

Final thesis Sandra in 't Groen

door Sandra in 't Groen

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The European Commission and European ‘energy security’

The ‘energy security, solidarity and trust’-dimension of the Energy Union

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1. Introduction

European citizens need energy in their current everyday lives (European Commission, 2012b, p. 3). However, we are expected to run out of European fossil fuel supplies, being oil, natural gas and coal (European Commission, 2012b, p. 3). The international gas market is more complicated than other energy resources' markets as the supplier and receiver are connected via pipelines, which constrains converting to other suppliers or receivers on short notice (Harsem & Claes, 2013, p. 785). In 2010, natural gas accounted for 25% of the EU's energy consumption, making it the second most used energy source (European Commission, 2012a, p. 18). At the same time, the EU's natural gas import dependency was 62,4% (European Commission, 2012a, p. 20), of which 35% was imported from Russia, with Russia being the EU's number one natural gas supplier (European Commission, 2012a, p. 22). In 2013, the share of natural gas in the EU's energy mix decreased to 23% (European Commission, 2015b, p. 20). Nevertheless, the EU's natural gas import dependency increased to 65,3% (European Commission, 2015b, p. 22), with 39% imported from Russia (European Commission, 2015b, p. 22).

On February 25th 2015, the European Commission (EC) under President Juncker presented its Energy Union Package, "a framework strategy for a resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy" (European Commission, 2015c). In July 2014, President-elect Juncker prioritized the Energy Union as one of his ten Political Guidelines for his future presidency (Juncker, 2014d, p. 5). The Juncker Commission took office on November 1st 2014, with among others Vice-President for the Energy Union Šeřčovič and Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Cañete (European Commission, n.d.).

In the Energy Union Package, the EC identifies five dimensions of the Energy Union, the first one being 'energy security, solidarity and trust' (European Commission, 2015c, p. 4-7). This dimension builds upon the European Energy Security Strategy, presented by the EC under Barroso on May 28th 2014 (European Commission, 2015c, p. 4; European Commission, 2014b). In the first dimension, the Juncker Commission presents energy supply as a European security issue (European Commission, 2015c, p. 4-7). The EC argues that "The European Union's prosperity and security hinges on a stable and abundant supply of energy" (European Commission, 2014b, p. 2). The most crucial concern regarding energy security is dependence from a single external energy supplier (European Commission, 2014b, p. 2). However, the only reason given for this is the wake-up call in the form of the 2006 and 2009 Russian gas disruptions that influenced Eastern member states' supplies (European Commission, 2014b, p.

2) Despite the earlier achievements and the absence of additional disruptions, the EC argues for a hard-headed strategy to enhance the EU's energy security (European Commission, 2014b, p. 2). This thesis researches why the Juncker Commission presented the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union in February 2015 with regards to natural gas, by identifying internal and external factors.

Firstly, I will clarify the EC's general role, functions and construction and I will give a short overview of the EU's energy policy. Secondly, I will identify the three internal and external factors that could have influenced the establishment of the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union. Thirdly, I will introduce the methodology, followed by the analysis of the influence of each of the three factors. The analysis will end with an interpretation of the causality between each factor and the establishment of the first dimension of the Energy Union. Finally, I will answer the research question, define the relevance of this thesis and make recommendations for future research.

2. Literature review

In order to research what caused the Juncker Commission's establishment of the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the European Energy Union in the case of natural gas, this thesis will provide more insight in the EC, since it is the Energy Union's establishment's main actor, and the energy policy of the European Union (EU). Within this overview of the EU's energy policy, I will focus on 'energy security', as this is the main concept of the first dimension of the Energy Union.

2.1 The European Commission

Article 9D of the Treaty of Lisbon outlines the EC's functions (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 19-21). The EC consists of one independent Commissioner per member state, including the President and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, is accountable to the European Parliament (EP) and takes office for five years (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 19-21). The President lays down the EC's guidelines, decides on its internal composition and oversees its performance (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 20). Additionally, he appoints the EC's Vice-Presidents (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 20). The tasks of the EC include promoting the EU's general interests, guaranteeing the Treaties' and measures' application and supervising the EU law application (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 19). Excluding the occasions when Treaties determine otherwise, the EU can only adopt legislation found upon an EC proposal (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 19).

Under the principle of conferral, determined in Article 5 of the Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, the EU is required to operate within the limits of the competences as decided in the Treaties (Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, 2012, p. 18). The competences are categorized into three groups, being exclusive competences, shared competences and supporting competences (Consolidated version of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union, 2012, p. 50-53). Article 4 of the Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union lists energy as a shared competence by the EU and the member states (Consolidated version of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union, 2012, p. 50-52). "The Member States shall exercise their competence to the extent that the Union has not exercised its competence. The Member States shall again exercise their competence to the extent that the Union has decided to cease exercising its competence", as further defined by Article 2 (Consolidated version of the

Treaty of the functioning of the European Union, 2012, p. 50). Accordingly, energy policy is a policy area in which both the EU and its member states operate.

2.2 The European Union's energy policy

At the time of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), established in 1952, energy was conceived as a national affair, not a European one, dominated by large corporations that were related to national governments (Helm, 2012, p. 558). Since the beginning of European integration, security of supply was the key element of a common energy policy (Kanellakis, Martinopoulos & Zachariadis, 2013, p. 1021). The EC had ambitious plans for connecting the existing national energy markets and believed that competition and liberalization would enable the security of energy supplies (Helm, 2012, p. 559). Contributing to the completion of the single market, the EP and Council presented a Directive, setting up rules for the internal natural gas market (Directive 98/30/EC, 1998).

