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The Energy Relations of the European Union and the Russian Federation Under the Juncker Commission: The Discourse of Energy Security and Decarbonisation

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS submitted by:
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The European Union (EU) is the biggest energy importer, and to a significant extent dependent on a single supplier, the Russian Federation (RF). Energy security concerns have long been dominating the EU-RF energy relationship due to this overdependence and vulnerability to external supply shocks. Simultaneously, the EU set ambitious decarbonisation goals with the aim of a low-carbon economy. Considering that decarbonisation has the potential to fundamentally transform established energy relationships, analysing this aspect is especially important in the EU-RF relationship due to their mutual dependence. Consequently, the aim of this thesis was to examine the energy security and decarbonisation discourses in the EU-RF energy relationship from the EU's perspective, considering this duality of energy policy objectives of the EU. As Jean-Claude Juncker was appointed President of the European Commission shortly after the Crimean crisis, and the Paris Agreement was negotiated during his presidency, this period is ideal to synthesise the EU's views. My approach to this study was based on discourse analysis, using various sources published by the European Commission and individual Commissioners. My analysis turned out to be in line with previous research arguing that energy security plays the leading role, and the negative perception of the RF strengthened further during this period. There was also strong emphasis on negative interdependence due to geographical and infrastructural circumstances. While there were initiatives for cooperation under the decarbonisation discourse, decarbonisation was perceived mostly as a tool by the EU to reduce vulnerability to Russian supply disruptions and geopolitical uncertainties.

Keywords: EU, Russian Federation, international relations, energy policy, energy security, decarbonisation, discourse analysis

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To everyone who kept telling me that “you can do this” the whole year. I am happy to announce that you were right.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem definition

Energy has long been an important issue in international relations, as having access and control over resources is essential for the economy and for national security. While some countries have sufficient resources to support their economy, others cannot cover their demand without trading with countries rich in resources (Siddi 2017). In line with this idea, the energy question in international relations has been most often associated with energy security - the uninterrupted availability of energy at affordable prices (International Energy Agency 2019) from a consumer perspective, or the availability of demand from a producer point of view (Sovacool 2011). For long decades, securing fossil fuel supply (and demand) has been in the centre of foreign energy relations, as hydrocarbons have been dominating the global energy mix, with relatively little change (Griffiths 2019). However, due to the growing concerns around the negative impacts of fossil fuel consumption on climate change, and the decreasing costs of low-carbon energy technologies, voices have been raised for clean energy on both the national and international arena (Griffiths 2019), adding a new important element to the energy discourse. The need for combating climate change has become an important issue on the global scale, and has been articulated in numerous international agreements. The most significant global international agreement to date, the 2015 Paris Agreement within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), set the ambitious goal to keep the rise of global average temperature well below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels. Achieving this target will require a dramatic reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, for which decarbonising the energy sector is an essential component (United Nations 2015). Decarbonisation will inevitably change the geopolitics of energy, such as reframing the power relations between fossil fuel producers and consumers (Griffiths 2019). While fossil fuel consumers will benefit from clean technologies by increasing production domestically,

exporters will face negative consequences, especially those whose economies are relying on energy exports to a critical extent (Buschle & Westphal 2019).

This dual focus, energy security and decarbonisation, can also be observed in the energy policy of the European Union, which is the largest energy importer on the globe (European Commission 2015), while being one of the loudest voices calling for combating climate change in the international arena (Oberthür and Groen 2017). As Buschle & Westphal (2019) point out, it is not a surprise that decarbonisation "took centre stage" in the 2015 Energy Union strategy, which was initially a strategy dedicated to energy security. The EU, the largest importer of energy, is to a significant extent dependent on one single supplier for fossil fuels, the Russian Federation (RF) (Siddi 2017). The Strategy concerns foreign relations regarding energy security and decarbonisation (European Commission 2015), which policies are expected to have the largest influence on the EU's energy relations with its largest supplier, the RF. When the Energy Union strategy was published, some say that the RF had already undermined itself as a reliable supplier from the EU's perspective due to the 2006 and 2009 gas disputes, which led to disruptions in gas supply, and the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea (Krickovic 2015; Siddi 2017; Tichý 2019a). It is important to note that not only is the EU highly dependent on supplies, but the RF is also dependent on the revenues coming from energy exports to the EU (Siddi 2017). Thus, there is a significant economic dependence between them.

Analysing the energy security discourse between the two actors is a relatively well studied area, and Tichý (2019b) in his 2019 article even analysed briefly the energy security discourse of the Juncker Commission, as part of the 2010-2019 period. However, I believe dedicating a longer chapter for the topic is needed in order to find out the consequences of the gas disputes and the political conflicts, and to place it in the context of the wider EU energy policy, namely the decarbonisation objectives. According to my initial review, the effects of decarbonisation on established energy relations is a highly understudied area, even if decarbonisation has the potential

to fundamentally transform the energy relationship of consumer and producer countries. Moreover, as has been pointed out by Khrushceva & Maltby (2016), the decarbonisation discourse is way "under-concerned" regarding the EU-RF energy relationship (and so in terms of the EU's external relations in general). They argue that research on the effects of decarbonisation should be an important aspect, considering the parties' commitments under the Paris Agreement, and their previous objectives articulated under the EU-Russia energy dialogue (Khrushceva & Maltby 2016). Thus, the state and the potential evolution of international energy relations with fossil fuel exporters are extremely important areas of environmental research, as the way these relations are treated will have a significant effect on both achieving energy security and accomplishing climate goals for the benefit of the global community.

1.2 The aims and objectives of this research

In light of the previous section, this thesis aims to fill some gaps in the literature regarding the energy security and decarbonisation discourse in the EU-RF energy relationship by identifying the EU's perception on the RF concerning energy issues under the Juncker Commission. Considering the fact that Jean-Claude Juncker was appointed President of the European Commission shortly after the Crimean crisis in 2014, and the Paris Agreement was negotiated during his presidency, analysing this period is ideal to synthesise the EU's views. My approach to this study is based on discourse analysis, as it is argued that discourses create and determine directions for action, while limiting other ways to maneuver (Larsen 2018). Therefore, discourse analysis is a useful tool to reflect on both the current state of the EU-RF energy relationship, and also to make assumptions on future directions based on the findings. In order to achieve the aim stated above, the following objectives need to be addressed:

1. Establishing a framework relying on discourse analysis suitable to analyse the EU perspective on energy security and decarbonisation towards the RF. This framework also

needs to be appropriate for making comparisons to identify overlaps and differences in the discourses.

2. Presenting a detailed analysis of the individual discourses under the Juncker Commission - using various publicly available sources - in order to find out the EU's views on the RF concerning energy issues, focusing on key patterns, dynamics, interests, tools etc.
3. Placing the results of this research in existing theories of international relations, such as realism and liberalism, to present a general understanding of the dynamics of the actors' energy relations.
4. Locating this research in the existing literature on the EU-RF energy relationship, to be able to identify similarities and differences within the discourses compared with previous periods of time, and in order to identify the literature my research aims to contribute to.

1.3 Outline

This thesis is composed of six main chapters. Firstly, a literature review will be presented, focusing on energy security and decarbonisation from an international relations perspective. These sections will initially provide a broader overview defining the terms and identifying popular theories of international relations regarding the issues. Then, selected works on the EU-RF energy relationship will be presented concerning the energy security and decarbonisation discourses between the actors. This will be followed by a brief overview of the energy policy of the Juncker Commision to provide a narrower context for this research. The next chapter will introduce the theoretical and methodological framework for this study. This chapter will strongly build on Lukas Tichý's (Tichý & Kratochvíl 2014, Tichý 2019a, 2019b) approach to analyse the field of the EU-RF energy relationship, as his framework is well-suited to achieve the aims of this thesis. This chapter will also pay attention to the limitations of the chosen approach. In chapter 6, the collected data - documents, speeches, interviews and press releases from the period of the Juncker

Commission - will be analysed, and the patterns, themes and topics which emerged will be introduced. In the next main chapter, the discussion will take place on the EU-RF energy relationship, reflecting on the findings of the literature review to place my research in existing theories and the literature my study aims to contribute to. Lastly, I will draw conclusions from the previous chapters and reflect on whether my aims and objectives had been accomplished. In addition, I will propose recommendations for further research that need to be explored in order to have a full understanding of the issues introduced.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to provide a background for this research and to provide an overview of the literature it aims to contribute to. It should be noted that this chapter does not aim to review the European energy system or the evolution of the EU's energy policy in detail, but to provide a background for the analysis of the energy relationship between the EU and the RF in the context of energy security and decarbonisation.

The first main section will define energy security and introduce the broader concept of energy security focusing on theories of international relations in order to set a broader context in which the EU-RF relationship can be placed in. Then, this section will present selected works on the energy security issue between the EU and the RF, as it has long been dominating their energy relationship, and energy security was also named a key objective for the Juncker Commission's energy policy. The second part of this chapter will examine the decarbonisation discourse. Similar to the energy security section, decarbonisation will be defined first, then its implications for international relations will be presented. After that, the review of the literature regarding the EU-RF energy relationship in the context of decarbonisation will be presented. It should be noted here that the available literature regarding the decarbonisation discourse between the EU and the RF is very limited, therefore this section will be much shorter than the previous one. The third section of this chapter will introduce the energy policy objectives, with a special focus on external energy policy, of the Juncker Commission in order to provide a narrow context for the research later on which will be based on this period. Lastly, a summary of the literature review will be presented to highlight the key points and identify potential synergies between theories and discourses.

2.1 The energy security discourse

2.1.1 Defining energy security

As Sovacool (2011) points out, defining energy security is often a sensitive issue, as the way it is defined in political documents has most likely a strategic dimension, or it is not even defined at all on purpose. Personally, I agree with Sovacool's approach, and believe it is not a necessity to agree on one proper definition. I find it more useful to identify the key drivers to enhance energy security, which I will intend to do in this section.

