchers using case study as an approach use process tracing “to uncover evidence of causal mechanisms at work or to explain outcomes” and they claim that “causal mechanisms are central to causal explanation” (George and Bennette, 2005, p.9). I will use the causality approach in this research to attempt to explain the several factors and policy developments that eventually led to set the energy policy reform in the EU as ‘high politics’ in the EU agenda.

3.6. Primary and secondary material

I will use EU agencies reports, Member States official reports, websites of official EU agencies, magazines, newspapers, EU governments’ documents, articles and books that were written when events related to the EU energy policy formation were taking place, statistical data provided by European organizations as primary source of information for my research. As a secondary source, I will use written material describing and analysing the energy policy reform in the EU after the actual events have taken place. Examples of these secondary data are books, journal articles, outdated written material, etc.

3.7. Line of approach

Deductive and inductive approaches are usually used for reasoning in research method. In this study I will use the deductive approach for my reasoning. Deductive approach fits my way of conducting this research since I have chosen beforehand the theories I am interested

in studying, narrowed them down into hypotheses to further test through collecting data and observations to confirm the theories.

3.8. Limitations

This study would have benefited from face-to-face interviews with some of the EU officials involved in the framing the energy policy in the EU particularly the Commission officials to get deeper understanding of the processes, causalities, constraints, and opportunities related to how it framed the energy policy of the EU. Therefore, this is one of the main limitations in this study.

3.9. Disposition

This thesis consists of seven chapters additional to the reference list: Introduction, theoretical background, empirical discussion, analysis, and conclusion.

In the introduction, I introduce the problem of the energy supply dependency of the EU and therefore the energy insecurity in the EU. Moreover, I introduce the aim of the thesis, the research questions. In the methodology chapter, I discuss the reasoning of my choice of method in this research, limitations, and data to be used, among others. In the theoretical background where I will explain the main points in theories used in this thesis and will give the reasoning behind my choice. In the empirical analysis chapter, I will use the chronological order of events leading to the MS adopting the idea of energy union in the EU and to analyse the empirical material from the lens of the theories. In the discussion chapter, I will discuss the main findings in the thesis. The thesis ends up with a short conclusion that points out the main answer to the research question.

Chapter four

Empirical Analysis

I will base my empirical discussion on developments, both inside the EU and outside it, that influenced the EU energy policy since the 2000 and onward. I will divide this period into three phases. The first phase start in 2000 and ends in 2005. The second phase starts in 2006 and ends in 2010. The third part starts in 2011 and continues until the present time. The main reason for my choice to divide this period into three phases is that each of these phases has its own characteristics for the EU energy union.

4.1. The 2000-2005 phase: Dramatic increase of the EU energy dependence on external suppliers

4.1.1 Energy policy shift in two major EU countries

The United Kingdom (UK) and Germany are two of the old MS that have significant influence in the EU decision making. Given how they perceive their energy security and whether to cooperate with the Commission in its EU energy policy strategies that largely determine the fate of the Commission efforts. That is why I will discuss how the energy shifts in these two countries have influenced the common EU energy policy strategy. I will more discuss how the energy policy shifts in the two countries played well in the hands of the Commission.

The United Kingdom (UK) was considered as a net exporter of energy but that was so until 2003. Since 2005 that has dramatically changed. The UK turned to be a net energy importer since then (EIA, 2011). Since it was a net exporter, The UK was among the MS that resisted any energy policy proposal from the Commission that the UK may have felt as a threat to its independence over its strategic energy policy decision-making. With it becoming a net importer it has changed its position. One may recognise such change during its EU presidency in 2005. In its end of presidency report, it showed flexibility promoting stronger energy ties among MS especially in improving EU security of supplies which may only be

successfully done through stronger EU energy policy cooperation (Helm, 2005). The UK has thus conceded that it has to give up some of its sovereign powers over its energy policy to the EU as a strategic step to reduce any risk of its potential energy supplies insecurity.

Germany is considered one of the most influential actors in the EU and it is the EU biggest economy. However, it is heavily dependent on energy imports which make about 60% of its energy needs (IEA, 2007). Nevertheless, Germany, together with France and Italy were until recently the EU most resisting MS to the idea of common EU energy strategy (Smith, 2008) because such a common energy strategy may mean “a transfer of decision-making power and sovereignty to the EU level” (Westphal, 2007, p.98). They preferred to make separate energy deals because energy policy is “critical for national security and the economy” (Milov, 2008, p.15) through their monopoly energy companies, with external suppliers from outside the EU, especially with Gazprom of Russia. This resistance to the Commission’s policy idea of common EU energy policy was among the biggest obstacles for its success.