However, by the 2000s, it became clear that the existent absence of interconnectors and collective European networks left Europe vulnerable to energy interruptions via transit country Ukraine (Helm, 2012, p. 559). In the early 2000s, the EC adopted its Green Paper and thereby put specific focus on the security of energy supply (European Commission, 2000). Furthermore, the EC adopted a common standpoint on strategic issues for energy security and climate change, resulting in the 2007 'An energy policy for Europe' strategy in which the EC argues for immediate action to achieve energy that is secure, sustainable and competitive (Kanellakis et al., 2013, p. 1020-1021; Commission of the European Communities, 2007).

The 2004 EU enlargement with the Eastern European countries led to a greater emphasis on security of supply (Helm, 2012, p. 564). In 2004, the Council of the European Union introduced a Directive regarding measures that safeguard security of natural gas supply, which represented the EU's first legal framework to do so (Council Directive 2004/67/EC, 2004). This framework was updated via a 2010 Regulation (Regulation 994/2010, 2010).

In 2006 and 2009, Eastern European member states suffered from Russian gas interruptions via transit country Ukraine, which led to a change in the view on Russia, leading away from the country being a reliable energy supplier (Helm, 2012, p. 565). In Article 176A of the Treaty of Lisbon, four goals in order to establish and employ the internal energy market properly are identified, being: ensuring the functioning of the energy market,

ensuring the EU's energy supply, promoting energy efficiency and saving, and promoting the interconnection of energy networks (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 88). As a result of the gas disruptions, the EC unsuccessfully attempted to consult with Russia and expressed its will for a political dialogue to replace their Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that expired in 2009 (Helm, 2012, p. 566). In 2017, the 2010 Regulation on security of supply was repealed by an amended Regulation (Regulation 2017/1938, 2017). In the meantime, the EC presented its Energy Security Strategy in 2014 (European Commission, 2014b), resulting in the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union presented in February 2015 (European Commission, 2015c).

3. Analytical framework

How can we explain the Juncker Commission's establishment of the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union, in the case of natural gas? In order to do so, I will examine three external and internal factors.

3.1 Perceived Russian threat by the European Commission

The first, external, factor that could explain the establishment of the first dimension of the Energy Union in the case of natural gas, is the perceived threat by the EC that Russia will use its energy resources as an energy weapon, that is a source of power. In critical security studies, the referent object, what is to be secured, does not necessarily have to be the state (Vaughan-Williams & Peoples, 2015, p. 4-5). Critical security studies distance themselves from the state-centric approach supported by traditional security studies (Vaughan-Williams & Peoples, 2015, p. 4). In this view, the object to be secured is not the survival of the state, but the EU's natural gas supply. Also, an applicable concept of critical compared security studies is the broadened threat (Vaughan-Williams & Peoples, 2015, p. 4). The threat does not necessarily have to be a military one and security is viewed as a derivative concept, meaning that the way one thinks about security is determined by the way that person perceives the international world system (Vaughan-Williams & Peoples, 2015, p. 4). In this view, the EC perceives Russia, the EU's number one natural gas supplier, as an aggressive state trying to seek power by employing its gas resources as an energy weapon.

By the use of critical security studies, one explanation of the EC's establishment of the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union in the case of natural gas could be the threat perceived by the EC, being afraid that Russia will use its natural gas resources as an energy weapon.

3.2 European Commission seeking deeper integration

The academic literature raises another expectation for the reason behind the EC's establishment of the first dimension of the Energy Union regarding natural gas: the internal factor that the EC is trying to achieve deeper integration among member states, acting in its traditional role as the EU's engine of integration, by focusing on solidarity (Ostrovskaya, 2014, p. 75). According to integration theories, there are two different perspectives to

integration: supranationalism and intergovernmentalism (Schimmelfenning & Rittberger, 2006, p.71) Since the EC is defined as a supranationalist institution (Warleigh-Lack & Drachenberg, 2013, p. 200), I will focus on the supranationalist doctrine.

Supranationalism is based upon pluralism, arguing that not states, but groups are the key players in integration (Schimmelfenning & Rittberger, 2006, p. 85). Supranationalism explains the self-reinforcing process that produces deeper integration and a transformation of member state identity (Schimmelfenning & Rittberger, 2006, p. 75; p. 82). Rationalist supranationalism is based upon is historical institutionalism, which focuses on path dependency (Schimmelfenning & Rittberger, 2006, p. 82-83). Path dependency is what characterizes historical developments of institutions (Sanders, 2006, p. 39), that are shaped by ideas (Sanders, 2006, p. 42). As captured in Article 9D of the Treaty of Lisbon, the EC is to promote the EU's general interest (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 19). Article 2 of the Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union declares that the EU is founded on a shared society in which solidarity is a key value (Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, 2012, p. 17). The EC could use this historically embedded key European value to achieve deeper integration among EU member states.

By applying supranationalism and the concept of path dependency, another explanation of the EC's establishment of the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union could be the EC's traditional role as European engine of integration, aiming for deeper integration among member states by focusing on solidarity within the Energy Union project.