Sovacool (2011) in his own literature review presents several definitions for energy security from academic sources. For instance, Barton *et al.* (2004) identifies the term with sufficient energy sources at reasonable prices, free from serious risks and disruptions. Sovacool's (2007) own interpretation shares a number of similarities, such as affordability and reliability, but introduces the need for environmental protection. Just like Kleber's (2009) five Ss, which emphasises sustainability besides supply, sufficiency, surety, and survivability. The diversification of supply, routes and resources are also popular elements in defining energy security according to Sovacool's findings, as they appear in the interpretations of Yergin (2006), Scheepers *et al.* (2006) and Kessels *et al.* (2008). In the definition of Brown & Sovacool (2007) social and cultural sustainability is also introduced when concerning energy security.

Considering that this research is concentrating on the European Union, I also turn to EU documents to search for some sort of a definition to energy security. The 2014 "European Energy Security Strategy" states that the EU's prosperity and security require stable and abundant supply of energy, which is in line with some of the academic definitions introduced above. Also, the Strategy highlights that energy security is inseparable and is fostered by low-carbon energy sources as they reduce EU's import dependence and enhance economic competitiveness, similarly to the emphasis on sustainability and environmental protection by the interpretation of numerous scholars. Moreover, the Strategy points out that in order to increase energy security, flexibility and

the capacity to adapt and change is fundamental (European Commission 2014). While the Energy Security Strategy lacks a direct definition, it is clear that energy security is strongly associated with "stability", "abundance", "sustainable", "flexibility" and "adaptation". The Energy Union strategy, which aims for a resilient energy union based on secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy, builds strongly on the "European Energy Security Strategy". Similar to its predecessor, the Energy Union strategy (European Commission 2015) does not provide a definition, but identifies the key drivers in achieving energy security. Firstly, it calls for solidarity and trust among Member States and its neighbours. Also, it highlights the need for diversification of energy sources, suppliers and routes. Furthermore, energy security is associated with reducing import dependence by improving energy efficiency and the deployment of domestically produced energy from low-carbon sources or non-conventional fossil fuels. And finally, the strategy calls for more transparency on gas supply by ensuring transparency of gas contracts that may concern EU energy security (European Commission 2015). In summary, according to the Energy Union strategy, energy security involves affordability", "solidarity and trust", "diversification", "energy efficiency", "low-carbon" and "transparency", in addition to the terms the 2014 Energy Security Strategy identified. The International Energy Agency (IEA) - to stay on the international level and of which most EU countries are a member of - defines energy security as "the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price" (IEA 2019). Likewise to the European Commission, IEA associates energy security with "prompt reaction to sudden changes", with other words "flexibility", and argues that serving environmental needs are key to long-term energy security. In addition, they highlight the need for a weather and climate, and also a digitally resilient energy system to ensure energy security (IEA 2019).

In light of the above, the most common denominators regarding energy security are "affordability", "availability", "stability", "resilience", "sustainability" and "diversification", which elements are shared by definitions of both scholars and intergovernmental organisations.

2.1.2 Energy security in international relations and in the context of the EU-RF energy relationship

Mohapatra (2017) points out that resource scarcity is an underlying issue in international relations, so as in the context of energy. In his words: "*ever since the discovery of hydrocarbons, there is a growing dependency by the global community for securing the same*", thus improving their energy security. He strongly highlights that energy is not only shaping the nature of inter-state relations, but also plays an important role in generating norms, which influence the practices of international relations (Mohapatra 2017).

To start with, according to Siddi (2017), there are two key approaches to energy based on international relations theory: realism and liberalism. Realism, or political realism emphasises the competitive and conflictual side of international relations, arguing that the principal actors are states who are driven by their own security and self-interests without concerning ethical norms in relations to other states (Korab-Karpowicz 2017). Realists argue that the rule of law is not applicable to the international arena, and it is characterised by active and potential conflicts (Korab-Karpowicz 2017). Neo-realists, led by Waltz, reformed the realist theory arguing that the international system has an anarchical structure, where the states are focusing on their survival and to secure their relative gain (Waltz 1979; Mohapatra 2017; Korab-Karpowicz 2017). Due to the asymmetric distribution of capabilities among states, conflicts are decided by those who are in control of most capabilities, like major superpowers (Farkas 2012). On the other hand, liberalism, or idealism, emphasises cooperation and mutual benefits (Korab-Karpowicz 2017), which can possibly lead to a positive-sum game where everyone benefits (Siddi 2017). From a liberal view, the concept of interdependence is especially important, as increased dependence can reduce conflicts between states, as it will lead to more cooperative and friendlier relations (Krickovic 2015).

Energy, particularly energy security, is often viewed under the lenses of realism. As Shum (2013) states, from a realist perspective, the question of international relations is who are the ones controlling material resources, such as energy. In the same vein, Siddi (2017) points out that energy can be seen as a strategic tool to acquire competitive advantage in the international arena. He also highlights that from a realist point of view, energy security is defined as unrestricted access and control of available sources, which are finite. Therefore, international energy politics is a zero-sum game. Once a state secures its supply, it can influence others who do not have access to sufficient resources (Siddi 2017). In contrast, liberals argue that international energy politics can have positive outcomes for all sides, as energy producing and energy consuming states can benefit from each other. Producers can sell their surplus and make profits, while the others can benefit from the peaceful access to resources. Also, besides energy flows, consumer countries may import manufactured or high quality goods for energy producers, enhancing the benefits for both (Siddi 2017). Therefore, energy trade cannot be suspended without significant social welfare losses, so none of the sides have rational interests to risk energy flows between them (Siddi 2017). Moreover, as Farkas (2012) points out, liberalism, especially neoliberalism, also has a normative approach, by providing guidance to get rid of illiberal practices pursued by national governments to overcome energy security issues, such as by setting up international institutions (Farkas 2012). Neo-liberal institutionalism can be easily identified in EU's external energy policy, like the establishment of the European Energy Charter with former Soviet states in order to secure energy flows on the territory of the newly formed republics (Mohapatra 2017; Buchan & Keay 2015), or the EU's requirement to be in compliance with EU energy rules by those who want to sell energy on the European market (Andersen *et al.* 2017).

In addition to realism and liberalism, social constructivism has also been used to explain energy policy formation. As Shum (2013) summarises, constructivists believe that policy goals are more than the rational interests of political institutions, as interests themselves are a consequence

of political activity. In other words, according to constructivists, international relations are socially constructed realities influenced by political values and ideas, rather than influenced only by materialistic structures (Egedy 2007). Shum (2013) presents the example of the 1970s when the conventional wisdom that economic growth can be enhanced by additional efforts in fossil fuel exploitation was challenged. He argues that with the recurring crisis and high gasoline prices, emphasising sustainability became the interpretation of reality (Shum 2013).

Siddi (2017) notes that energy has long been a key component of the EU-RF relationship, as the RF is the most important supplier of fossil fuels to the EU, while the RF relies heavily on revenues coming from fossil fuel exports to the EU. He reminds that this mutual dependence has started during the last decades of the Cold War when the European Community and some neutral countries have started to import fossil fuels for civilian and industrial use from the Soviet Union and the Comecon[1]. While during the Cold War, relations between the Eastern and Western blocks were mostly characterised by the realist logic of conflict, energy relations were an exception, and the volumes of exported fossil fuels grew gradually (Siddi 2017). With the end of the Cold War the liberal paradigm had dominated the EU-RF energy relationship for more than a decade, based on "positive" interdependence, cooperation and emphasising their mutual benefits. However, from the second half of the 2000s, this paradigm has been constantly challenged by political factors, starting with the 2006 Russian-Ukrainian gas transit crisis, which caused disruptions in Russian gas exports to the EU (Siddi 2017). This was complicated further by the fact that new Member States from the Central-Eastern European (CEE) region were extremely dependent on Russian gas imports which posed a real threat to their security (Siddi 2017). While in the case of Western Member States the RF had to compete with other suppliers, for Central Europe and the Baltics there were no other alternatives to Russian gas (Selei & Takácsné Tóth 2015). The 2009 Russian-

[1] The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was established in 1949 to lead and coordinate the economic development of Eastern European and other socialist countries belonging to the so-called Eastern block, led by the Soviet Union (Britannica Encyclopedia n.d.).

Ukrainian transit price crisis, which led to a two-week long gas crisis with the suspension of gas transit through Ukraine (Gyermán 2010), and the Russian annexation of Crimea made the EU emphasise further the need for enhancing their energy security, and to reduce dependence on an often unpredictable supplier (Siddi 2017).

As Siddi (2017) highlights, several authors have started to argue that the realist paradigm found its way back to the EU-RF relationship, especially concerning energy security. For instance, Tichý (2019a) found that the energy security discourse, or what he calls the "diversification" discourse, in the EU-RF energy relationship correlates heavily with political realism. Both sides are competing for limited resources, and are using these resources to strengthen their political power. When analysing the energy relationship between the EU and the RF for the period of 2004-2014, Tichý (2019b) points out that the energy security discourse involves a strong rhetoric about EU's vulnerability, and the reduction of EU's dependence on external suppliers from the EU's side. He argues that between 2006 and 2010 the energy security discourse focused mostly on the external dimension of energy policy, and finds that during this period there was a changing perception of the RF as a reliable supplier, which was articulated in communications by the European Commission highlighting the concerns about the instability of Russian supplies. Also, he highlights that for the period between 2004 and 2010 the discourse "gains intensity and momentum" during times when an energy crisis takes place, like in the case of the 2006 and 2009 gas disputes. While the same is true for the 2010-2014 period, he finds that energy became a key pillar to EU energy policy, even if there were no disruptions during these times. Furthermore, he identifies that there was a shift in tools securing supply as besides securing external relations, the EU put an emphasis on, for instance, internal market connections. Tichý argues (2019a) that this strengthening focus on energy security can be a consequence of the deeping rivalry or even hostility between the two actors. In addition, Tichý (2019a) points out that the previously emphasised interdependence rhetoric shifted to "unilateral dependence" highlighting EU's threatening import dependence,

especially on the RF. He points out that this interdependence is not seen as a positive element which ensures stable relations between the EU and the RF, but instead as a risk which should be minimised as much as possible (Tichý 2019a).