During the period 1998-2005 Germany was ruled by a coalition government consisting of the Green Party and the Social Democrats. The Green Party was advocating for phasing out nuclear power in Germany and for energy policy that encourages an energy strategy shift towards renewable energy sources for its energy needs. That was the period when the energy policy shift towards sustainable energy in Germany has begun. As the result of this shift in policy, renewable energy technology production in Germany was encouraged leading to the present reality that the German renewable energy technology is considered as one of the best in the world (Jegen, 2014).

In 2010, the German Federal Government has adopted set of energy policy instruments called ‘Energiewende’ which is a long-term integrated energy strategy path to 2050 (Jegen, 2014). As part of the ‘Energiewende’ strategy, Germany wants to have 60% of its energy supply produced from renewable energy by 2050, up from current 25% (Jegen, 2014). During that period there was no immediate plan in Germany to phase out nuclear energy from its energy mix.

Following the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident in Japan in March 2011, the German government has decided to phase-out its nuclear power by 2022 immediately closing down eight of its old nuclear units thus pressuring the German government to increase its

investments further in renewable energy. One of the main technical problems related to renewable energy in Germany is that there have not been enough investments in power network infrastructure connecting German cities to provide the potential renewable energy to the customer in Germany (IEA, 2013). Moreover, the number of windmills and solar cells needed to create that targeted renewable energy may well exceed the territorial capacity available in Germany meaning that Germany has to look for its EU neighbours to put solar cells and windmills on their territories. That creates a kind of interdependence thus increasing the necessity for policy coordination among the concerned states (Keohane, 2005). That would mean automatically more EU cooperation, at least on the regional level, on creating a common energy policy strategy. The Commission may have seen in the German energy policy shift and its consequences on Germany as a window of opportunity. The EU Energy Union may help Germany to implement its energy policy targets, an opportunity that will make it possible to achieve its energy plans set by 'Energiewende' and therefore it has started to be less resistant to the common EU energy strategy and to show more flexibility in conceding to delegate some of its sovereignty powers over its national energy policy to the Commission.

4.1.2. The EU enlargement

Since 2004, the number of MS has increased from 15 to 28 leading to an increase in the EU population to over 508 million people. The enlargement of the EU 2004 was the biggest in the EU history increasing the number of the EU population by over 20% (Statista, 2015). According to Maltby, this enlargement opened a policy window to the EC enabling it to "couple a supranational 'solution' to the emergent 'problem' of energy insecurity; that more reasonable pricing and reliable supplies could be achieved through an internal EU gas and energy market, supplied by more diversified sources of gas" (Maltby, 2013, p.439).

According to the Commission, security of supply is "insuring that future essential energy needs are satisfied by means of a sharing of international energy resources and strategic reserves under acceptable economic conditions and by making use of diversified and stable, externally accessible sources" (European Commission, COM (94) 659, 1995). The enlargement has created a new reality for the EU affecting dramatically every key sector in the EU. It increased the EU energy demand, its dependence on energy import from external energy suppliers and therefore the importance of the security of supply became even more

important than it was before. Most of the new MS were heavily dependent on their gas supply on gas import from outside the EU, dependence in some of the new MS reaching to over 90% of their gas imports need (European Commission, 2014). To add to their energy supply problem, most of the 2004 new MS had poorly developed energy sector, high energy intensity, high vulnerability to supply disruption, and also undiversified energy resources (Gnansounou, 2008; Neumann, 2010). This expansion showed clear differences in the energy sector between the new and the old MS. Old MS had more diversified energy sources, well developed energy infrastructure, more diversified suppliers in most cases. Since the EU is a European integration (economic) project, and the energy integration is part of it, this posed an EU integration problem.

That was precisely what the Commission has done by framing it as an EU integration problem (i.e. problem stream). The Commission has also offered its frame policy or its idea of the policy solution which is the common EU energy policy (policy stream). However, it needed to convince the citizens and the MS leaders about the problem and the solution so that the policy idea is pushed high on the EU agenda.