3.3 European Commission in search for a stronger position

A third possible explanation, an internal one, for the establishment of the first dimension of the Energy Union in the case of natural gas is the EC's search for more power within the European institutional framework, attempting to accomplish this by pressing on the issue of security of resource supply and thereby establishing a prominent project. In the light of the bureaucratic politics model, foreign policy decisions are the outcomes of bargaining (Jones, 2010, p. 1). The organizational decisions are political resultants of a competitive gain in which the players adhere to different preferences and bargain over the policy decisions (Jones, 2010, p. 5). The bureaucratic politics model is based upon Miles' Law: "Where you stand depends on where you sit" (Miles, 1978, p. 399), meaning that the preferences of the individuals are determined by their place within the organization (Jones, 2010, p. 5).

According to the bureaucratic politics model, politics consists of bargaining within an organizational hierarchic system (Allison, 1969, p. 707). Organizational behaviour is the outcome of bargaining and politics are determined by the choices made (Allison, 1969, p. 710). Decision-making is represented by the pulling and howling of the players, having different preferences and viewpoints (Allison, 1969, p. 711). By applying the game-playing metaphor to bureaucratic politics, policymaking is projected as a win-or-lose power struggle (Preston & 't Hart, 1999, p. 53). Preston & 't Hart link several conditions to the political structure and process in order to be bureaucratic, including the presence of multiple actors with divergent preferences in the policymaking arena and a decision-making process that takes place via bargaining and compromising (1999, p. 55). Moreover, they argue that political leaders influence the nature of the bureaucratic policymaking process, being either consensus-seeking or confrontational (1999, p. 58). In this view, the EC is an institution that operates within the EU in the process of pulling and hauling between different European institutions, creating winners and losers.

Securitization is a concept from Securitization Theory, labelling the process of “shifting an issue out of the realm of ‘normal’ political debate into the realm of emergency politics by presenting it as an existential threat” (Vaughan-Williams & Peoples, 2015, p. 94). EU decision-making is characterized by a race for influence, due to the vertical and horizontal division of power (Warleigh-Lack & Drachenberg, 2013, p. 204).

In this race of influence and bargaining to achieve specific interests, the EC could have securitized the issue of natural gas supply in order to gain relevance for the Energy Union project and ‘win’ this game of pulling and hauling. Therefore, a third explanation of the EC’s establishment of the ‘energy security, solidarity and trust’-dimension of the Energy Union could be the EC’s need to securitize natural gas supply, in order to increase the relevance and to acquire a stronger bargaining position among other European institutions in their power struggle and put itself on the map by presenting a prominent project.

4. Methodology

Despite the absence of gas disruptions since 2009 and achievements concerning the EU's energy security since then, in February 2015 the EC introduced its Energy Union Package containing the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'- dimension to establish a European Energy Union. How can we explain the EC's establishment of the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union, in the case of natural gas? In order to do so, I will identify several external and internal factors. Since the Energy Union Package (European Commission, 2015c) builds upon the 2014 European Energy Security Strategy that uses figures of 2013 (European Commission, 2014b), the energy figures of the year 2013 will be used in this thesis.

The research design used to answer this question is an in-depth analysis of the EC. Previously I have identified three possible causes for the establishment of the first dimension. This thesis will examine the possible causal relationship between the three independent variables and a dependent variable individually, with the dependent variable being the establishment of the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union, introduced by the Juncker Commission's Energy Union Package in February 2015 (European Commission, 2015c). The first independent variable is the threat perceived by the EC, which is afraid that Russia could use its natural gas resources as an energy weapon, creating an incentive to formulate policy to prevent this. The second independent variable is the EC's aim for deeper integration among member states by focusing on solidarity within the Energy Union project. The third independent variable is the EC's need to securitize natural gas supply, to increase the relevance and acquire a stronger bargaining position among other European institutions in their struggle for power and to prioritize the Energy Union project. The causal relationship between these three independent variables and the dependent variable will be tested in this thesis.

The first applied research method is document analysis, which is a qualitative research method (Bowen, 2009). By applying document analysis, official primary documents of the EU and European actors relevant to the Energy Union will be examined. Moreover, I will use speech analysis, analysing the statements of main actors addressing different types of public. Both document and speech analysis are primary sources. The research purpose of document analysis and speech analysis is that it provides us with the reason behind the establishment communicated by the EC or relevant European actors themselves. I will identify the reason the EC gives for constructing the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension, in the case

of natural gas. Due to the limited scope of this thesis, I chose President-elect Juncker's official opening statement in the EP in July 2014 as the starting point of the speeches and statements researched in this thesis. I chose this point, because his EC is the creator of the Energy Union and this speech was the first time Juncker officially outlined his plans for his future EC. I chose to analyse important statement and reports up till and including the first State of the Energy Union in November 2015, because at this point in time the main actors planned to evaluate the Energy Union's first few months and the Energy Union's governance system was planned to be presented (Šefčovič, 2015g). With regards to official documents, I chose to research the Energy Union Package, because it outlines the Energy Union and its dimensions, and the European Energy Union Strategy, because the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension builds upon this document. Furthermore, I use EU legislation to provide research and clarification.

However, it is important not to over-rely on institutional documents (Bowen, 2009, p. 29). I am aware of possible bias due to the fact that the documents and statements are presented by the EC and main actors themselves. I will try to bypass this possible bias by triangulating, that is by using more than one source or method of data (Bryman, 2012, p. 392). Via secondary sources as scholarly articles and books, I will test the three independent variables and the plausibility of the reasons given by the EC and European actors. By doing so, I will use already available statistics in the analysis.