Tichý (2019a) also argues that their relations are "essentially symmetrical", but both actors see the other as rivals, which ends up in a zero-sum game; like when Member States are trying to protect their distribution networks, the RF seeks to regain control over them, and so on (Tichý 2019a). Similarly to Tichý (2019a), Krickovic (2015) argues that on the contrary to liberal theories, economic interdependence between the EU and the RF has not lessened, but strengthened their security concerns towards each other. He highlights that this tension exacerbated during the 2014 Ukrainian crisis, when they supported opposing parties. Like Tichy (2019), Krickovic (2015) states that the EU-RF relationship is highly symmetrical, as the EU is highly dependent on the RF to serve its energy needs, while for the RF EU is the most important foreign economic relationship. He points out that due to this interdependence, the EU is increasingly concerned about its dependency on Russian hydrocarbons, and have been adopting several measures to reduce Russian influence, for instance by blocking Russian interests to buy into European energy companies, and by finding alternative routes for gas imports from former Soviet states to bypass Russian control (Krickovic 2015).

2.2 The decarbonisation discourse

2.2.1 Defining decarbonisation

Decarbonisation is strongly related to the Paris Agreement, and as Buschle & Westphal (2019) points out, in a sense decarbonisation can be understood as the "actions and processes to fulfil the goal of the Agreement", i.e. to keep global temperature increase well below 2°C compared to pre-industrial level. They argue that decarbonisation means the replacement of fossil fuels by renewables to a large extent, but also involves demand-side measures, most importantly energy savings (Buschle & Westphal 2019). This definition strongly correlates with the Juncker Commission's decarbonisation objectives, namely the need for increasing the share of renewables and improving energy efficiency (European Commission 2015). Buschle & Westphal (2019) argue that there are two dimensions of decarbonisation. Firstly, it can be understood as a process, what is often called as energy transition, and also a result, where renewables replace a critical proportion of fossil fuels. Hildingsson *et al.* (2019) emphasises the process dimension of decarbonisation, and highlight that state institutions are in the centre of decarbonisation by adopting policies and political processes to reduce the generation of carbon emissions. They strongly underline that decarbonisation goes beyond decoupling emissions from economic activity, towards radically decreasing societal and economic dependence on fossil fuels. They point out that while decoupling is achievable through technological and efficiency improvements, decarbonisation requires "systematic changes and transformations" in the practices of "late-modern capitalist economies and industrial processes" (Hildingsson et al 2019). The interpretation of decarbonisation by Hildingsson *et. al.* (2019) strongly correlates with the views of Gough & Meadowcroft (2011). As Gough & Meadowcroft argue, addressing climate change requires rethinking production and consumption patterns that produce greenhouse gas emissions, while also requires to transform social welfare institutions built in the last century. They highlight that in order to achieve

decarbonisation, the meaning of welfare and institutions need to be radically reformed (Gough & Meadowcroft 2011).

Besides having a positive effect on climate change, decarbonisation also has the possibility to enhance energy security by encouraging domestic energy production, as it was articulated in the Energy Union strategy (European Commission 2015). Buschle & Westphal (2019) highlight this relation, and argue that decarbonisation and energy security need to be reconciled, rather than treated separately under the impacts of climate change. Locally produced energy will put countries who cannot cover their energy demand from domestically available fossil fuels to a better position with the deployment of low-carbon sources, as risks associated with vulnerable infrastructure or political crisis will be lowered. In addition, Buschle & Westphal (2019) conclude that the change in fuels will inevitably change the traditional energy security discourse, and security policy will likely shift from a geopolitical point of view towards a more technology and trade centred one.

2.2.2 Decarbonisation in international relations and in the context of the EU-RF energy relationship

As Buschle & Westphal (2019) point out, decarbonisation will have a significant influence on established energy relations, concerning interdependence between producers and consumers of fossil fuels both on the regional and global level. Similarly, Khrushceva & Maltby (2016) argue that the transition to a low carbon economy has an additional dimension to established energy trade, raising the question to what extent decarbonisation will change relations between consumers and suppliers. As highlighted above, decarbonisation has the potential to reduce import dependence by enhancing locally produced energy, thus existing energy relations might be transformed and reframed.

Overland (2019) argues that decarbonisation will affect the European demand for different types of fossil fuel differently, but it is hard to predict to what extent. He points out that logically coal imports will be cut off first, as it is the biggest polluter and European coal is able to compete

with imported sources. As for oil, he highlights that there is a potential increase in bicycles, electric mobility and alternative fuel transport, which could be enhanced by the fact the European cities were designed well before the motorisation of transport, featuring narrow streets and compact urban centres. Thus, the EU has the potential to reduce its oil consumption significantly. However, Overland (2019) points out that the future of natural gas in the context of decarbonisation is way more unpredictable than coal and oil. Firstly, he points out that natural gas has a special position in the case of the EU due to the existing gas pipeline infrastructure, that leaves the EU dependent on its current suppliers. Also, LNG imports are rapidly increasing, and there is a general excitement about LNG in the EU to diversify its gas supplies. But LNG's future is highly unpredictable, as it heavily relies on whether climate policies will enable their use in the long run (Overland 2019). Overland concludes that during the early 2010s natural gas was seen as a bridge fuel to a low-carbon transition, but the excitement has faded away recently. From an energy security perspective, Stern (2019) highlights that if the EU chooses to include natural gas in its decarbonisation narrative the threat of Russian dependency will continue. He suggests that while during the 2020s natural gas will probably stay, there is a possibility that in the 2030s natural gas will be jeopardised by security concerns over Russian dependence and climate change considerations (Stern 2019).

Considering the dynamics between the EU and its fossil fuel suppliers, Overland (2019) strongly emphasises that EU's external suppliers are not rule-makers, but rule-takers. He presents the example of Russia, which is being forced by EU regulations to change its practices to be in compliance with the free-market competition rules. Therefore, no matter how much the EU energy mix will change, suppliers will have to adapt (Overland 2019).

The most affected relationship due to decarbonisation might be with the RF, as the latter is the single biggest supplier of fossil fuels to the EU. At the same time, as was highlighted in the previous sections, the RF is highly dependent on revenues coming from energy trade with the EU. Khrushceva & Maltby (2016) draw attention to the fact that the implications of decarbonisation

policies on the EU-RF energy relationship is highly under-considered in the literature, while it should be an important aspect of research in light of the commitments made by both actors under the Paris Agreement. Considering the fact that there is a limited amount of literature on the topic, moreover, some of the scholars argue that the future of the relationship is highly unpredictable, this section may not provide a comprehensive understanding, but hopefully will be able to set some directions for the actual research later on.

Kuzemko (2014) argues that during the early 2010s climate ideas in terms of the EU-RF energy relationship were quite mixed. She highlights that some authors suggest that climate objectives promoted by the EU might have a positive effect if Europe establishes itself as a knowledge leader in the region. She points out that this has been relevant as the RF is pursuing development in energy efficiency and the deployment of new technologies. She presents the example of the 2011 “Common Understanding of EU-Russia Energy Cooperation" document issued by the European Commission, which includes a clause on cooperation on energy efficiency, and the example of the 2010 “EU-Russia Partnership for modernisation” which includes joint projects on new energy technologies. On the other hand, EU climate policy will inevitably involve the increase of locally produced energy, thus threatening Russian exports to the EU (Kuzemko 2014). As Kuzemko points out, this will lead to increased energy security due to reduced dependence on imports. From the Russian perspective this will have “disastrous results”, as they perceive energy security as security of demand. She highlights that energy efficiency initiatives and the deployment of new technologies from the Russian side is with the aim to be able to sell more fossil fuels externally. In the same vein, Khrushceva & Maltby (2016) find that Russian decarbonisation and climate change policy is way less ambitious than the EU’s, and it is characterised by failed implementations and modest objectives. They argue that this divergence of ideas is one cause of the lack of successful cooperation in terms of clean energy. However, similarly to Kuzemko (2014) they highlight that there is a potential in cooperation regarding energy

efficiency and related technology trade, and even renewable energy trade, as these issues are relatively less politicised. They even highlight that cooperation on these issues could have the potential to restart the EU-Russia energy dialogue, which has been suspended since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Khrushceva & Maltby 2016). As Dannreuther (2016) concludes, while decarbonisation is an essential part of the EU's conceptualisation of energy security, Russia sees it as a threat to its own security concerns. Thus, it is not a surprise that there has been no effective institutionalisation of the EU-RF non-hydrocarbon relationship (Dannreuther 2016) Finally, as Khrushceva & Maltby (2016) note, it is important to highlight that while decarbonisation is a real threat to the RF in the long-term, while there is no significant progress in electricity storage technology gas will stay as an important back-up capacity to balance renewables in the short to medium-term.