According to Buzan *et al* (1998), securitization is a process that includes raising an issue above 'ordinary' politics and that issue should not be necessarily a real threat to become a security issue but also because it is considered as an existential threat. It was during that period (2004-2005) when Gazprom started forcefully taking over all its private competitors in Russia, such as YUKOS and Rosneft, thus practically centralising the energy sector in Russia in the hands of the Russian government (Poussenkova, 2010). That has created uncertainty in the EU on how Gazprom will act as a main energy supplier and thus raising the issue of security of supply as a potential security and economic threat to the stability of the EU project. According to Light (2008) "the Russian government was seeking state control of Russia's energy resources to use as a political lever" (Light, 2008, p.16). Even before these developments in the EU, the EU 2003 European Security Strategy indicated that the EU energy dependence is an issue of 'special concern' (Council of the European Union, 2003). However, that 'special concern' was not considered as sufficient for the EU to make its clear energy dependence among the 'key threats' it was facing. Therefore, although energy insecurity was of special concern to the EU, it was not considered as a 'high' political issue that should be prioritised although the EC was trying to push for that.

According to Sheehan (2005, p.43), security is considered as “socially constructed concept with a specific meaning to within a particularly social context”. Additional to that, to frame “is to select some aspect of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p.52). Framing is a process in which actors conceptualise an issue at hand in a certain way or redirect their views on that issue (Chong and Druckman, 2007). These frames not only influence the different positions of the actors but also influence the policy outcomes (Daviter, 2009). Therefore, there arise differences in the meaning and understanding of a certain frame such as the meaning and perception of energy security frames among various states. The new MS were under communist regimes for decades and that have not only structured the economy and politics in these countries in a certain ways different from the West European countries but also influenced their people’s mentality, their social construction and perception of the world, and also their perception of risk and security issues. That may have contributed to different perception of risk and security among old and new MS regarding energy security issues. According to Natorski and Herranz (2008), the EU is characterised by divergent perceptions and conception of energy security among MS, especially between the old and new MS, and also among the various institutions governing the EU. This divergence of energy security perception among new and old MS is attributed to many factors such as import dependency, gaps between the national energy sectors of old and new MS, energy intensity, the strength of national energy companies in the national energy politics (Natorski and Herranz, 2008; Pointvogl, 2009; Neuman, 2010).

The increasing dependence on Russia as an energy supply after the 2004, additional to the then emerging reality that the Russian government was successfully trying to centralise its energy sector in the hand of the Russia central government, have increased the notion of increased insecurity in the energy supply to the EU from Russia (Neuman, 2010). For many MS, especially for the new ones, this was an existential threat to their national economy and sovereignty. One of the main goals for many new MS from joining the EU was to once and for all get away from Russia’s sphere of political influence. Because their domestic energy was so much relying on Russia as the main supplier, joining the EU did not reduce Russia’s influence on their energy dependency (Palonkorpi, 2007). Palonkorpi mentions that “the amity and enmity” pattern may explain why energy dependencies of particular states are

politicized and securitized while in others are not (Palonkorpi, 2007, p.5). Palonkorpi explains, by giving an example, how the type of relations between energy suppliers and consumers determines the perception of energy dependency and energy security: “State with cordial bilateral relations to another state might not consider 30% energy dependency from neighbouring state as a serious security threat, whereas two states with antagonistic relations might perceive even 10% dependency as a serious threat to national security” (Palonkorpi 2007, p.5).

So, the new MS had to lobby within the EU for a common energy policy in the EU since dependence on Russia as main energy supply because of their perception of this dependence as a security threat. This played well on the hands of the Commission who informally made a coalition with these new MS for a common EU energy policy. It saw in this as a policy window and made sort of coalition around the energy security frame with the new MS as they enjoy considerable weight in the political decision making of the EU institutions.

According to (Rhinard, 2010), frames are used by actors to create coalitions and networks, actor based networks, which guide actions and call for a policy change and that advocacy coalitions are formed around frames since among the main roles of frames is to integrate beliefs and interests of the actors cooperating to call for a policy change. The Commission continued to frame the energy supply dependency on Russia as a security threat to the entire EU. Therefore, the Commission yet again framed this energy insecurity as a problem and a threat to the EU and again proposed its common EU energy policy as a solution. That was an opportunity for the Commission to try to lessen the influence of the old MS who were resisting such energy integration policy. Discourse from the EU institutions and the securitizing actors of EU member states have continued to frame the EU energy security issue into the form of existential threat against the EU citizens’ standards of living and also the EU’s stability as an economic and political entity.

