



The 17th International Scientific Conference
**“DEFENSE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
IN THE 21st CENTURY”**
Braşov, October 27th-28th 2022



**RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES OF THE EUROPEAN
GREEN DEAL IN THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL
CONTEXT**

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Abstract:

Referring to the international context as a first starting point throughout this article, the visible and most recent conflicts that have been taking place in the immediate vicinity of the European Union is the one major reasons for which I have decided to bring into discussion the vulnerabilities of the latest European project with a vital role in the European citizens lives. In the beginning of this article, I will be arguing on the importance of support from the international community, that is lacking, on the values promoted by a project as the European Green Deal and the way it should be viewed, as a rescue attempt from the very serious situation regarding the environment. I will also be arguing on how the energy security field is also concerned about the drastic changes it must face and how the transition to green energy is perceived. Also, another very important subject addressed in this article would be the impossibilities that the European Green Deal is facing in imposing a certain level of responsibility at the individual level in the context on the Ukrainian refugee crisis, oil and gas crisis and the international tensions and threats that are permanently hovering over the old continents people.

Key words: vulnerabilities; war; international society; crisis; responsibility; threat; environment.

1. Introduction

Due to the international context to which I will relate, I will be using a comparison between the European Green Deal and the Green New Deal [1] which better illustrate the vulnerabilities that are present and that could occur to the European Green Deal but also the strong point of the plan. The purpose of the Green New Deal was very much the same as the European Green Deal in what regards the needs of the society that must be met but through green, non-pollutive means and, of course, fulfilling the scope for which was initiated, to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions to zero until 2050. Unfortunately, the ambitions of this project were not in accordance with the expectations of the Republicans about the values that American society should embrace in relation to the environment and the climate changes that are, after all, an important enough problem that require the implication of every individual to make a difference at the international level. [2] Lacking political support from the majority, the initiative was doomed to failure not getting the necessary number of votes to pass. This result helps characterize the American society and the values that they espouse regarding the environment but also the way they relate to the future which clearly does not show signs of improvement without the any restrictive measures on pollution of any kind.



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2. International perspectives upon the European Green Deal

Returning to the European Green Deal, although it apparently has political support, in the European Parliament being present seventy-two MEPs from the Greens–European Free Alliance, unlike the Green New Deal, it still encounters resistance from the actual implementation of the measures it contains. One of the most important challenges faced by the European Green Deal was maintaining on the agenda the purposes of the Green Deal in the context of the war in Ukraine that represented the start of international tension that inevitable took first place on the priority list, even more by that fact that the war is at the border of the European Union. The EU still needs to specify the objectives for its international collaboration as part of the EGD's external dimension. These must be turned into specific steps in close consultation with the EU's partner nations. Furthermore, international collaboration needs to be coordinated to support long-term plans for the coordinated implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This calls for the creation of a policy environment that encourages responsibility and learning through ongoing observation and assessment of relevant international cooperation initiatives and alliances. In addition, the EU must play a crucial role in fostering trust among allies and displaying global leadership in the face of Russia's geopolitical aggression.[3] The lack on international support represents the biggest and most dangerous vulnerability of the European Green Deal and the fact that there was an opportunity for the European states to find an ally in the United States if the Green New Deal would have passed in the congress, this could create doubt in the peoples will not believe that such measures will improve their life quality on long term. The argument would be based on the fact that the image of the United States in the eyes of the Europeans is very important and if the Americans were doubting the importance of the measures stipulated in the Green New Deal, then what would offer the European Green Deal credibility, taking into account the tense situation of the war nearby that leaves space for the European citizens to rethink their priorities not only at the political level. Still, all the arguments above cannot contradict the fact that the European identity is stronger, therefore the Europeans have one of the most optimistic projects in the environmental sector that shares the same values with the Green New Deal and that for the American people was not considered important enough to be implemented so that the United States and the European Union would have been linked by the same purposes in one more security sector.

3. The importance of energy security

Energy security is now a high priority due to the geopolitical unrest that has recently occurred in Europe as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. One illustration of the significant responses taken by European nations is the suspension of the contentious Nord Stream 2 project. One of the nation's most reliant on Russian fossil fuels is Germany. According to the International Energy Agency, Germany's energy consumption in 2020 depended on imports from Russia for 45.7% of its natural gas, 37.2% of its oil, and 20.9% of its coal. The German situation simply serves as a mirror of the significant weaknesses in the larger EU energy system (Russia supplies 40% of the EU's natural gas needs). A strategy to put the bloc on a road to energy independence from Russia before 2030 is expected to address these vulnerabilities. [4]



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During the war, new needs are created, the search for alternative energy sources is one of them and here is introduced a new concept, the “war ecology”. The very idea of the new “war ecology” makes it clear that diplomacy and cooperation are not always supported by this new ecological necessity brought forth by the Russian invasion. This imperative runs the risk of being thrown out the window or shifted in favor of energy security and the desperate quest for fossil fuel alternatives. This is because fossil fuels have recently been given a fresh lease of life. The European Green Deal may fall into a trap due to the ecology of war. The response of European institutions and member states demonstrates that the so-called “war ecology” does, in fact, have a strong capacity for unification, a broad spectrum of actions, and a polysemy of (often) justified stakes, all of which are designed to hasten ecological action. However, it also implicitly supports the blending and mingling of goals (isolating Russia, achieving energy independence...) and deadlines (heating our homes and staying warm this winter, decreasing our emissions by 55% by 2030...) at a pace that our institutions are losing control over.[5] This situation gives birth to a paradox of being more united in within the European Union be the fact that we share the same threats, that is Russia and the dependency it created, but also it highlights the differences between the states that do not have similar value systems as I mentioned earlier, Germany in the need for fossil fuel to sustain its mostly industry based economy.