2.3 Energy policy of the Juncker Commission: A resilient energy union with a forward-looking climate change policy

In July 2014, then-candidate for President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker introduced the priorities of his presidency (if elected) in his speech "A new start for Europe" (Juncker 2014). While energy policy had long been playing a supporting role in EU policy-making (Buchan & Keay 2015), due to the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 and the growing concerns around climate change, it was not surprising that Juncker proposed the creation of "A resilient energy union with a forward-looking climate change policy" as one of the top ten priorities of his presidency. Juncker highlighted that the creation of an energy union is essential to enhance European energy security, as it was often said during the Ukrainian crisis, and to find a united voice in energy negotiations with third countries. He also called for the EU's leading role in deploying renewable energy sources, and the need to emphasise energy efficiency to reach the EU's clean energy objectives (Juncker 2014). Jean-Claude Juncker was appointed president of the European Commission in late 2014, and in February 2015 the Commission put forward the strategy for creating the European Energy Union. The strategy proposed five interrelated and mutually reinforcing dimensions - energy security, energy efficiency, a fully integrated European energy market, decarbonisation, and research and innovation - with the aim to reach enhanced energy security, sustainability and competitiveness (European Commission 2015). Goldthau and Sitter (2020) argue that the Energy Union package has been a shift from the priority of market integration of the previous regulatory packages of 1998, 2003 and 2009 to security of supply with the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. In addition, the Energy Union package ties EU energy policy more strongly to climate objectives than before (Goldthau & Sitter 2020).

As Andersen *et al.* (2017) highlight, the emphasis on energy security and the need for a fully integrated energy market have a direct effect on the EU's external energy policy. At the time the Energy Union strategy was published, the EU imported more than 53% of its energy, making it the

largest energy importer in the world (European Commission 2015). In 2014, more than one third of hard coal and crude oil, and around 37% of natural gas imports were coming from the RF (Eurostat 2020), and six Member States relied entirely on Russian gas imports (European Commission 2015). Andersen *et al.* (2017) argue that the external dimension of security of supply in the EU's case is the diversification of gas supply. Most importantly, reducing dependence on Russian imports, as it turned out to be a "particularly sensitive issue" during the times of the gas cut offs during the gas price debates in 2006 and 2009 between the RF and Ukraine, and during the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Andersen *et al.* 2017). The Energy Union strategy offers three key solutions for diversification of gas supplies: enabling Central Asian countries to export gas to Europe, establishing liquid gas hubs, and encouraging liquified natural gas (LNG) imports (European Commission 2015). The Energy Union strategy, under the dimension of energy security, also calls for a stronger European role in global energy markets. It is highlighted that energy policy has been used as a foreign policy tool by several major energy producing and transit countries, which has to be considered when developing the EU's external energy policy. The Strategy states that trade policy needs to play an important part as well through the inclusion of energy related provisions in trade agreements[2] to secure security of supply further. The Strategy names several potential trade partners, such as Turkey, Turkmenistan, the Middle East and Africa, and calls for the development of deeper partnerships with Norway, the United States and Canada. In addition, there is a direct reference to the Russian energy relationship, stating that the relationship needs to be reframed in terms of market opening, fair competition, environmental protection and safety for the benefit of both sides. Moreover, the Strategy points out that attention should be given to diversification of nuclear fuel and related services (such as enrichment) by those Member States where nuclear power is part of the energy mix (European Commission 2015). The RF plays an

[2] The Treaty of Lisbon, which came into force in 2009, gave the EU full legal personality, therefore the EU is able to sign international treaties or join international organisations (European Union 2007).

important role in the European nuclear power market also - as of 2014, almost 20% of uranium supply, and about 30% of enrichment services were provided by the RF (Walker 2014). While the RF is the largest source of crude oil and solid fuels, the Energy Union strategy does not address directly the need for diversification of supply for these commodities (European Commission 2015).

Besides enhancing security of supply, as Andersen *et al.* (2017) argue, the need for a fully integrated European energy market has a direct influence on external relations also. This affects external players, as those who want to sell or operate on the European internal market need to be in compliance with EU market rules. Besides securing energy supplies on EU territory, market regulations address potential threats to market distortion both internally, and by external partners; such as the issues related to the behavior of the RF and its state-owned energy monopoly, Gazprom (Andersen *et al.* 2017).

In addition to energy security and the need for a fully integrated energy market, the decarbonisation of the European economy was also named as a top priority of EU energy policy. The Energy Union strategy proposed that the EU is committed to be a world leader in renewable energy, and to play an important role in climate negotiations (European Commission 2015). The EU had already been committed to an at least 40% reduction of domestic reduction of GHG emissions by 2030 relative to 1990 levels, and set up a renewable target of at least 27% (European Commission 2014), which provided a foundation for the negotiations of a binding international climate agreement in 2015 (European Commission 2015). In 2015 December, the Paris Agreement on climate change was adopted within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and became effective in 2016 November (Oberthür & Groen 2017). Oberthür & Groen (2017) points out that the EU was playing a central role during the negotiations and advocated for a treaty binding for all countries with quantifiable commitments. In light of the Paris Agreement and the Energy Union strategy, the Commission released the "Clean energy for all Europeans" package. As part of the package an updated renewable target of at least 32% (European

Commission 2018) and an energy efficiency target of at least 32.5% by 2030 were set (European Commission 2018a), and the directive concerning energy performance of buildings was updated and amended (European Commission 2018a), among others. Furthermore, in 2019 the Commission adopted a revised version of the Directive on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles in line with the decarbonisation targets, setting new emission thresholds, and clean energy targets for light-duty vehicles (European Commission 2019). Turning back to energy security, the large-scale penetration of renewables will have a direct effect on the EU's security of supply. As the Energy Union package highlights, domestically produced energy, like renewables, contributes to decreasing EU's import dependence, thus improves its security of supply, as it has been also articulated in the previous section on decarbonisation. It should be noted here again, that this aim of a decarbonised economy undoubtedly has an effect on external relations. As Franza & Van Der Linde (2017) point out as an example, the shift towards increasing domestic production capacity, for instance, puts a pressure on EU-RF relations, as it can be viewed as a threat to the energy and geopolitical interests of the latter.

2.4 Summary

Energy has long been an important issue in international relations, as securing energy supply is essential for all international actors due to economic and security reasons, just like in the context of the EU and the RF. Energy security is mostly associated with "affordability", "availability", "stability", "resilience", "sustainability" and "diversification", which elements are shared by definitions of both scholars and intergovernmental organisations. Uniquely, in the case of the EU there is also a strong emphasis on solidarity and trust, articulating the strong economic (and also political) integration of Member States. According to international relations theories, energy can be perceived under the prism of realism, liberalism, and also social constructivism. In the case of energy security, it is usually associated with realism, as actors on all sides are trying to secure and control their resources. Consequently, EU-RF energy relations are also increasingly associated with realism, with the increased concerns over security due to the gas disputes of the 2000s, and the 2014 Ukrainian crisis. Furthermore, literature also showed that there is a symmetrical interdependence between the EU and the RF, which ends up in a zero-sum game and deepening rivalry, instead of enhancing cooperation and mutual benefits.

Decarbonisation in brief means the replacement of highly polluting fossil fuels in the energy mix with low-carbon resources, such as renewable energy, and enhancing energy efficiency. Due to the fact that decarbonisation involves increasing production locally, the process has a direct effect on the relations of fossil fuel suppliers and consumers by reducing their interdependence. Consequently, decarbonisation affects energy security, and some even suggest that the traditional view on energy security may shift towards a technology and trade centred perception. Like any other energy relation, decarbonisation will inevitably change for some yet unpredictable extent the EU-RF energy relationship. The climate objectives of the two actors are not in line with each other, as the RF has way less ambitious policy goals regarding the issue. This is not a surprise, as decarbonisation is a threat to its security of demand, thus its economic competitiveness. However,

the RF is also interested in pursuing energy efficiency objectives and deploying new technologies, which could serve as a basis for their future cooperation.

The energy policy of the Juncker Commission articulated this dual focus on energy security and decarbonisation, which was characterised by the Energy Union package and its supporting directives. The Commission's external energy policy was strongly around diversification of supply routes, thus reducing dependence on Russian supplies, and advocating for decarbonisation and renewable energy on the regional and global levels.

This dual focus, energy security and decarbonisation, will be investigated throughout the next chapters in relation to the RF, considering the gaps in literature doing a detailed discourse analysis of the Juncker Commission. As mentioned above, the Juncker Commission was appointed shorty after the Crimean crisis, and the negotiations of the Paris Agreement were taking place under this period. Therefore, analysing this period has a significant value in identifying the EU's perception on the RF concerning energy issues.

3 APPROACH

In this chapter I will introduce the framework created for this analysis. In line with the objectives, a framework relying on discourse analysis will be established, which is suitable to analyse both the energy security and decarbonisation discourses, while also being appropriate to make comparisons between them. To accomplish that, my approach will strongly follow Lukas Tichý's (Tichý & Kratochvíl 2014; Tichý 2019a; 2019b) well-established framework and methodology for analysing the EU-RF energy discourse. All components of the presented approach are either following directly, or largely based on his works. In his articles concerning the EU-RF energy relations, he focuses exclusively on the discursive aspects, rather than the non-discursive dimensions, such as the material or institutional factors. He argues that the ideational and discursive approach is analysed way less frequently, while these are important aspects as they provide a context for the material and institutional structures. Moreover, he highlights that the latter two give meaning to and influence the actions taken regarding the relationship. For his analysis, Tichý (Tichý & Kratochvíl 2014; Tichý 2019a; 2019b) builds on "methodological pluralism" with regards to discourse analysis, and combines a number of approaches and methods to conduct a comprehensive study. He points out that he sees discourse analysis as an "overarching methodology" which enables various approaches to data analysis to be combined. My methodology treats Tichý's (2019a) approach as a "pool of methodologies". Therefore, I use only those components which are essential to accomplish my aims and objectives, considering the constraints of length and time.