However, the Commission’s effort to become real EU supranational power would mean that it will be able to govern EU energy relations, including negotiating gas contracts with external suppliers including Russia, which would compel the MS to transfer their “decision-making power and sovereignty to the EU level” (Westphal, 2007, p.98). The governments of Italy, France, and Germany did not perceive their dependence on energy supplies as national security threat because their national energy companies, the so called “national champions”

energy companies, had bilateral relations with Russia. Since these three old MS national energy policies were mainly centered on promoting their energy companies' interests rather than promoting the EU energy security interests and together with national sovereignty issues over their national energy policies that did not make the Commission and new MS coalition's energy policy efforts high priority on the EU political agenda.

4.2. The 2005-2010 phase: Increasing threats to EU external energy supplies

The Russia-Ukraine gas dispute during 2006 has affected the gas supply to many MS both old and new ones, for four days. The gas supplies to Germany, France, and Italy as well as to Hungary were interrupted (Stern, 2006). Although the interruption was not for a long period of time, its psychological effects went beyond these four days and it functioned as a reminder to all MS that depending extensively on one energy supplier is not sustainable from economy and security perspectives. The Commission saw in this crisis as an opportunity to remind the MS of what it said before: that EU intensive energy dependency on external suppliers is a security problem and in its proposed policy solution to that problem in the form of common EU energy policy.

Another influential EU governing body, the European Council (Council), was clearly alarmed with the gas interruption in 2006 to some MS. It expressed that it is concerned with the excessive EU dependency on certain external energy suppliers, with the limited diversification of energy sources in the EU, and with high and volatile energy prices. In 2006, the Council communicated that:

“European countries are facing with several challenges in the field of energy: the continuing problematic circumstances on the oil and gas markets, the growing dependency on import and limited diversification achieved so far, high and volatile energy prices, growing global energy demand, security risks affecting producing and transit countries as well as transport routes” (Council, 2006:13).

Now that the Council is seeing in energy insecurity in the EU as a security problem, the Commission has had success in framing the energy insecurity as a problem to the entire EU. Since the interruption of gas supply was for a relatively short period of time, it could have been one of the reasons that the old MS did not see in that gas interruption to some of MS as a major security problem that needs to be set as issues of high politics on the EU political agenda.

The Treaty of Lisbon in 2007 reinforced the importance and need of coordinated action in field of energy policy among the MS. According to De Jong (2013), the ‘Treaty of Lisbon’ was EU major key treaty that brought some legislative basis for EU energy policy. It had two provisions that supported further cooperation in the EU energy policy, particularly in the internal energy policy of the EU. The first provision is related to security of supplies calling upon the MS to act in a ‘spirit of solidarity’ if severe difficulties arise in the supply of certain products, notably in the area of energy" (TFEU: Art.122). The second provision is more related to legislations of importance to the EU internal energy policy such as the trans-European network in the energy sector legislations. However, it did not include any direct specific legislation related to the external energy policy of the EU. The Lisbon treaty left to MS the sovereign right to decide upon their own energy policy strategies by stating that MS shall “determine the conditions for exploiting its energy resources, its choice between different energy sources and the general structure of its energy supply” (TFEU, 2009:Art.194).

It is clear from the lack of direct legislation regulating external EU energy policy that the Treaty was a compromise legislative document among the MS, a compromise between old MS and new ones. Moreover, it also shows that some old MS were still unconvinced that the security of their energy supply is threatened, and were also not yet ready to give up some of their sovereign powers over their external national energy policy to the Commission. However, the legislation opened up for more internal energy policy integration among the MS which is a step forward for a comprehensive common EU energy policy.

The Commission continued to frame, reframe the energy security problem and to call for common EU energy policy action including common EU external energy policy too. Frames are used by actors to create coalitions and networks, actor based networks, which guide actions and call for a policy change. According to (Rhinhard, 2010, p.40), “frames allow actors to make connection between new and existing facts, information, and analysis, as well as with values and interests in the policy process”. The Commission, clearly a frame and policy entrepreneur, continued its efforts to push further for the common EU energy policy learning from its past experiences in this matter, framing and reframing, and therefore has tried to tie energy security and the need for common EU energy policy with other contemporary EU issues such as climate change. This was innovative strategy the Commission has used to push forward its energy policy through coupling and framing the

energy insecurity with other issues that MS agreed to cooperate in and are set on the top priority of the EU decision making agenda such as climate change.

