The European Union's Efforts to Formulate Energy Policy Following the 2022–2023 Russian Invasion of Ukraine

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ABSTRACT

The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine triggered a significant energy crisis for the European Union, which had long depended on natural gas supplies from Russia. This dependency exposed structural vulnerabilities within the region's energy system, prompting the EU to urgently formulate a more resilient and sustainable energy policy. This study aims to analyze the formulation process of the EU's post-invasion energy policy through a supranational approach and the co-decision mechanism, while also evaluating the policy's effectiveness using the Four As framework (Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability, and Affordability). A qualitative descriptive method is employed, drawing upon policy documents and relevant literature. The findings indicate that the REPowerEU policy serves as a milestone in Europe's energy transition by diversifying energy sources, accelerating the adoption of renewable energy, and strengthening cross-border energy infrastructure. Beyond addressing the immediate crisis, the policy also reflects a deepening of regional political integration in energy matters. The study concludes that crises can act as positive catalysts for energy policy transformation and the reinforcement of supranational solidarity within the European Union.

Keywords: *Co-Decision, Energy crisis, Energy security, European Union, Four As, REPowerEU, Supranationalism.*

INTRODUCTION

The energy crisis that occurred in Europe following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 became a turning point in the direction of European Union energy policy. Prior to the invasion, the European Union was highly dependent on energy imports from Russia, particularly natural gas supplied through infrastructure such as Nord Stream. Russia had been the main energy supplier for EU member states for several decades, although the level of dependence varied between countries. Apart from Russia, the EU also utilized other energy sources such as coal, nuclear power, and renewable energy from hydro and wind power. However, debates regarding energy supply diversification and infrastructure development were often hampered by differences in member state interests and individual strategies of European energy companies.

Russia's invasion triggered the implementation of economic sanctions by the European Union, which resulted in restrictions on gas and oil exports from Russia. In response, Russia reduced gas supplies by up to 60%, causing energy prices to surge by 20% in the first five months after the invasion and triggering an energy crisis in the region. This situation also contributed to high inflation and economic slowdown in several EU

member states. In addressing this crisis, the European Union launched the REPowerEU policy published on May 18, 2022, with three main pillars: energy conservation, diversification of energy sources and suppliers, and acceleration of renewable energy development. Diversification was pursued through increased LNG imports from the United States and Norway, as well as cooperation with North African countries. The EU also accelerated investment in renewable energy projects such as the North Sea Wind Power Hub and Celtic Interconnection to strengthen long-term energy resilience.

The research problem in this study is how the European Union formulates energy policy following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022-2023, amid the gap between the reality of energy dependence (das sein) and the need for energy independence (das sollen). This gap reflects a fundamental dilemma between the empirical condition of dependence on external energy sources that has persisted for decades and the ideal aspiration to achieve sustainable energy autonomy and security.

Several previous studies have highlighted this issue. Juanda and Rosdiana (2024) discuss the REPowerEU policy outlined in Regulation (EU) 2023/435 as a strategic response to the energy crisis, focusing on source diversification, renewable energy enhancement, and strengthening efficiency and infrastructure. Logayah et al. (2023) highlight the challenges and opportunities in this crisis, including negative economic impacts and the potential transition to renewable energy. Meanwhile, Nursyahbani and Marzaman (2023) examine the impact of the invasion on energy supply instability in major countries such as Germany, Italy, and France, and how this dependence is exploited in geopolitical contexts.

This research differs in focus from previous studies. Rather than simply describing the impact of the energy crisis, this study specifically examines how EU energy policy was designed and implemented through supranational mechanisms after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The novelty of this research lies in its analysis of the co-decision process in energy policy formulation, as well as how external crises can accelerate institutional integration at the regional level. Additionally, this research uses the latest sources up to 2023 to update policy analysis, filling gaps in the literature regarding crisis-driven institutional evolution in regional governance structures.

The main argument of this research is that the energy crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine has strengthened the European Union's supranational decision-making mechanisms in the energy sector, where member states have transferred some of their national authority to achieve common goals in facing external threats. The energy policy formulation process is conducted through a co-decision mechanism involving the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, and the European Parliament in democratic and structured decision-making. The resulting policies aim to build energy security to maintain regional political and economic stability from geopolitical disruptions. These efforts are realized through an approach that ensures adequate energy availability, ease of access to energy, public acceptance of energy transition, and affordability of energy costs for all levels of society. Through this integrated approach, the European Union has successfully transformed the energy crisis into momentum for accelerating sustainable energy transition and strengthening regional integration.