Besides Tichý's (Tichý & Kratochvíl 2014; Tichý 2019a; 2019b) approach, Neumann's "toolkit" will serve as my guidelines, and will be reflected on throughout this chapter. Drawing on his experience, Neumann (2008) presents the "discourse analyst toolkit", preconditions and tips, for achieving a successful discourse analysis. Firstly, he argues that an important prerequisite is to have a certain cultural competence, or in other words, drawing on extant knowledge when choosing

the topic. Secondly, he calls for the need to delimit the analysis to a manageable range of sources and timeframes, while taking into consideration potential censorship and other practices which might have an effect on the availability of sources. Finally, he encourages researchers to "explore change", to uncover layering within discourses. He concludes that the "more actions that the analysis may account for demonstrating its preconditions, and the more specifically this may be done, the better the discourse analysis" (Neumann 2008).

This chapter is organised in the following way. Firstly, the theoretical approach will be introduced, namely social constructivism and the conceptualisation of discourse. Next, the methodological framework will be introduced, and then the collected data - the corpus of documents - will be presented considering the proposed approaches. Lastly, the limitations of my chosen approach will be addressed.

3.1 The theoretical approach

3.1.1 Social constructivism

Tichý (2019a) places his approach, the one which will be used for this thesis, under the paradigm of social constructivism. As Egedy (2007) concludes, social constructivists argue that international relations are socially constructed realities, and not necessarily determined by materialistic values. In the same vein, Larsen (2018) states that the focus in social constructivism is that the world is observed via our ways of categorising it, and the social world is a product of these categorisations. Tichý (2019a) introduces Wendt's (1999) concept of social constructivism when concerning international relations. Wendt (1999) argues that viewing international relations as "socially constructed" has become commonplace in academic literature. He draws three assumptions regarding the theory. Firstly, he argues that states are the main units of analysis. Also, their interactions are characterised by intersubjectivity, rather than materialistic structures. And lastly, the identities and interests of states or actors are constructed by social structures (Wendt 1999; Tichý 2019a).

3.1.2 Conceptualising discourse

Tichy (2019a) introduces the concept of discourse through the definition of Simmerl (2011), who states that a discourse is a constructed meaning through written and oral communication. Larsen (2018) highlights that discourses have an action component, as in discourses' meanings are constantly produced and reproduced (Larsen 2018). Milliken (1999) clarifies that producing and reproducing under this understanding means that discourses create ways of acting, while limiting other ways of identity and action. In other words, as Neumann (2008) concludes, discourses can determine which actions are possible, and can show what is the "obvious" thing to do in a certain situation.

In the literature review, the energy security and decarbonisation discourse have been introduced, which will serve as the basis of further analysis. The literature review also fulfills Neumann's (2008) precondition of being culturally competent, as the context and background has already been presented. As a reminder, the energy security discourse in the context of the EU is often associated with dependence and the need for diversification, and poses as an economic and national security issue. Under the perspective of the EU-RF energy relationship, it has been presented that the relationship has been perceived as a negative interdependence, and can be understood under the realm of realism, where both actors are pursuing their own security, ending up in a zero-sum game. While the energy security discourse is a well-studied area, there is way less known about the decarbonisation discourse, which leaves space for making assumptions before turning to the analysis. According to the literature review, the decarbonisation discourse is associated with the transition towards a low-carbon economy based on low-carbon energy sources, replacing fossil fuels in the energy mix. Consequently, I assume that the key words associated with the discourse will be, for instance, "clean energy", and "environmental protection", in addition to "decarbonisation". Moreover, considering that the EU highlights the benefits of renewables in enhancing energy security, presumably there will be overlaps with the energy security discourse in relations to the RF as well. Finally, I assume that in the context of the Paris Agreement the mutual benefits of decarbonisation will be emphasised, locating the discourse under the liberal paradigm.

3.2 The methodological approach

3.2.1 Discourse Analysis

Tichý (2019a) uses discourse analysis as his "overarching" method, placing it under the social constructivist approach. Similarly, Larsen (2018) argues that discourse analysis as a theoretical and methodological approach needs to be understood under the general understanding of social constructivism, with the assumption that the social world is the result of categorisations, or in other words, discourses. In the definition of Potter (1996), discourse analysis focuses on talks and texts as social practices, and on the resources that are drawn on to enable those practices. Discourse analysis is a popular approach to analyse international relations, as for instance Neumann (2008) argues, discourse analysis is a useful tool, as it shows for example, why some states are perceived as enemies, and a discourse maintains a "degree of regularity" in social relations, producing preconditions for actions.

Following Tichý's lead (2019b), I will draw on various sources within the European Commission for the period of 2014-2019, including speeches, interviews, documents and press releases, to present a detailed discourse analysis for a comprehensive presentation on the EU's perception towards the RF. Besides being able to present a detailed overview due to the wide variety of examined documents, drawing on a single institution and a clearly stated time period is in line with Neumann's warning that for a successful discourse analysis delimitations are needed regarding sources and the timeframe.

3.2.2 Thematic Analysis

Tichý (2019a) uses thematic analysis as the main tool within discourse analysis in order to examine the contents of different themes of the EU-RF energy discourse. He argues this approach enables a more detailed analysis of separate discourses through converting emerging themes into analytical categories.

Braun & Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a method for identifying and analysing patterns and themes within data. They add that thematic analysis can go further than that, and can be used to interpret different aspects of the topic researched (Braun & Clarke 2006). Nowell *et al.* (2017) highlight that thematic analysis is a foundational method in qualitative analysis, as it can be used to examine a wide variety of research questions due to its flexibility, as it can be modified for the needs of various studies. Considering that a relatively large data set will be used for this research, as Braun & Clarke (2006) point out, thematic analysis is a great tool to take a structured approach, and to conduct a clean and organised research.

Considering the events of the Juncker Commission - the growing concerns around dependence on Russian supplies and the adoption of the Paris Agreement - and the main objectives of EU energy policy of the period, I identified energy security and the decarbonisation discourse as core topics for analysis. Similarly to Tichý (2019a), I believe that using a thematic approach will enable me to do a more focused and detailed analysis on the issues. Limiting this analysis to these two discourses will also make my research more manageable, in line with Neumann's "toolkit".

3.2.3 Comparative Analysis

The third approach Tichý (2019a) uses is the comparative approach in order to compare the similarities and differences of the examined discourses with each other and over time. Lijphart (1971), probably the most well-known scholar of comparative politics, states that "the comparative method is a method of discovering relationships among variables". Collier (1993) argues that a comparative approach is a fundamental tool in social sciences as it helps "concept-formation" by highlighting "suggestive similarities" and contrasts among cases.

In the case of my research, making comparisons over time makes little sense, as will examine a certain period of time. However, I will compare the two examined discourses with each other, as I assume that it will show overlaps considering the positive effects of locally generated renewable energy on energy security.

3.3 Data collection

Following Tichý's approach (2019b), I will draw on various sources within the European Commission for the period of 2014-2019, including speeches, documents, interviews and press releases, to present a detailed discourse analysis for a comprehensive presentation on the EU's perception towards the RF. The European Commission (or the Commission), serves as the politically independent executive arm in the EU's institutional system, and speaks for EU countries in international bodies and negotiates international agreements on behalf of the EU. (European Union n.d.) The Commission represents the common EU standpoint, unlike the European Parliament, or the European Council, which by definition represent the citizens and the Member States of the Community (European Union n.d.). Therefore, the Commission's point of view is the most appropriate to identify the EU's perceptions, as they articulate a common point of view, and they represent the EU on the international level.

For the main pool of documents, documents published between 1 November 2014 and 30 November 2019 were selected which covers the Juncker Commission. Initially, I intended to include those documents only that contain the keyword "energy" together with "Russia", "Russian" or "Russian Federation". However, I had to make an adjustment during the data gathering process, as sometimes there was no direct reference to the RF, but it was indirectly named as "one single supplier", "one source of supply" and other variations. Therefore, those sources which had an obvious reference to the RF were also included in the pool. It should be noted that only sources, including speeches, interviews, press releases etc., which have a written transcript will be taken into consideration (Tichy 2019a). Besides the Commission as an institution, the views of several representatives of the Commission who were making statements and giving speeches on energy issues concerning the RF will be presented, namely Jean-Claude Juncker the President of the European Commission, Maroš Šefčovič Vice-President of the European Commission for the Energy Union, Miguel Arias Cañete the Commissioner for Energy and Climate Action, Cecilia

Malmström the Commissioner for Trade, and Margrethe Vestager the Commissioner for Competition.

With the keywords applied, I identified 71 sources relevant to the research; 7 documents published by the European Commission as a body, and 64 sources, namely speeches, interviews and press releases, by individual Commissioners. As seen in *Table 2.*, the leading roles were played by Šefčovič and Arias Cañete, making up together more than 70% of the identified documents. This is not a surprise, as these two Commissioners were in charge of energy issues. As for the years, 2015 is the most represented, when the Commission's leading document concerning energy issues, the Energy Union strategy, was released, followed by 2016.

Table 1. The total number of documents from the European Commission

Year	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**SUM**
Number of documents by the Commission	0	1	2	1	2	1	**7**

Source: based on Tichý (2019a)

Table 2. The number of speeches, press releases, and interviews from selected EU representatives

Representatives of the European Commission	**Year**						**SUM**
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
J. C. Juncker	1	2	4	1	1	1	**10**
M. Šefčovič	3	9	7	4	3	3	**29**
M. Arias Cañete	0	9	5	3	3	2	**22**
C. Malmström	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
M. Vestager	0	1	0	0	1	0	**2**
SUM	**4**	**21**	**17**	**8**	**8**	**6**	**64**

Source: based on Tichý (2019a)

3.4 Limitations

With my chosen methodological approach several potential limitations occur. Firstly, as Morgan (2010) points out, the main disadvantage of discourse analysis is that meaning is never fixed, and there are always "open doors" for different interpretations and negotiations. Considering that it is only me who attempts to find meanings in the analysed discourses, there is a possibility that my initial assumptions and understanding regarding the discourses will influence the findings. This potential to bias could have been decreased by doing interviews with different experts on the topic. Also, with thematic analysis similar problems occur. Identifying the themes themselves has the potential for bias in the first place. As Braun & Clarke (2006) highlights, several topics may emerge, but researchers play an active role in selecting the ones to be analysed based on their interests.