In its communication to the European Council before its meeting in 2007, the Commission wrote:

“The challenges of security of energy supply and climate change cannot be overcome by the EC or its Member States acting individually. It needs to work with both developed and developing countries, energy consumers and producers, to ensure competitive, sustainable and secure energy. The EU and Member States must pursue these goals with a common voice, forging effective partnerships to translate these into a meaningful external policy. Indeed, energy must become a central part of all external EU relations; it is crucial to geopolitical security, economic stability, social development and international efforts to combat climate change. The EU must therefore develop effective energy relations with all its international partners, based on mutual trust, cooperation and interdependence.” (European Commission, COM/2007/0001, 2007 p.17).

According to Rhinard (2010), frames, with time, become embedded in the policy domain shaping interests, attracting new actors while reforming old ones to form a coalition. The Commission in their communication to the Council identified priority areas for political action and continued to play a major role in influencing the policy agendas of both the European Parliament and European Council. The European Parliament, in its turn, have utilised its “conditional agenda-setting power” in the decision-making process of the Council and the Commission as well (Biesenbender, 2015). During the 2007 Spring meeting of the European Council head of states a new “Energy Action Plan” was decided upon linking climate change with energy policy. The Action plan was based on the EU “Green paper” of 2006. It called upon more cooperation in the energy policy field, more coordination among the EU institutions and called upon formulating policy frames by identifying short, long, and mid policy goals. In that action plan, five EU energy priority areas were identified for action: renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy security, effective energy policy, and to develop a strategic EU plan for energy technology research (Biesenbender, 2015, p.34). Here we may see the 2007 Energy Action Plan as a strategic action plan as a result of cooperation among the Commission, the Parliament, and the Council, cooperation as a result of the Commission framing efforts of EU energy security. This action may be seen as an important step in the

road toward common EU energy policy and the influence of the Commission on its decisions are clear.

Frame entrepreneurs are individuals, groups of individuals, or organizations that make efforts to create frames with the purpose of changing policy outcomes. They use metaphors, rhetoric, scripts, and other strategies such as the ones based on the understanding of cause-effect relationship to create frames that shall be adaptable enough to get adjusted, frames that are used by actors to create coalitions and networks that guide actions and call for a policy change (Rhinard, 2010). Some leaders in the EU institutions are frame and policy entrepreneurs. Jose Manuel Barroso, the Commission former president, was one of them. This may be realised from some parts of the speech when addressing the World Energy Congress in November 2007 when he successfully connected the energy security with other security frames such as the environment and climate change. He said:

“Energy is not an issue in itself; it has impact on other sectors: If I am asked today what is the most important issue for global security and development, the issue with the highest potential for solutions but also for serious problems if we do not act in the right way, it is energy and climate change. Energy today is not only considered as a major challenge from an economic point of view but precisely for its implications for environment and climate. Because of increased competition for scarce resources, it poses serious concerns for global security... It is the great challenge of our generation.”

Joining the EU, the new MS did not only bring more energy security problems to the EU but also policy entrepreneurs that have actively participated in framing the energy policy in the EU. Donald Tusk, the Prime Minister of Poland at that time, is a clear example. He proposed the Council to enforce mandatory minimum levels of gas reserves for all member states and also to provide EU funding for energy infrastructure (Maltby, 2013). In March 2008 Council Summit, the EU leaders agreed with his proposal and with crisis policy mechanism known as ‘the Solidarity Clause’, a mechanism which “would be activated if over 50 percent of supplies for any Member State, even the smallest one, had been disrupted” (cited in Maltby, 2013, p.437). This new policy directive replaced a directive where solidarity clause would only be activated if supplies of half of the MS get interrupted. His innovative EU energy policy ideas have strengthened the energy integration efforts in the EU and reinforced the Commission efforts in its energy policy efforts.