In summary, via document and speech analysis of primary sources and secondary sources as such scholarly articles and available statistics, I will research if a Russian threat perceived by the EC, the EC aiming for deeper integration among member states or the EC's search to acquire a stronger bargaining position within the European institutional framework led to the EC's establishment of the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union, in the case of natural gas.

5. Analysis of the ‘energy security, solidarity and trust’-dimension of the Energy Union

I will research if and to what extent each of the three identified factors contributed to the establishment of the ‘energy security, solidarity and trust’-dimension of the Energy Union introduced by the Juncker Commission in February 2015, in the case of natural gas. To begin with, I will analyze the two primary official documents of the Energy Union, being the European Energy Security Strategy and the Energy Union Package (European Commission, 2014b; European Commission, 2015c). Afterwards, I will analyze each of the three factors individually, by using speeches, statements, academic literature and the two official documents.

5.1.1 Energy Union

The purpose of the Energy Union is to provide the EU’s consumers with secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy resources (European Commission, 2015c, p. 2). The Energy Union is grounded upon trust and solidarity and must globally be represented by one single voice (European Commission, 2015c, p. 2). The ‘energy security, solidarity and trust’-dimension of the Energy Union builds upon the European Energy Security Strategy, presented by the Barroso Commission in May 2014 (European Commission, 2014b; European Commission 2015c, p. 4). In the Strategy, the EC declares that the EU’s security and welfare is dependent upon a lasting energy supply (European Commission, 2014b, p. 2). It identifies the 2006 and 2009 winter gas disruptions that troubled the energy supply of Eastern member states as wake-up calls, revealing the EU’s vulnerability to external energy resource shocks (European Commission, 2014b, p. 2). In the report, the EC emphasizes the EU’s necessity to bolster its energy security regarding gas supplies (European Commission, 2014b, p. 2). The necessity to decrease the number of member states that are dependent on only one gas supplier is identified as the key goal (European Commission, 2014b, p. 2). In the Strategy, a globally increasing energy demand is predicted (European Commission, 2014b, p. 2). The EC underscores the necessity to address energy security collectively (European Commission, 2014b, p. 3; European Commission, 2015c, p. 3).

The Energy Union Package presents five dimensions to create greater energy security, competitiveness and stability, being “Energy security, solidarity and trust; A fully integrated European energy market; Energy efficiency contributing to moderation of demand; Decarbonising the economy; and Research, Innovation and Competitiveness” (European

Commission, 2015c, p. 4). The plan of action for the first dimension consists of diversification, cooperation, a stronger European role for global energy and more transparency (European Commission, 2015c, p. 4-7). Highlighted is the EC's viewpoint that energy policy is regularly used as a foreign policy tools (European Commission, 2015c, p. 6). In the Package, the EC calls for a governance and monitoring system to assure that member states' energy-related actions are devoted to the Energy Union's objectives (European Commission, 2015c, p. 17).

5.1.2 Perceived Russian threat by the European Commission

The first expected explanation is the threat perceived by the EC, being afraid that Russia would use its natural gas resources as an energy weapon. In their presentation of the Energy Union and its dimensions, main actors of the Energy Union -being the EC, Commissioner for Climate Change and Energy Cañete, Vice-President for the Energy Union Šefčovič and EC President Juncker- address the issues of high energy dependency on one single supplier creating vulnerability, the EU's energy relationship with Russia and Russia's possible use of an energy weapon to be of influence on the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension (Juncker, 2014c, p. 5; Juncker, 2014d, p. 5-6; Juncker, 2014b, p. 4; Juncker, 2014a, p. 4; Šefčovič, 2015e; Cañete, 2015; Šefčovič, 2015f; Šefčovič, 2015d; Juncker, 2015b; European Commission, 2014b, p. 2; European Commission, 2015c, p. 4; European Commission, 2015d, p. 11).

In its Energy Union Package, the EC highlights its viewpoint that energy policy is regularly used as a foreign policy tool (European Commission, 2015c, p. 6). Moreover, in a speech at the Energy Union Conference in February 2015, Commissioner Cañete calls for European action with regards to energy security, or "... many member states will remain dependent on a single supplier that does not view the sale of gas as simply a commercial issue" (Cañete, 2015). Also, Vice-President Šefčovič highlights the importance of creating a resilient internal European energy market that can "... help us combat the illegitimate use of energy as a political tool" (Šefčovič, 2015f).

The statements by the EC and related European actors seem to confirm the expectation that the threat perceived by the EC of Russia using its natural gas resources as an energy weapon caused the EC's establishment of the "energy security, solidarity and trust"-dimension of the Energy Union presented in February 2015. However, I am aware of possible bias in these statements and consulted academic literature to research the severity of the

threat of Russia employing its resources as an energy weapon. In contrast to what the main actors imply, the EU and Russia's energy relationship is one of interdependent nature (Bugajski, 2009; Casier, 2011; Krickovic, 2015; Harsem & Claes, 2013; Yergin, 2006), and the perceived threat is a two-way phenomenon.

Suppliers and receivers are constrained in their ability to switch to other trade partners when it comes to natural gas, due to the pipeline system through which gas is transported (Harsem & Claes, 2013, p. 785). The EU-Russia energy relationship is a symmetrical one, since both parties would be confronted with discouraging costs if the relationship were to be disconnected; the EU is dependent on Russia's energy resources and Russia is dependent on the revenues of its high level of EU resources export (Krickovic, 2015, p. 9).