In addition, as for the data collection, considering that I collected data using desktop research, there is a possibility that not all documents have been identified which could be relevant for this research. However, due to the relatively large number of sources, I assume that the potential absence of a few documents will not have a significant effect on the results of this analysis.

Besides the methodological limitation, by examining the EU-RF energy relationship through the views of the European Commission two significant limitations occur. Firstly, considering time and length constraints, in addition to language barriers, the perception of the EU from the perspective of the RF will not be addressed. Thus, only one side of the story will be told, leaving gaps for a full understanding. However, as it has been argued by Overland (2019), the EU's external suppliers are not rule-makers, but rule-takers. Therefore, he argues that suppliers, including the RF, will have to adapt, no matter how the energy mix will change (Overland 2019). I believe this statement justifies that presenting the EU's point of view only can still make a valuable research, as the EU has more influence on which direction the energy relationship will go on. And secondly, in this research only the European Commission's point of view will be addressed,

therefore, the views of citizens through their representatives, and the views of Member States will not be examined. I believe studying the views of the European Parliament and the European Council could be a great foundation for further research to see what kind of disagreements occur among countries and how different their perceptions are towards the RF, to compare them with the somewhat unified views of the Commission.

4 ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the analysis of the data will be presented to introduce the patterns - the key themes and topics - emerged from the collected data, which help to give a clear and structured analysis of the examined discourses. This chapter begins by presenting the most frequently occuring keywords, which helped identifying the main themes and topics within the energy and decarbonisation discourses. Then, it will go to introducing the themes and topics occured. The last two sections will present the detailed analysis of the identified topics within the discourses, relying on selected data to provide a comprehensive basis for discussion in the next chapter.

4.1 The key patterns within the examined discourses

In the first phase of the analysis, I identified the most frequently emerging keywords associated with the energy security and the decarbonisation discourses in relation to Russia. I read through all 71 documents individually, and focused on the most frequently occuring words which best described the individual discourses. As seen in *Table 3.* below, the words "vulnerability", "dependence", "diversification", "security of supply", "Ukraine", "natural gas", "antitrust" and "Nord Stream 2" have occurred the most concerning energy security, while "science and technology", "environmental interdependence", "energy transition", "energy security", "natural gas" and "geopolitics" for the decarbonisation discourse. Interestingly, "natural gas" has emerged as an important keyword in both discourses, and "energy security" appeared in the decarbonisation discourse, suggesting overlaps between the two discourses. The identified keywords for the decarbonisation discourse are barely in line with my initial assumptions, that clean energy and renewables will be in the centre of attention, as it is clear that geopolitics and natural gas will have a significant role to play.

Table 3. Keywords associated with the discourses

Discourse	**Keywords**
Energy Security	- vulnerability - dependence - diversification - security of supply - Ukraine - natural gas - antitrust - Nord Stream 2
Decarbonisation	- science and technology - environmental interdependence - energy transition - renewables - energy security - natural gas - geopolitics

The first phase outlined numerous potential perceptions and topics, and showed that many sources were almost identical contentwise. Consequently, in the next phase I read through all sources the second time searching for details, and finalised the list of key themes and topics. As seen in *Table 4.*, four clearly identifiable topics were found in the energy security discourse, namely diversification, competition, securing Ukrainian transit, and Nord Stream 2., in addition to a general perception and emphasising the need for stabilising the relationship. The latters will not be treated as individual themes, as these general views can be spotted in all themes. For the decarbonisation discourse, the topic of environmental and scientific cooperation, the role of natural gas in energy transition, and the effects of geopolitical tensions on energy transition have occured. Moreover, during the same rereading of documents, I collected quotes which best described and summarised the certain themes and topics within the discourses, and which were appropriate to highlight the reasons and meanings behind them. In addition, this phase showed that several documents were extremely similar to each other in content, and my collection of quotes highlighted these features further. Consequently, I got rid of duplications and will present selected data when introducing the results in the next section.

Table 4. Individual themes/topics associated with the discourses

Discourse	**Themes/topics**
Energy Security	- Emphasising diversification to reduce dependence on Russian supply - Securing competition (the Gazprom Antitrust case) - Securing Ukrainian transit - The concerns with the construction of Nord Stream 2
Decarbonisation	- Environmental and scientific cooperation - Natural gas a transition fuel to a low-carbon economy - Geopolitical tensions accelerating energy transition

4.2 The energy security discourse

Energy plays the key role in the EU-RF relationship. As Vice-President Šefčovič (2015a) puts it in his speech "The state of play of EU-Russia energy relations": "*energy plays a pivotal role in our relations with Russia, and Russia plays an important role in our energy policy",* highlighting the influence of the RF in EU energy policy-making. He argues that energy is the "*cornerstone*" of the economic relationship between the two actors, and he points out that while the security of natural gas supply dominates the discussion, trade is not limited to natural gas, as energy trade includes coal, oil products and also nuclear materials and services (Šefčovič 2015a).

The discourse is dominated by emphasis of the EU's vulnerability and the dependence on Russian supplies, coupled with deepening distrust due to recent geopolitical events, namely the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. The fact that the EU is highly vulnerable to external supply shocks, particularly Central and Eastern European Member States due to overdependence on the RF, is highlighted several times by both the Commission as a body and by individual Commissioners (European Commission 2015; Kanter 2016; 2016b; Šefčovič 2015b).

Besides overdependence, particular events also shaped the energy security concerns, as for example it was articulated by Arias Cañete, Commissioner for Energy and Climate Action (2016a), who argues that it is not a surprise that energy security is one of the most important aspects of the Energy Union, as "*we all remember the gas crisis of 2006 and 2009 that left many millions out in the cold",* furthermore, "*with political tensions on our borders still on a knife-edge, it is a sharp reminder that this problem is not "just going to go away"",* referring directly to events in which the RF had a major role to play. The importance of these events on energy security on the perception of the RF - especially the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea referred indirectly as "*the political challenges over the last months*" (European Commission 2015) or "*political tensions on our borders"* (Kanter 2016), and also directly (Šefčovič 2015b; Juncker 2016) - were pointed out many times. Arias Cañete (2015d; 2016a) notes that the reason these conflicts were critical to the EU's

energy security is because half of Russian gas imports transit through Ukraine, which makes the EU particularly vulnerable. It is also noticeable from the texts that the 2014 events in Ukraine deepened "*suspicion and distrust*" (Juncker 2015) towards the RF. As President Juncker (2016) highlights, the "*illegal annexation*" and "*Russia's actions*" have "*shaken the very principle of the European security order, sovereign equality, the non- use of force and territorial integrity,"* which cannot be ignored. He concludes that the relationship is troubled and characterised by mistrust (Juncker 2016). This negative perception can be easily identified in many more cases. For instance, referring to the above mentioned events, Arias Cañete (2015d) highlights that there is a pattern of events and a clear lesson should be learned: "*when it comes to energy, don't put your fate in the hand of autocratic regimes".* Arias Cañete (2015c; 2015d) even points out the "energy weapon" issue, and states that Russia "*views the sale of gas not simply as a commercial matter, but as a political weapon"* stressing the aggressive behaviour of the RF, similarly to Junker (2016).

However, besides all these negative perceptions, the restoration of the relationship, and the establishment of a "*practical relationship"* (Juncker 2015) due to the actors' interdependence is highly emphasised. Juncker (2016) argues that the EU and the RF need to accept this interdependence "*as our fate - the fate of geography*". Similarly, Šefčovič (2015a) points out "*EU-Russia interdependence in the field of energy will remain for the foreseeable future",* therefore normalising the relationship is essential. He highlights that "*Russia is a particularly important neighbour to the Energy Union*", and the EU has already proved to be a reliable consumer, and "*we want to continue to buy gas from Russia*" (Šefčovič 2016a). Juncker (BBC 2015) concludes that the RF "*must be treated decently*" and the EU needs to make efforts to normalise the relationship "*even [if] it is not sexy*", but it just cannot *"go on like this*". All in all, this interdependence is perceived as a highly negative issue, which leads to vulnerability and mistrust towards the RF. Besides the obvious need to restore a somewhat normal relationship, the need for diversification

of supply and routes, especially for natural gas, appears to be the most common answer, which will be elaborated on in the next section.

4.2.1 Diversification

The Energy Union strategy (European Commission 2015) names gas supply diversification as the key solution to reduce dependency and to "*ensure secure and resilient energy supply*". Diversification does not mean the EU aims to get rid of Russian supplies entirely. Moreover, as Arias Cañete (2015a) points out, the EU "*wants to see Russia as a reliable supplier of natural gas in the future*", but Russian transports need to fit into the EU's diversification strategy.

This diversification strategy involves access to alternative suppliers and sources. As Arias Cañete (2015a) points out, every Member State has to have at least three sources of supply, be it from pipeline gas, LNG or storage. The first step towards diversification the Energy Union strategy names is the diversification of suppliers by enabling new countries to export their gas to Europe, such as Central Asian countries (European Commission 2015). It is highlighted that the EU aims to use its foreign policy to establish new strategic relationships with "*increasingly important*" producing and transit countries, such as Algeria, Azerbaijan or Africa (European Commission 2015). Besides establishing new partnerships, it also stresses that increasing the volumes of imports from "*traditional partners*" (Šefčovič 2015b; European Commission 2015), such as Norway, the US and Canada, needs to part of this diversification strategy. In the case of the US, Malmström (2015), the Commissioner for Trade, points out directly, that one of the key answers to reduce Russian dependence is to remove the legal obstacles to US exports. Referring back to the 2014 conflict, she highlights that this dependence has "*limited Europe's freedom of manoeuvre in the face of Russia's unacceptable actions in Ukraine",* arguing that besides energy security concerns, this dependence limits the EU's field for action in political conflicts, too.