This research aims to analyze the formulation and implementation of EU energy policy after Russia's invasion in 2022, as well as how this crisis has strengthened supranational decision-making processes in the energy sector. Through this analysis, the research is expected to contribute to understanding crisis-driven institutional evolution in regional governance structures, particularly in the context of energy transition and collective energy security in an era of global geopolitical uncertainty.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the formulation of European Union energy policy following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in the period 2022–2023. A descriptive approach was chosen because this study focuses on systematically presenting facts, policies, and energy strategies without testing cause-and-effect relationships.

The data used consists of primary and secondary data. The primary methods in this study are literature review and case study. Academic literature and scientific publications are used to build a theoretical foundation and understand the European Union's energy policy, particularly the REPowerEU program, from various legal, political, economic, and supranational perspectives. Case studies were chosen to examine a specific phenomenon, namely the European Union's policy response through REPowerEU during the energy crisis, in order to describe the collective decision-making process, differences in member states' readiness, and the application of the principles of democracy and sustainability.

Secondary methods include online interviews with practitioners and academics, as well as netnography through the examination of official EU documents such as Opinion 04/2022 and the REPowerEU 3 Years On report. Interviews provide an empirical perspective on energy policy, while netnography is used to observe the dynamics of online discussions and official EU publications.

Data collection techniques included a literature review to examine academic literature and policy documents, a descriptive case study to examine the implementation of REPowerEU, online interviews to enrich practical perspectives, and digital observation/netnography of official EU publications. Furthermore, the data was analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis using the framework of supranationalism, co-decision mechanisms, and the 4A energy security concept (availability, accessibility, acceptability, affordability) to evaluate the EU's response to the energy crisis and its implications for regional energy security.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Supranationalism and the Role of European Union Institutions

In responding to the energy crisis caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the European Union demonstrated a strong institutional transformation by promoting the principle of supranationalism. This principle allows member states to transfer some of their national authority to regional institutions, which have collective legislative and

executive powers. In this context, supranationalism signifies that the European Union is no longer merely an intergovernmental forum, but rather a regional policy entity that can make strategic and legally binding decisions.

The REPowerEU policy designed by the European Commission is concrete evidence of the application of this principle. The European Commission acts as the policy initiative body, which then goes through the legislative process with the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament. As explained by Juanda & Rosdiana (2024), the strategic steps in this policy include diversifying energy sources, increasing renewable energy production, and strengthening energy efficiency to build a more independent system. Bauböck (2007) supports this idea by stating that in a system such as the European Union, citizenship and policy legitimacy are derived from the collective ability to respond to common challenges through joint decision-making. In the case of the energy crisis, the decision to shift dependence from Russian energy to alternative sources reflects a supranational consensus on external threats.

This transformation also strengthens regional solidarity. Countries such as Lithuania, which have a dark history under Russian influence, have become pioneers in completely cutting off energy supplies from Russia and quickly switching to other sources (Yudhi, 2025). They fully support supranational measures as a form of collective protection against cross-border geopolitical threats. Therefore, supranationalism is not merely a theory, but a political reality that strengthens the legitimacy of the European Union in implementing integrated regional energy policies (Kiljunen, 2004; Hildebrandt, 2020).

Decision-Making Mechanism: Co-Decision as a Pillar of Legitimacy

The implementation of energy policies such as REPowerEU is not carried out unilaterally, but through a democratic and complex co-decision procedure between the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of the European Union. This procedure reflects rational steps in public policy-making as described by Taherdoost & Madanchian (2023), which includes eight stages ranging from problem identification, policy formulation, option analysis, to outcome evaluation.

The process begins with the European Commission as the initiator, which assesses the impact and conducts public consultations before submitting a legislative proposal. In the case of REPowerEU, this proposal was submitted in May 2022 in response to the energy crisis. The aim is to accelerate the transition to clean energy and reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels (European Commission, 2023a). Funding is allocated through the NextGenerationEU program, specifically the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) instrument (European Commission, 2022b).