The second major interruption of gas supplies from Russia to the EU was in January 2009. This was due to the political tensions in the form of ‘gas war’ between Russia and Ukraine, a transit country of the Russian gas pipelines allowing gas flow from Russia to the rest of Europe. This time the interruption of gas to the MS was for two weeks, interruption by an EU average of 20% of the total gas flow to the MS, occurred during the midst of the cold winter season in Europe, negatively impacting their economies and their citizens’ well-being (Sauvageot, 2010). This crisis did not only show how vulnerable the entire EU was to gas import disruption, but also showed lack of appropriate coordination among MS in crisis situation particularly to find energy alternative from within the EU. This is probably mainly to poor gas interconnections both at regional and EU levels (European Commission, COM2009/363, 2009).

According to Multiple Stream Approach, a policy is successfully put high on the political agenda when problem streams, policy streams and political streams meet thus opening a policy window for the issue to be put high on the political agenda (Kingdon, 1995). When all the three streams are coupled opening a policy window, the proposed solution or policy would exist on the political agenda. This gas disruption and its consequences on the EU citizen well being and economy have shown the problem of gas as a security threat to the EU, an existential security threat. The affected people in the MS have voiced much concern putting pressure on their governments to find alternative solutions for the energy supply dependency. The Commission has already framed the policy: an integrated common EU energy policy.

In its assessment to the 2009 gas disruption, it says:

“Security of supply clearly needs to be part of a common and coherent energy policy of the EU and full consideration needs to be given to the long and short term dimension of security of gas supply. The internal market dimension has to be complemented by a strong external relations element.” (European Commission, COM2009/363, 2009).

This was a clear message to all MS that it is not anymore sufficient to think about the EU security of gas supply from internal market dimension but that the external element shall also be included. It is the first time that all the three components of the MSA were coupled in the case of EU energy issue and a policy window was opened where the Commission has utilised

it timely thus making common EU energy security as high politics and setting EU energy as a priority on the EU agenda.

According to Bojn *et al.*,” the aftermath of a crisis and its outcomes can be usefully understood in terms of ‘frames contests’ between the various actors that seek to exploit the crisis-induced opportunity space. Crisis typically generates a contest between frames and counter-frames concerning the nature and the severity of a crisis, its causes, the responsibility for its occurrence, or escalation, and implications to the future” (Bojn *et al.*, 2009, p.82).

This crisis has not only created an opportunity for the Commission but also created opportunities for the new MS to push for further energy integration through regional energy integration projects and regional gas interconnection strategies by financing from the EU. As an example, Poland and the other Baltic States intensified their joint efforts and proposed Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan as form of regional cooperation and regional gas interconnections within the Visegrad Group.

4.3. The 2011-2016 phase: the phase of MS coordination in EU energy politics

In his Statement at the pre-European Council debate EP Plenary, the Commission president Barroso in February 2011 said: “I have described energy policy as the next great European integration project. And it’s not hard to see why. A safe, secure, sustainable and affordable energy supply is key to our economic and strategic interests as a global player” (Barroso, 2011).

Another conflict has started between Ukraine and Russia since the end of 2013 affecting not only the relations between Ukraine and Russia but also the relations between Russia and the EU. Since Russia illegally annexed Crimea and Sevastopol from Ukraine, the EU considered that a threat to international peace and European stability and thus decided to impose economic and diplomatic sanctions on Russia (European Union Newsroom, 2016).

The conflict between Ukraine and Russia since the end of 2013 has affected the EU-Russian relations. On 3 March 2014 the EU head of states decided to impose economic and diplomatic sanctions on Russia in an effort to pressure Russia to withdraw its military from the Ukrainian territories (European Union Newsroom, 2016). As retaliatory measure against

to EU sanctions, Russia decided to reduce its gas supplies to some MS that openly took the Ukraine side in the conflict, countries such as Germany and Poland. As the result, for example, Russia's gas supplies to Poland were reduced by over 30% for few days (Deutch Welle, 12.09.2014). Although the Russia reduction of supply to these countries was for short period of time, the Russian reaction by using the gas supply to EU as retaliatory tool not respecting the gas supply contracts between and among states was additional prove that Russia may use its gas supplies to EU as a weapon against the EU thus posing a clear energy security threat to the EU.