Besides the diversification of suppliers, EU set up an "*ambitious LNG strategy" (*Šefčovič 2016b), to diverse sources of natural gas which can be accessed through a global market, from

multiple suppliers. With other words: " *LNG expanded our trade circle from our immediate region to virtually the entire world"* (Šefčovič 2015d), channeling new sources like Australia or Israel (Šefčovič 2015d). For the success of LNG, the Commission also calls for the establishment of liquid gas hubs all around Europe, following the example of the Northern European gas hubs (European Commission 2015; Šefčovič 2015b).

In addition, the Energy Union strategy (European Commission 2015) highlights that there should be a push to domestically produced energy as well in achieving energy security, through mostly the large-scale deployment of renewables, but also by exploiting non-conventional fossil fuel sources. In the same vein, Arias Cañete (2018) argues that energy transition, notably the push to domestic renewables, need to be accelerated due to the geopolitical tensions at the EU's border, in order to improve energy security.

To sum up "*Let me repeat that in the context of energy security, diversification is key. Diversification of routes and of sources" (*Arias Cañete 2015a).

4.2.2 Competition

From the security perspective, the importance of fair competition regarding gas markets also emerges through the speeches of Vestager, the Commissioner for Competition in relations to the Gazprom antitrust case (Vestager 2015; 2018). The Gazprom antitrust case emerged from the issue that the 2009 Third Energy Package made it illegal for companies to own and operate the transmission network and to generate or sell energy at the same time (European Commission 2009). However, Gazprom was responsible for both the extraction and the shipments of natural gas via pipelines, and tried to seek exemption from the EU rules (Siddi 2018).

Concerning the issue, Vestager (2015) argues that all companies need to play by the EU rules, whether they are European or not. She argues that "*gas is an essential commodity in our daily life",* therefore, *"maintaining fair competition in European gas markets is of utmost importance"* (Vestager 2015). Moreover, Vestager (2015) highlights that Gazprom may build artificial barriers

preventing gas from flowing freely in Central Eastern European countries, hindering competition and fixing prices, thus hindering security of supply and overpricing natural gas. Arias Cañete (2015a) also pointed out that Russia, just like any other supplier, has to be in compliance with EU rules. Similarly to Vestager, Arias Cañete (2018) points out that it is critical from a security perspective to "*ensure that Russian energy supplies into Europe are subject to competitive pressures*" to enable other suppliers to improve resilience and security. After the settlement of the case, Vestager (2018) concludes that "*this case is not about the flag of the company*", but about serving the needs of businesses and consumers. However, it is quite obvious that the competition theme in the discourse was developing around the Russian issue.

4.2.3 Securing Ukrainian transit

The third main topic which emerged when analysing data, is the need for securing Ukrainian transit. As Arias Cañete (Oroschakoff 2015) points out, "*the Ukrainian situation has triggered all the alarms in the EU and now security of supply is a main concern that permeates all our policies".* As was highlighted earlier, half of natural gas imports from Russia are transferred through Ukraine (Šefčovič 2015b), to emphasise the significance of Ukrainian transit. The key document of the period, the Energy Union strategy, underlines Ukraine's importance as a transit country, and directly states that "*particular attention will be paid to upgrading the Strategic Partnership with Ukraine*" (European Commission 2015). Šefčovič (2015b) highlights that Ukraine has been a major transit country between the EU and the RF for natural gas, and to a lesser extent for oil, and "*will remain so for the foreseeable future*".

In order to secure this transit, several bilateral and trilateral negotiations took place between Ukraine, the RF and the EU, chaired by Šefčovič (Šefčovič 2015a; 2015b). The stake was the implementation of the so-called Winter Package, which meant to address Ukraine purchase of Russian gas, and to ensure "*stable, sufficient and uninterrupted*" gas transit to the EU (Šefčovič 2015b). In 2015, after agreeing on supplies for the 2015-2016 winter season, Šefčovič (2015e)

concludes that "*both parties live up to their roles as reliable partners in the gas business",* and states that further progress can be achieved in the future as well (Šefčovič 2015b). Interestingly, this has been the only statement so far with a positive tone out of the data presented, as it emphasises cooperation rather than hostility towards each other. Although, Arias Cañete (2015b) warns that this deal has not put an end to the EU's vulnerability, and "*we clearly need to reduce our exposure to geopolitical risk"* further. Lastly, Arias Cañete (2018) also hints at the opportunity of securing Ukrainian transit as a place for cooperation, as he highlights having Ukraine as a strategic partner is *"believed to be in the mutual interest of Europe, of Ukraine and also of Russia".*

4.2.4 Nord Stream 2

The last key theme within the energy security discourse is the debate around the building of Nord Stream 2 - a pipeline between Germany and the RF through the Baltic Sea, bypassing Ukraine (Siddi 2019). The project will double the capacity of the already existing route, Nord Stream (Siddi 2018). The project became a highly publicised, and a "*highly political*" (Kanter 2016) issue. The Commission followed a quite harsh communication on the project, and articulated their disagreement with the construction several times.

The key concern that has been highlighted by President Juncker, and also the Commissioners is the fact that the project hardly contributes to the diversification objectives, moreover it increases dependence on one route, while decreasing the significance of Ukrainian transits (Oroschakoff 2015; Stefanini 2015; Arias Cañete 2016a; Šefčovič 2016b; Šefčovič 2017; Baczynska & de Carbonnel 2016). For instance, Šefčovič (Stefanini 2015b) to illustrate the situation raises the question "*How is it in compliance with our strategy for diversification of supply? What kinds of conclusions should we draw if the aim of such a project is to practically shut down the Ukrainian transit route?".* In the same vein, Arias Cañete (Oroschakoff 2015) calls out the project arguing that Nord Stream 2 does not follow the core policy objective of diversification, as *"it would not only increase Europe's dependence on one supplier, but it will also increase Europe's dependence*

on one route", going absolutely against the EU's energy security objectives. In addition Arias Cañete (2015a) points out that the transport capacity from Russia already well exceeds the EU's needs, and Nord Stream 2 will further increase excess transmission capacity, leaving not much sense for its construction. Šefčovič (2016b) highlights the problems of excess capacity also, arguing this situation will limit access for new sources and suppliers, hindering the EU's needs to enhance its energy security. As the European Commission concludes, the project will further strengthen the dominant position of Russia, and will lead to a further concentration of supply routes, undermining the Energy Union objectives (European Commission 2017). Similarly, Juncker (Baczynska & de Carbonnel 2016) warns that "*no market operator should be able to leverage a position of dominance to the detriment of competitors and consumers",* and the project will inevitably alter the landscape of the EU's gas market, while limiting market access for new sources and suppliers.

As a consequence of the issues stated above, the Commission confirmed that they cannot support such a project financially. Arias Cañete (Oroschakoff 2015) makes it clear that "*they can say whatever they like, but we can also finance whatever we like",* and as Nord Stream 2 is not in line with the energy security objectives, the project will not benefit from the EU's budget, and "*cannot ever become a project of common interest*" (Arias Cañete 2015a). Juncker (Baczynska & de Carbonnel 2016) confirmes Arias Cañete's statement by saying that the Commission will not provide financing for projects that are hindering security of supply and diversification. Furthermore, the Commission makes it clear that the pipeline, if constructed, needs to be fully in compliance with the EU regulations, and the aquis needs to be "*respected"* (European Commission 2017; Arias Cañete 2015a; 2017). Arias Cañete (2015a) even warns that he "*will pay personally attention"* to ensure that the project follows EU regulations.

Concerning Nord Stream 2, Šefčovič (Stefanini 2015) called out the parties involved for the lack of solidarity, and pointed out that he hopes "*these companies understand their responsibility*

for the overall security of supply for the whole of Europe, not only for parts of it". He concludes that "*it's in our interest to secure the energy security of all member states, not just a few" (*Florence School of Regulation 2017).

4.3 The decarbonisation discourse

4.3.1 Environmental and scientific cooperation

The first theme or topic identified is the potential of cooperation with regard to environmental and climate change issues. As the European Commission (2018b) puts it "*Despite the current geopolitical tensions, environment is among the areas where the EU would benefit from further engagement with Russia".* They emphasise that due to the "*environmental interdependence*" of the EU and the RF, climate change and environmental protection in the RF needs to be a priority interest for the EU. The Commission highlights that the RF has a direct impact on the neighbouring countries' environment and climate, and the RF's environmental impact is significant globally as well. The EU calls for engagement with the Russian civil society, following a "*people-to-people approach*" to support environmental protection and climate mitigation (European Commission 2018b).

The second basis for potential cooperation, according to the EU, is Science & Technology (S&I) cooperation (European Commission 2018c). The Commission highlights that Russia is one of the most important S&I actors in the neighbourhood of the EU, and scientific relations with the RF are based on "*a long tradition of excellence*". The Commission strongly highlights that supporting scientific relations remains a priority "*which is especially relevant under the current political situation",* namely the geopolitical tensions on the border. The Roadmap for this cooperation names climate and environmental research as top priorities, and strengthens the above mentioned need for "*people-to-people*" contacts (European Commission 2018c).