The mindset needed for a transition that went from following a normal course to a rapid and chaotic way of implementation, supposes a very big capacity of the population to adapt to conditions and situations that they did not think of being put through. The whole dynamic of this transition to other means of ensuring energy security, changed based on the situation that the war provided, one of insecurity and panic among the Europeans, lack of trust in the national institutions that are overwhelmed by the situation and desperately trying to find solutions to adapt and keep the prices of energy lower. This scenario that approaches, shows the exact opposite on the way the society should have looked described by the measures take in the implementation of the Green Deal principals. The “crisis” initiated by the sudden change of plan and urge to find new means to provide energy in a non-pollutive way to diminish as much as possible the dependence on Russian oil and gas, brought many people to the point of reorientating their careers. From here, results another important perspective on the impact that the war has over the agenda of the European Union, the impact is much larger, spreading over fields as employment and human resources, not only the energy security and environmental measures that would diminish and at some point, finally stop climate changes as the Green Deal proposes.

4. Alternatives for sustainable development

To decrease vulnerabilities, in the economic sector, the European Union offers financial support for the transition especially in the areas that depend on the fossil fuel to function. These are the most challenging tasks of the European Union, having to find new ways for these communities to develop sustainably without the means they totally relied on before the implementation of the Green Deal. The European Union has made a commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2050 and has incorporated that goal into all its policies as part of the European Green Deal to combat global warming. This lofty goal necessitates a shift to a low-carbon economy, which is difficult for areas that rely heavily on fossil fuels and carbon-intensive industries. The Just Transition Fund, a component of the €1 trillion European Green Deal climate funding proposal, was suggested by the European Commission



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in January 2020 to address the social, economic, and environmental effects of the transition. In May 2021, MEPs approved the Just Transition Fund, approving the €17.5 billion deal negotiated with the Council in December 2020. For this, the EU budget for 2021–2027 will provide €7.5 billion and the EU Recovery Instrument will provide €10 billion. All EU nations are eligible for funding; however, funds will be concentrated in the regions with the greatest challenges: those with high carbon intensity and extensive fossil fuel use (coal, lignite, peat and oil shale). It will also be considered how wealthy the nation is.[6] On the other hand, all the changes expected need, of course, a legal basis and for this, a set of thirteen interconnected amended laws and six planned laws on climate and energy, was suggested by the Commission in 2021 for the EU to meet the 2030 target. On June 22, the Parliament passed a resolution endorsing the expansion of the emissions pricing system (ETS) to cover polluting industries including construction and transportation by road and phasing out free allowances by 2032. The deployment of the carbon leakage tool, which should impose a carbon price on imported goods to prevent a shift of manufacturing to nations with less stringent climate standards, also, a fund financed by the auctioning of ETS allowances, that aims to combat the resulting energy and mobility poverty in order to achieve an equitable energy transition.[7] These measures are meant to stabilize the way the European Green Deal is perceived and how it's implemented so that the transition is tolerable from all points of view by the population and it doesn't raise frustration, even though the changes are much bigger and are happening faster with the presence of the new threat in proximity regarding especially the energy security field, which is a key domain and is enough to influence the smooth running of the European Green Deal since now.

5. Individual contribution

Global warming is a problem that impacts us as individuals also, not only the states should deal with finding solutions and carry the weight of a better future. All individuals of the society should do what they can, even in the most apparently insignificant ways possible to make the process of reducing pollution easier. The way the individual chooses to live its life can make a difference in its relationship with the environment, and pollution is one of the results of the human's neglect of the importance of nature that even in the worse situation it seems to be more important than the efforts others put into saving the environment. A few small measures that can be taken to contribute to the fight against climate changes are: recycling, is not just one of the best answers to a worldwide problem, but also one of the simplest ways to help prevent global warming. Another one would be alternation of the way of transportation, we are currently leaving overly large carbon footprints as a species. To significantly lower those numbers, we must act. Finland is well recognized for its lush woods and countless lakes, and we surely value environmental preservation. However, the typical Finn continues to consume far more than is necessary. The average Finn produces more than 10 tons of carbon dioxide per year, according to research done by The Finnish Innovation Fund in 2019. Also, avoiding wasting food is another way of caring for the environment, much easier to implement than other measures. Managing energy consumption and educating others also play a very important role in the smooth running of the fight against global warming.[8] The lack of interest in the problems that occur in our society are a major vulnerability especially when it comes to security of any kind, in any domain. To ensure a high standard of living as the European Union does through the European Green Deal in what



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regards the quality of the environment, is and will remain a priority for the EU and the actions taken at the individual level, will be reflected in long term changes.

6. Conclusions

After the general review done on what could represent risks and vulnerabilities for the European Green Deal, the conclusion would be that starting with the war in Ukraine, the lack of support and consistency in adopting the same values promoted by the EDG by the United States, the economy that struggles with inflation and lack of implication of the citizens that continue to pollute at the individual level, all these represent the risks that the EDG is dealing with and could represent arrows in Achilles' heel if they are not countered as soon as possible and always taking into account the dynamic of the European society that is in permanent transformation influenced by all the event taking place at the international level.

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