In his article for the Financial Times on 21 April 2014, Donald Tusk wrote: "Regardless of how the stand off over Ukraine develops, one lesson is clear: excessive dependence on Russian energy makes Europe weak" (Financial Times, 21 April 2014). Since the end of 2014, Tusk has become the President of the European Council. He has used this key leadership position in the EU to promote further his idea of creating EU energy union. On 25 February 2015, Maros Sefcovic, one of the Commission vice presidents, revealed to the Commission "A Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy", which is the EU energy union. The main aim of this Energy Union "is to provide: secure, sustainable, competitive, affordable energy for every European"(European Commission, 25 February 2015).

After listening to Maros Sefcovic presentation of the energy union, the current president of the Commission Jean-Claude Juncker said: "For too long, energy has been exempt from the fundamental freedoms of our Union. Current events show the stakes – as many Europeans fear they may not have the energy needed to heat their homes. This is about Europe acting together, for the long term. I want the energy that underpins our economy to be resilient, reliable, secure and growingly renewable and sustainable."

On 19 March 2015 the EU leaders met to discuss the Energy Union framework as proposed by the Commission and agreed on Energy Union Framework Strategy. Donald Tusk seeing his idea becoming a reality, even if the framework is a compromise deal, said after the Council meeting that "All leaders agreed to reinforce transparency in the gas market, so suppliers cannot abuse their position to break the EU law and reduce our energy security" (Euractiv, 20 March 2015).

According to the Commission, “The Energy Union also needs an integrated governance and monitoring process, to make sure that energy-related actions at European, regional, national and local level all contribute to the Energy Union’s objectives” (European Commission, COM 572, 18 November 2015).

The Commission has promised to publish an annual report on the State of the Energy Union to follow up progress and also the difficulties that may arise while further promoting the Energy Union framework to the parliaments of the MS, to the EU citizens, and also to attract more European energy stakeholders that would be willing to invest in implementing the framework (European Commission, Press Release Database, 18 November 2015). On November 2015 the 1st ‘State of the Energy Union Report’ was released showing that some progress has been done since the Energy Union framework was approved but also that much is yet to be done.

In his comments on the Report, Maroš Šefčovič said: “Nine months down the road, we can say with confidence that we are on track to deliver the Energy Union. My messages for 2016 are clear. First, the EU should continue to lead in the transition to a low-carbon economy. Second, that transition should be socially fair and consumer-centred. And third, the geopolitical challenges that we faced this year will not go away. 2016 will also be the year in which we will lay the foundations of a robust governance system bringing predictability and transparency, which is what investors need. In sum: 2016 will be a year of delivery!" (European Commission, MEMO/15/6106, 18 November 2015).

Chapter 5

Discussion

The Commission has used its executive and exclusive powers in other sectors other than energy such as its powers over climate Change policies, EU internal markets and competition rules indirectly in its efforts to frame its energy policy. According to (Rhinhard, 2010, p.40), “frames allow actors to make connection between new and existing facts, information, and analysis, as well as with values and interests in the policy process”. In such situations, frames help actors to make a connection between generic interests with specific policy alternatives (Barletta, 2007). This is true in how the Commission has pushed forward the common EU energy policy high on the political agenda.

The Commission did not initially have any executive power over EU energy policies. However, it successfully used its powers in other sectors, such as its executive and exclusive powers in the field of competition, internal markets, and the environment to institutionalise its energy policy frame (Jegen, 2014). There was gradual move toward institutionalising the EU energy policy. It used informal institutions towards establishing formal institutions to eventually acquire the necessary executive power to institutionalise a common energy policy agenda in the EU. As an example, in the 2000 the Commission founded the Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER) as an informal institution which aim was to facilitate the exchange of information among MS national energy regulations through channels of communications and meetings. In 2003, that body has become formal institution having powers. The European Regulators Group for Electricity and Gas (ERGEG) was found whose functions was, among others, to give advices to the Commission on issues related to energy policy implementation measures. Based on the ERGEG, another Commission related formal institution with more power was found in 2009 and that is the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) which has several functions such as coordinating the activities of national regulators, monitoring the electricity and gas markets in the EU.

According to Princen, “actors have to argue not only that certain substantive aspects of an issue are more important than others but that European action is needed to address it” (Princen, 2007, p.32). Environmental issues and climate change concerns additional to the leading role of the EU environmental and climate change diplomacy at the global level was a

key factor that was used by the Commission to frame the existing energy system as a problem and to set the agenda for an integrated European energy policy forward. Therefore, energy initiatives were initially mainly framed as part of the environmental policies.