Since the EU only has limited energy resources, the member states are dependent on Russia for their supply (Morina & Fuga, 2015, p. 73). The use of the transit countries influences the level of energy security, since it is an extra link in the energy chain (Morina & Fuga, 2015, p. 75). Morina & Fuga (2015) argue that the Ukraine crisis, reflecting the fragility of the use of transit countries, represent the EU's need to diversify its energy sources in order to achieve energy security (Morina & Fuga, 2015, p. 73). Moreover, they highlight the 2006 and 2009 Russia-Ukraine gas disputes in which "... Russia is using energy as an imposing instrument on its foreign policy" (Morina & Fuga, 2015, p. 73).

However, Russia is limited by its available energy tools in attempting to achieve political objectives, so in its attempt to utilize its energy weapon (Orttung & Overland, 2011). The content and shape of Russia's energy toolbox change over time (Orttung & Overland, 2011, p. 84). The energy tools available enable or constrain Russia's capacity to achieve political goals (Orttung & Overland, 2011). Casier (2011) argues for a nuanced image of the EU-Russia energy relation, in contrast to the geopolitical perspective. He attributes the causes of this geopolitical perspective to material and social changes since the 1990s, like EU enlargement and the difference in nature of the EU and Russian energy markets (Casier, 2011, p. 502-503). True, embedded ideas about the socioeconomic role of energy cause different attitudes of the EU and Russia towards energy and different ideas on how it should be governed (Kuzemko, 2014, p. 70). Nevertheless, it cannot be stated that the EU is dependent on Russia, simply because it imports a large amount of Russian gas (Casier, 2011, p. 506).

As stated by the main actors in 2014, the EC looks back upon a positive process of trilateral meetings with Ukrainian and Russian gas companies (European Commission, 2014a; European Commission, 2014f; European Commission, 2014g; European Commission, 2014d; European Commission, 2014c; European Commission, 2014e). The meetings were the result

of the Russia-Ukraine dispute that was brought to the international arbitration court and concluded in decisions over unpaid gas bills by Ukraine and an agreement to insure Russian gas supply to Ukraine and the EU until the international arbitration court decision was to be reached (European Commission, 2014a; European Commission, 2014f; European Commission, 2014g; European Commission, 2014d; European Commission, 2014c; European Commission, 2014e). Former EC President Barroso declares his hopes for the Russian Federation and Ukraine to act as reliable partners and the enlargement of trust between the two countries (European Commission, 2014e).

5.1.3 European Commission seeking deeper integration

The second explanation is the EC's aim for deeper integration among member states by focusing on solidarity within the Energy Union project. By emphasizing on solidarity and collectiveness, the main actors seem to confirm this expectation. In his speech addressing the EP when he was President-elect, Juncker emphasizes his wish to bring a halt to the division between 'old' and 'new' member states (Juncker, 2014a, p. 7). Šefčovič highlights the importance of the principle of solidarity and collectivity regarding security of energy supply (Šefčovič, 2015e; Šefčovič, 2015a; Šefčovič, 2015c). He explains that some member states pay high financial prices for their Russian gas imports (Šefčovič, 2015e). Even though some member states' energy supplies are more vulnerable than others, energy security is applicable to every member state and therefore a solidarity clause is needed (Šefčovič, 2015e). Member states should be able to rely on their neighboring countries in case of disruptions (Šefčovič, 2015a). The EC is to cooperate closely with member states when implementing the Energy Union project (Juncker, 2014f, p. 12; Juncker, 2014g).

In his first Speech of the Union, Juncker asks for more unity and he declares that in key areas, the EU can achieve more than member states separately (Juncker, 2015). Moreover, President Juncker addresses the EU's need to show loyalty towards Ukraine within the context of the 2014 crisis (Juncker, 2015). The EU should unite to defend its borders and this should be clear to Russia (Juncker, 2015).

The Strategy illustrates that in 2013, six member states were dependent on Russia as their only gas supplier, being Bulgaria, Estonia, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland (European Commission, 2014b, p. 2; European Commission, 2014d, p. 21). The first country belongs to the 2007 enlargement and the next four belong to the 2004 enlargement (European Commission, 2016). Five EU member states were for 20% or less dependent on Russian gas,

being France, Denmark, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Romania (European Commission, 2014b, p. 21). With the exception of Romania, these member states entered the EU no later than 1973 (European Commission, 2016). To sum up, the countries that are most gas dependent are member states added during the period of the 2004-2007 enlargements.

Since statements by relevant actors within the EC might be biased, I researched to what extent the principle of solidarity matters within the EU and EC. The principle of solidarity was first addressed in the Treaty on European Union, which forms the EU's constitutional framework (Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, 2012). Article 2 of the Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union declares that the EU is a common society that is founded upon tolerance, justice and solidarity (Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, 2012, p. 17). Article 188R of the Treaty of Lisbon presents a Solidarity clause (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 100-101). The clause declares that "The Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster" (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 100). Even though the possible gas disruption is not necessarily a terrorist attack or natural/man-made disaster, this clause underscores the relevance of solidarity and collective action. The Solidarity clause (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 100-101) underlines the EU's emphasis on joint reaction in case of threats. However, there is no consensus over the definition of solidarity (Küçük, 2016).