In the legislative stage, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union act as co-legislators. Policies can only be passed if they receive strong majority support: simple majority voting in Parliament and qualified majority voting in the Council, which must represent at least 55% of member states and 65% of the total EU population (Taherdoost & Madanchian, 2023). If there are differences, they are resolved through

trilogue, which is an informal meeting between the three institutions to reach a compromise (Fern, 2021; European Public Health Alliance, 2013).

REPowerEU was then passed in the form of Regulation (EU) 2023/435, which came into force in March 2023. After that, each member state was required to revise their national recovery plans to include the REPowerEU chapter in order to access additional funding. Thus, this co-decision process shows that EU energy policy is the result of a democratic and compromise-based joint formulation.

Energy Security and the 4A Approach as a Crisis Evaluation Framework

The concept of energy security is key to explaining the urgency of the REPowerEU policy. The European Union is not only facing a supply crisis, but also threats to economic and social stability. To that end, the 4A approach developed by APERC (2007) is used to evaluate four important dimensions: availability, accessibility, acceptability, and affordability.

a. Availability
   Before 2022, around 40% of the European Union's natural gas came from Russia. When Russia began cutting supplies in response to sanctions and exploiting its position for political gain (Nursyahbani & Marzaman, 2023), an availability crisis immediately ensued. Member states had to compete in the global market to obtain LNG from alternative suppliers such as the United States, Qatar, Norway, and Algeria (Yudhi, 2025). Investments in renewable energy, such as the North Sea Wind Power Hub project, became a long-term strategy to strengthen energy availability (Juanda & Rosdiana, 2024).
b. Accessibility
   Not all member countries have equal access to alternative energy supplies. Countries such as Germany, Italy, and France are heavily dependent on Russian energy and have more established infrastructure to receive LNG (Nursyahbani & Marzaman, 2023). In contrast, Balkan countries and some Eastern European countries such as Estonia are still heavily dependent on Russian pipelines, creating an access gap (Zhiznin et al., 2020).
c. Acceptability (Social and Environmental Acceptance)
   The transition to renewable energy requires strong social support. Coal energy, although available, has a high environmental impact. Meanwhile, nuclear energy is rejected in many countries due to safety concerns. Therefore, REPowerEU also focuses on public engagement through a just transition scheme to increase social acceptance of energy change (Newell & Mulvaney, 2013).
d. Affordability
   Rising energy prices due to supply shortages have a direct impact on inflation and economic slowdown in EU countries (Logayah et al., 2023). The cost of living has increased, and vulnerable groups are the most affected. The European Union has responded by providing energy subsidies and supporting efficiency. The long-term goal is to reduce energy costs through technological innovation and the economies of scale of green energy (APERC, 2007; European Commission, 2025).

Concept Integration: From Crisis to Resilience

The combination of supranationalism, co-decision mechanisms, and the 4A approach creates a strong normative and operational basis for the EU in building collective energy security. This crisis is not just about energy, but has become a moment of redefinition for European integration. REPowerEU is a concrete example of how the EU is using this crisis to promote long-term strategic policies. Although initially seen as a symbolic response, it has evolved into a concrete framework for coordinating and distributing resources to respond efficiently to transnational threats. Thus, this conceptual analysis shows a shift in European integration from economic cooperation to strategic cooperation that encompasses sustainability, solidarity, and political resilience in responding to global crises.

CONCLUSION

The formation and implementation of the REPowerEU policy demonstrates how the principle of supranationalism works effectively within the European Union system. Through a co-decision mechanism between the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, and the European Parliament, energy policy is established through a democratic and representative process. This strengthens the political legitimacy of the decisions made, while demonstrating that the European Union is a collective policy actor capable of responding comprehensively to cross-border crises.

Despite obstacles such as disparities in preparedness between countries, the dominance of large countries in the legislative process, and the emergence of Euroscepticism, REPowerEU remains a symbol of regional solidarity and the European Union's long-term commitment to building robust and sustainable energy security. This program shows that crises not only create threats, but also open up opportunities to accelerate the transformation of a more equitable, clean, and resilient energy system in the future. Thus, REPowerEU is not only a response to short-term energy supply threats, but also the European Union's strategic

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