The manifest problem of the human-induced deterioration of the climate and the environment created the necessity for new energy policies and technology innovation at the EU level making renewable energies and energy efficiency as crucial components of EU energy policy (Biesenbender, 2015; Collier, 2012). The Commission has used the active role it played in environmental and climate change effort to “create as many different policy frames as possible to make energy legislation viable” (Tosun and Solorio, 2011, p.3.). Additional to that, it had also some success as a framing entrepreneur and policy entrepreneur “in coupling of policy, political, and problem streams and in doing so expanding its competences in the internal energy market and to lesser extent in the external dimension” (Maltby, 2013, p.441).

In framing that energy produced by burning coal, oil, and gas in one country of the EU contributes to polluting of the environment not only in that country but also in other EU countries thus accelerating climate change, the Commission used that as a policy window to push for the alternative energy sources to reduce the carbon emissions and to set its European energy policy agenda.

With times, frames become embedded in the policy domain shaping interests, attracting new actors while reforming old ones to form a coalition. Frames become so embedded in the policy domain that even new actors will have to interpret a policy through the lens of that dominating frame thus leading to “thick sedimentation of perspective over time” (Rhinard, 2010, p.62). The Commission throughout the years of its efforts of framing and reframing energy policy has attracted other actors, such as the Council and the European Parliament, that also adopted the Commission perception that the dependence of EU on external energy suppliers, particularly on Russia, as energy security threat.

The ability of policy entrepreneurs to feel it is appropriate timing to move a framed problem high on the agenda is a key for their success (Zahariadis, 2014). The Commission seized every opportunity to frame its policy and timing was crucial in that. It has used the turbulence in relations between the EU and Russia, even between Russia and Ukraine, to frame the energy supply problem in the EU as existential security problem.

Prevailing policy principles may be challenged by crisis situation thus creating windows of opportunities and make it possible for paradigm shifts to take place (Surel, 2000). During the crises between Russia and Ukraine, the Commission challenged the old MS prevailing national energy policy principles as unsustainable not only for the energy security supply of the EU but also to their own national energy security.

The Commission has still a long road to put the agreed upon EU energy union framework to practice and the difficult tasks remain especially regarding the details of this EU project. Therefore, it has to make sure that the EU energy governance system, especially regarding the EU rules governing MS external national energy policies, is in place and functioning and the sooner it succeeds in that the better. Timing is important for this and it has to take the momentum to push forward for its vision of the EU energy union governance structure after appropriate consultation with the MS national governments in order to make a compromise governance system that functions well. The main immediate task is also to convince the MS national parliaments to support the EU energy union framework idea and to assure them the project is not a threat to their sovereignty and independence but that this EU project will help them to make sure their energy system is more sustainable and their national energy security is better off. Moreover, it has also to attract the private investors to invest in this EU project. For this project to be successful at EU level, MS regional cooperation in the energy field is a key for success in this energy project and therefore the Commission has to make sure appropriate funding is available for that matter and also to provide expertise to MS to settle any differences or misinterpretation of the framework among them. Therefore, the Commission needs to continue framing and reframing the energy insecurity issue as a threat, to continue reminding the MS of the need of efficient cooperation on this strategic EU project, and to keep making this EU energy integration project and its details high on the political agenda of the EU.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

I have discussed how the Commission managed to successfully frame and push its EU energy union high on the EU political agenda. The road leading to the EU Energy Union was long and the uncertainty was always the case. However, the Commission has patiently framed and reframed the energy problem in the EU as a security problem, by coupling it with other issues of high EU politics such as EU climate change politics, and has offered its solution in the need of a common EU energy policy and a system that defines the rules on how the MS shall cooperate in the energy matter not only among each other's within the EU but also in their external national energy policies. The Commission has managed to find its way acting as a supranational government in having managed to get some control over the energy policy of the EU not only regarding its role in the EU regional energy cooperation but also in the EU external energy politics.

The theories used in this thesis have complemented each other and have been instrumental in analysing the empirical material as they provided better understanding of the processes leading to the Commission's success in the energy union.

Although this thesis focuses on the case of the Commission's role in framing EU energy cooperation, it may also be a useful to understand how policy entrepreneurs function to push certain issues high on the political agenda especially when the issue is complex requiring intergovernmental cooperation.

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