Traditionally, the EC occupies the role of engine or integration, functioning as the driving force of European policy-making (Becker, Bauer, Connolly & Kassim, 2016, p. 1012). This is the EC's interpretation of Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union, obliging the EC to "... promote the general interest of the Union" (Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, 2012, p. 25; Becker et al., 2016, p. 1012; Ostrovskaya, 2014, p. 75). The 2004-2007 EU enlargement, adding 12 new member states, was the biggest EU enlargement so far (Ostrovskaya, 2014, p. 74). The addition of the former Eastern Bloc countries had a symbolic meaning, marking the change in the international framework since the Cold War (Ostrovskaya, 2014, p. 75). The 2004-2007 enlargement generated more heterogeneity among EU member states (Ostrovskaya, 2014, p. 75). Moreover, there was heterogeneity among the 12 'new' member states (Ostrovskaya, 2014, p. 75). The EU enlargement made it more difficult for the EC to operate, since it had to take preferences of 28 member states into consideration (Becker et al., 2016, p. 1014).

During that time period, Presidents Barroso, and later Juncker, took personal control over the EC's agenda, enlarging the EC President's power and providing the EC with the

ability to act strategically and targeted (Becker et al., 2016, p. 1012-1013). This permits the EC to be assertive and to perform as the EU's engine of integration, however, in a different way than before the Treaty of Lisbon reformed the EU's institutional balance (Becker et al., 2016, p. 1026). Presidentialisation and prioritization is characteristic for the Juncker Commission (Becker et al., 2016, p. 1026). While Barroso and Juncker reinforced the EC's Presidency (Becker et al., 2016, p. 1021), the Lisbon Treaty changed the European institutional framework and undermined the EC's centrality by providing the EP and European Council with more functions (Becker et al., 2016, p. 1014; Treaty of Lisbon, 2007).

5.1.4 European Commission in search for a stronger position

The third expected explanation is the EC's need to securitize natural gas supply, in order to increase the relevance and acquire a stronger bargaining position among other European institutions in their power struggle and to gain importance by its Energy Union project. Securitization is "shifting an issue out of the realm of 'normal' political debate into the realm of emergency politics by presenting it as an existential threat" (Vaughan-Williams & Peoples, 2015, p. 94). According to Maltby, as a policy window opened, in the form of the 2006 and 2009 gas disruptions, energy security could be framed as a European issue that needs a supranational European solution (Maltby, 2013, p. 436-438). This was partly caused by the 2004-2007 enlargement, with 'new' member states that are more dependent on Russian gas (Maltby, 2013, p. 436). In order to research whether the EC wanted to gain more power, I will evaluate the Energy Union's governance system and the politics of the Juncker Commission.

The EC did not present a clear governance plan in its presentation of the Energy Union (European Commission, 2015c). Nevertheless, the EC calls for a governance system that assures member states' energy related actions are devoted to the Energy Union's objectives (European Commission, 2015c, p. 17). Cañete recalls the EU leaders' wish for a new governance system (Cañete, 2015). In April 2015, Šefčovič provides more information on the Energy Union's future governance system. The Vice-President plans to launch an Energy Union Tour during which he will discuss the Energy Union with national governments, organizations and citizens (Šefčovič, 2015g). To goal of the Tour is to communicate with national governments, the EP and stakeholders and to get the member states involved in the Energy Union (European Commission, 2015e; Šefčovič, 2015b). As a result of the Energy Tour, Šefčovič promised to provide more clearance on the Energy

Union's governance in the first State of the Energy Union at the end of 2015 (Šefčovič, 2015g).

By including the member states, Šefčovič aimed to create an integrated, democratic and inclusive governance system (Šefčovič, 2015c). In the first State of the Energy Union, the EC underscores its effort to help the member states create policies to achieve the standards of the Energy Union (European Commission, 2015g, p. 1). The EC stressed that national or regional energy projects must be in line with the European regulatory framework (European Commission, 2015g, p. 11) and EC calls for a transparent governance process including legislation, to create unity (European Commission, 2015g, p. 15). In the future, the EC plans to continue to cooperate with member states provide guidance on regional cooperation (European Commission, 2015b, p. 1).

No decisions were made concerning the Energy Union's governance system at the time of the first State of the Energy Union. In order to get more insight in the European institutional framework, I researched the EC's relationship with other European institutions. Juncker addresses the widening gap between the EU and its citizens (Juncker, 2014c, p. 2). President Juncker declares to implement his Political Guidelines in close partnership with the EP and the member states (Juncker, 2014d, p. 12) and accentuates the opportunity his EC is given to create an advancing Europe, bringing citizens closer to the EU by dealing with big issues (Juncker, 2014e). Also, President Juncker underscores the benefits of the Community method and his great belief in the triangle of the EP, EC and the Council (Juncker, 2014e).

A recurrent aspect is Juncker's personal link to the EP, based on the reformed electoral system that made his election the result of the outcomes of the May 2015 EP elections (Juncker, 2014e; Juncker, 2015). That resulted in Juncker's aims to be a political President, leading a political EC, a goal supported by the 'heavyweight Commissioners' (Juncker, 2015; Juncker, 2014e). Juncker aims for an effective EC, which is to be invoked by his reformed EC, creating political balance (Juncker, 2014e).

The Juncker Commission initiated at a time of Euroscepticism (Jepsen, 2015, p. 243). By 2014, the effects of the Eurocrisis were felt throughout Europe, dividing the EU, creating weak political bonds and negating negative public attitudes (Dinan, 2015, p. 93). With his EC, Juncker wants to focus on the big issues (Juncker, 2014c, p. 4; Kassim, 2017, p. 15). In order to distinguish between big and small things, Juncker identified his ten policy areas in his Political Guidelines (Juncker, 2014d).

The weakness of EC's in the past was caused by the legislative failure to provide the President and the College of Commissioners with significant competences and the President's

lack of power over the composition of and the division of powers within the College (Kassim, Connolly, Dehousse, Rozenberg & Bendjaballah, 2017, p. 657). However since 2004, the Commission Presidency has been reconstructed (Kassim et al., 2017, p. 658). The *Spitzenkandidaten* system produces a close link between the EC President and the EP and provides the President with a personal mandate (Kassim et al., 2017, p. 659). Juncker was the first EC President to be selected via this system (Kassim et al., 2017, p. 659; Kassim, 2017, p. 14; Peterson, 2017, p. 350; Jepsen, 2015, p. 243). Moreover, the EC under Juncker was the first one to be divided into Vice-Presidents and 'regular' Commissioners (Peterson, 2017, p. 350). Juncker reformed his EC and created a so-called political Commission, to ensure that it could effectively implement his ten priorities and confront the EU's challenges collectively (Kassim et al., 2017, p. 667; Kassim, 2017, p. 14). By reforming the College, Juncker tried to solve the issue of an oversized College so that all Commissioners had meaningful functions (Peterson, 2017, p. 358; Kassim, 2017, p. 20). The College expansion as a result of the EU enlargement had led to an increase in portfolios, that generated coordination issues and minor responsibilities (Kassim, 2017, p. 20).

5.2 Interpretation of the results

The explanation of the threat perceived by the EC of Russia using its natural gas resources as an energy weapon, *has not* contributed to the establishment of the Energy Union. The statements of the EC and its main actors and those of the academic scholars differentiate greatly. On the one hand, the EC and its main actors highlight the possibility that energy policy will be used as a foreign policy or political tool (European Commission, 2015c, p. 6; Šefčovič, 2015f) and characterize Russia to be a threat (Juncker, 2015). On the other hand, academic scholars view the EU-Russia energy relationship as one of interdependent nature (Bugajski, 2009; Casier, 2011; Krickovic, 2015; Harsem & Claes, 2013; Yergin, 2006) and point to high costs for both parties if the trade were to be ended (Krickovic, 2015, p. 9). The academic scholars recognize the possibility of Russia employing its resources as an energy weapon, but, this possibility is limited, among other factors, by this interdependent relationship (Orttung & Overland, 2011).

Due to the interdependency of the EU-Russia energy relationship, as argued by academic scholars, I find that it is not likely that Russia would use its natural gas resources as an energy weapon. In fact, no more gas disruptions have appeared since the 2006 and 2009 disruptions (European Commission, 2014b, p. 2). The EC even looks back positively upon

its trilateral gas talks with Ukraine and Russia in ensuring the 2014 winter gas supply (European Commission, 2014a; European Commission, 2014f; European Commission, 2014g; European Commission, 2014d; European Commission, 2014c; European Commission, 2014e).

Since all the acknowledgements of Russia's energy weapon originate from the EC and its main actors and they are possibly biased, I conclude that these statements are not likely to be valid and the EC's establishment of the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union is not caused by the threat perceived by the EC of Russia employing its energy weapon.

The second expectation of the EC trying to accomplish deeper integration among member states by focusing on solidarity *has* contributed to the establishment of the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union. A key value of the EU has traditionally been solidarity (Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, 2012, p. 17), accentuated by the Solidarity clause of Treaty of Lisbon (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, p. 100-101). The Energy Union emphasizes equality, unity and cooperation among member states (Šefčovič, 2015e; Šefčovič, 2015a; Juncker, 2015; Juncker, 2014a, p. 7; Šefčovič, 2015c). Integral to the Energy Union project is that member states should be able to rely on their neighbours in case of gas disruptions (Šefčovič, 2015a) and that the division between 'new' and 'old' member states disappears (Juncker, 2014a, p. 7).

From the numbers illustrated in the analysis, I conclude that the gas dependent member states are member states that joined the Union during the enlargement process in 2004-2007 (European Commission, 2014b, p. 2; European Commission, 2014d, p. 21; European Commission, 2016). Nevertheless, Šefčovič argues that energy security is applicable to every EU member state (Šefčovič, 2015e). In short, the EC and its main actors have mainly advocated collective action and speaking with one voice (Juncker, 2015; European Commission, 2015c, p. 2; European Commission, 2015d, p. 11). Even so, the 2004-2007 enlargement brought forth a challenge to the EU and the EC. After all, from then on the Union had to operate while taking into consideration the interests of 28 greatly heterogenic member states (Ostrovskaya, 2014, p. 75). During that period and while the Treaty of Lisbon changed the EU's institutional framework (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007), the EC presidency under Barroso and later Juncker changed as the Presidents took more control over the EC's agenda (Becker et al., 2016, p. 1012-1013).

To add up all of the above, I conclude that the EC focuses heavily on solidarity and unity within the Energy Union by integration all member states in the Energy Union, while still pursuing the interests of the ‘new’ and gas dependent member states in the first dimension.

The expectation of the EC’s need to securitize the natural gas supply to acquire a stronger bargaining position and put itself on the map by presenting a prominent project *has not* contributed to the Juncker Commission’s establishment of the ‘energy security, solidarity and trust’-dimension of the Energy Union.

If the EC wanted to acquire a stronger position and gain relevance by its Energy Union project, it would have demanded more credit for it. However, the EC emphasizes cooperation with both the EP and member states, the Community method and plans to generate an inclusive and democratic governance system from member states’ feedback communication during the Energy Tour (Šefčovič, 2015g; European Commission, 2015e; Šefčovič, 2015b; Šefčovič, 2015c; European Commission, 2015b, p. 1; Juncker, 2014d, p. 12; Juncker, 2014e). The EC aims to cooperate with member states and offer them guidance and does not delegate itself relevant functions (European Commission, 2015, p. 1).

From this, I derive the conclusion that the EC has not securitized natural gas supply in acquire a stronger bargaining position by introducing a prominent project and therefore successfully claiming the project.

With regards to the Juncker Commission, specifications need to be mentioned. Firstly, President Juncker is the first EC President with a personal mandate derived from his election (Juncker, 2014e; Juncker, 2015; Kassim et al., 2017, p. 659; Kassim, 2017, p. 14; Peterson, 2017, p. 350; Jepsen, 2015, p. 243). This then resulted in Juncker’s goal to be a political President, leading a political and effective EC (Juncker, 2015; Juncker, 2014e). To reach this goal, he reformed his EC by creating political balance and providing every member state with a task of great relevance (Juncker, 2015; Juncker, 2014e; Kassim, 2017, p. 20). Thirdly, the Juncker Commission initiated at a time of Euroscepticism (Jepsen, 2015, p. 243). Juncker hence wanted to focus on and accomplish big issues (Juncker, 2014c, p. 4; Kassim, 2017, p. 15).

Nevertheless, I *do* argue that the EC securitized the EU’s natural gas supply. In the ‘energy security, solidarity and trust’-dimension, the EC framed natural gas supply as an issue that requires action. However, as previously explained, academic scholars argue that no gas disruptions are to be expected on the short term. Therefore, there was no need to depict

the EU's natural gas supply as an issue that needed urgent action. Yet, the EC *did* frame natural gas supply as a security issue. Considering these premises, I conclude that the EC securitized the issue of natural gas supply and thereby created the possibility to focus on solidarity and integrate all member states in the Energy Union project, while pursuing the interests of the 'new', most gas dependent member states in the first dimension. This is an effect of President Juncker's ambition to lead a political, effective Commission that focuses on big issues, to reconnect the EU with its citizens. I expect that President Juncker's ambitiousness comes from his personal mandate.

6. Conclusion

In this thesis, I aimed to identify the reason behind the Juncker Commission's establishment of the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union in the case of natural gas in February 2015. I identified three factors that I expected to possibly be of influence: the threat perceived by the EC of Russia using its natural gas resources as an energy weapon; the EC aiming for deeper integration among member states by focusing on solidarity; and the EC's need to securitize natural gas supply, in order to increase its relevance and acquire a stronger bargaining position within the European institutional framework and put itself on the map by presenting a prominent project. By analyzing speeches, statements, official documents, academic literature and already available statistics, I researched which factors contributed to the EC's establishment of the first dimension of the Energy Union.

As explained in the introduction, we are expected to run out of European fossil fuel supplies (European Commission, 2012b, p. 3). Compared to 2010, the EU's share of natural gas in its energy consumption declined from 25% to 23% (European Commission, 2012a, p. 18; European Commission, 2015b, p. 20). However, over that time the EU's natural gas import dependency increased with 2,9% (European Commission, 2012a, p. 20; European Commission, 2015b, p. 22). In 2013, 39% of the EU's natural gas imports came from Russia (European Commission, 2015b, p. 22)

On February 25th 2015, the Juncker Commission presented its Energy Union Package, including an 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension (European Commission, 2015c, p. 4-7). The EC's most crucial concern with regard to energy security, is energy dependency from one external supplier (European Commission, 2014b, p. 2). In this thesis, I argue that the Juncker Commission securitized the EU's natural gas supply, to gain relevance for the issue of natural gas supply. By doing so, the EC aimed to strengthen unity and collectivity within the EU by focusing on solidarity within the Energy Union, while pursuing the interests of the 'new', most dependent member states. The EC's goal was to achieve deeper integration among member states by making the Energy Union a common need.

The Juncker Commission is identified by its President as an effective and political Commission, that is committed to achieving progress in key issues (Juncker, 2015; Juncker, 2014e; Juncker, 2014c, p. 4). Juncker prioritized these key issues in his Political Guidelines, which includes the Energy Union project (Juncker, 2014d). I suspect that President Juncker's ambitiousness to achieve on key issues was triggered by his personal mandate (Juncker,

2014e; Juncker, 2015) and the Euroscepticism (Jepsen, 2015, p. 243). However, this is beyond the scope of this thesis; Juncker's reformation of the EC and creation of his Political Guidelines would be applicable to future research on the effects of political leadership.

Since this thesis solely focuses on the establishment of the 'energy security, solidarity and trust'-dimension of the Energy Union, no further research is done into the EC's general policy towards Russia. However, as the EC and its main actors themselves *do* identify Russia and its energy weapon to be a threat (European Commission, 2015c, p. 6; Šefčovič, 2015f; Juncker, 2015), further research could clarify to what extent this perception of Russia could have influenced the EC's overall policy towards Russia. With this thesis I have contributed to the debate of the EU's 'energy security', by researching the EC's reasons for the establishment of the first dimension of the Energy Union.

7. Bibliography

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7.1 Legislation

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