4.3.2 Natural gas as a transition fuel

On the way to decarbonisation, the European Commission assigned an important role for natural gas. In light of the then newly accepted objectives of the Paris Agreement, Arias Cañete (Oroschakoff 2015) underlines that in the process of decarbonising the European economy "*gas*

has a role" as it is the cleanest fossil fuel. He highlights several benefits of natural gas regarding decarbonising the economy, as he argues that gas serves as a "*bridge*" fuel between fossil fuels and renewables, it serves as a back-up to renewables, and can play an important role to decarbonise the transport sector as an alternative fuel (Arias Cañete 2016b). He calls for a "*carefully*" managed energy transition, as "*we cannot get to 100% renewables overnight or improve our energy efficiency immediately at the click of a finger" (*Arias Cañete 2016a).

While emphasising the benefits of natural gas, the same old story about "*dependence on one source of supply*" and about the "*current political tensions on our borders"* appears in the same speeches (Arias Cañete 2016a, Arias Cañete 2016b, Oroschakoff 2015). Lastly, Arias Cañete (2016a) strongly highlights that "*our strategy is not about using more gas, but about using it more intelligently.",* and calls for diversification of sources and suppliers, and the prioritisation of energy efficiency.

4.3.3 Accelerating energy transition

The benefits of domestically produced renewable energy from the energy security perspective are highly articulated in the Energy Union strategy, and the geopolitical tensions Russia involved in have given a huge boost to these aspirations.

Arias Cañete in his 2018 speech "International geopolitical uncertainties: brakes or accelerators for the EU energy transition?" clearly underlines the connections between geopolitical tensions and the need for energy transition (Arias Cañete 2018). He argues that "*geopolitical situation appears ever more fluid and uncertain*", and there are new challenges in the immediate neighbourhood of the EU, which can and need to impact the speed of the EU's energy transition. He strongly points out that "*these challenges make the objective of unifying the EU around an ambitious energy transition agenda ever more urgent",* which needs to be carried through Member States and the European Parliament as soon as possible. Arias Cañete argues that these increasing uncertainties should be seen as "*reason to accelerate our energy transition*", and the international

context should "*should act as an accelerator rather than a brake on the EU's energy transition".* He points out again that the EU is way too dependent on Russian imports, and the lesson had been learnt from the gas crisis of 2009 and from the tension between the RF and Ukraine 2014, that it is key over a long term to reduce dependence on imported hydrocarbons. He argues that in the case of Europe, this dependence can only be reduced by the deployment of renewables and storage technologies, putting further efforts into energy efficiency, and by assigning a more active role to consumers through demand response. To summarise the importance of energy transition in the times of uncertainties, Arias Cañete concludes that "*energy transition (...) remains our strategic answer to the geopolitical uncertainties we are facing"* (Arias Cañete 2018).

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 The energy security discourse

Generally, concerning energy security under the Juncker Commission, there was a strong emphasis on "vulnerability" and "dependence" on external suppliers, strongly emphasising the dependence on the RF. Also, while I treated diversification as an individual topic, it should be noted that diversification appeared in all topics, as diversification was the overarching objective to reduce dependence on Russian supplies. These findings strongly correlate with Tichý's (2019) findings on the previous Commissions, therefore, it is obvious that the concerns regarding vulnerability and dependence have become long-term, especially in relation to Russia. Tichý' (2019a) also highlights that during the previous periods, energy security "gained momentum" when there was a specific crisis, however, during the Juncker Commission articulating the issues of security of supply were constant and present for the whole time. It is clear that the gas crisis in 2006 and 2009, and the annexation of Crimea strongly defined the perception of the RF, as it was highlighted by the Commission several times, and even deepend the distrust and hostility, compared to the periods Tichý (2019a) examined. The fact that Arias Cañete suggested that Russia was using the energy weapon several times, strengthens this statement further.

The symmetrical traits of the EU-RF relationship, ending up in a zero-sum game has been pointed out by numerous authors, presented in the literature review (Tichý 2019a; 2019b; Krickovic 2015). The example of the construction of Nord Stream perfectly describes this phenomenon. While the EU is all for diversification, Russia pushes the construction of a new pipeline, doubling the existing capacity, seeking to keep its dominance as the biggest supplier of the EU. Interdependence, economic, geographical and even historical, are also highly emphasised by the Commission. To reduce this interdependence, the Commission set up a diversification strategy with clear objectives, for instance enabling certain countries to access the EU market or pushing alternative sources to pipeline gas, namely LNG, to be able to buy gas from the global market

without the limitations of infrastructure. This interdependence is perceived as a highly negative phenomenon, which has been also highlighted by both Tichý (2019a; 2019b) and Krickovic (2015), which increasingly affects the EU's security concerns, in light of the actions of the RF. Krickovic (2015) points out that the EU has been active in using its regulatory power to limit the playing field of Russian companies to reduce this interdependence, which can be also identified through the Gazprom antitrust case, which eventually led to the cancelling of the South Stream pipeline project (Siddi 2019). Due to this interdependence, the Commission was active to normalise, and to establish a "practical relationship" (Juncker 2015) with the RF, as besides economic dependence, there is a strong geographical, and through the pipelines a strong infrastructural dependence between them. Consequently, it was pointed out by the Commission that the RF will be a significant partner of the EU in the future as well, and work should be done to achieve appropriate results in their relations with the RF.

It is clear from the data that the discourse is mostly characterised by energy security interests, although through the antitrust case economic interests are also identifiable due to the emphasising of unfair gas pricing in certain countries. In line with these interests, the EU was pushing its normative power through policies and negotiations with regards to the energy security objectives and securing Ukrainian transit, and specifically its regulatory power restricting the operations of Gazprom on the EU energy market. Similarly, the Commission highlighted that the construction of Nord Stream 2 will be strictly supervised by them through regulatory tools. Using normative tools is in contrast to the physical power used by the RF during the annexation of Crimea, which was strongly disapproved by the EU, articulating that this action was completely against EU norms.

In line with previous findings (Tichý 2019a; 2019b; Krickovic 2015; Siddi 2017), the realist approach is clearly identifiable regarding the energy security discourse under the Juncker Commission. The EU was desperately seeking to secure its supply, while the RF was all about

securing its own supplies to its largest consumer, the EU. This situation is a constant field for conflict as both of them, driven by their own security interests, are taking actions to secure their own needs without seeking cooperation, resulting in a zero-sum game. As I pointed out earlier, the communication on the construction of Nord Stream 2 is a great example to illustrate this situation. While the cooperative element appeared regarding establishing a “practical relationship”, this is a consequence of compulsion, rather than emphasising mutual benefits.

5.2 The decarbonisation discourse

While the energy security discourse had an overarching objective for diversification, the decarbonisation discourse consists of three more or less distinct topics. While the first one emphasising cooperation on the basis of the environment and research is an entirely new theme that emerged from the documents, the other two concerning natural gas and the need for energy transition are overlapping with the energy security discourse. Interestingly, although both actors made GHG reduction commitments under the Paris Agreement, the discourse is mostly concerning security, be it environmental or energy security issues.

The first theme I identified is the need for cooperation on environmental and scientific terms, which have a history in the framework under the EU-Russia energy dialogue, that has been suspended after the 2014 Ukrainian crisis (Kuzemko 2014). Az Kuzemko (2014) highlights research on environmental and clean energy could be a great start for cooperation, as these are relatively less politicised topics. As the Commission highlighted, there is even a greater need for cooperation on environmental and scientific terms in light of the geopolitical tensions. Security, specifically environmental security, concerns appear within this topic as well. The Commission strongly points out that the EU and the RF are environmentally interdependent due to geographical reasons. Moreover, Russia is a significant contributor to climate change globally. In this understanding, Russia poses a threat to the EU's environment, highlighting negative interdependence and the EU is using its soft power to handle the situation. Soft power is the concept that a state can have direct influence over another state without using force or coercion (or military and economic tools), through the attractiveness of the values and norms the state conveys (Nye 2004). The usage of soft power can be identified under the so-called “people-to-people” approach, which calls for cooperation with the Russian civil society and academia, through which the EU can have an indirect effect on the environmental protection measures the RF will take. This theme can

be understood overall under the institutionalist paradigm, through the institutionalisation of these collaborations under roadmaps and partnership frameworks.

The second topic identified is the role of natural gas in energy transition. Arias Cañete argued several times that gas has a role to play in decarbonising the European economy, as the cleanest fossil fuel. He argued that natural gas has several benefits, including posing as a bridge fuel between fossil fuels and renewables. This finding is in contrast to Overland's argument (2019) stating that while during the early 2010s natural gas was seen as a bridge fuel, recently this view faded away. It is very clear that the European Commission, or at least Arias Cañete, assigned a significant role to natural gas in energy transition. These views on natural gas puts Šefčovič's (2015a) claim that the "*EU-Russia interdependence in the field of energy will remain for the foreseeable future"* into a whole new perspective, suggesting that besides the dependence on infrastructural connection, the RF actually has a role to play in the decarbonisation of the EU's economy as well, as an important supplier of natural gas. As Stern (2019) highlights, if the EU perceives natural gas as a bridge fuel and includes it in the decarbonisation strategy, Russian dependency will continue, at least in the medium term. To address this problem, Arias Cañete highlighted the need for natural gas supply diversification to reduce dependence in his speeches concerning the benefits of natural gas in decarbonisation.

The last topic that emerged is the need for decarbonisation under geopolitical tensions, especially due to the conflicts between the RF and Ukraine, for improving energy security. This finding is strongly in line with Buschle & Westphal's argument (2019) that decarbonisation and energy security need to be reconciled and need to be treated together under the impacts of climate change. The Commission argued that these conflicts on the EU's borders have to be perceived as a boost to energy transition, by deploying domestically produced energy and storage technology to increase security. Arias Cañete even highlights that energy transition should be a strategic answer to geopolitical uncertainties and tensions.

All in all, security interests were dominating this discourse as well. A new aspect of security occurred, namely environmental security, in addition to energy security, which is also relevant to this discourse. In emphasising cooperation on environmental and climate issues and research, the Commission pushed its soft power by supporting civil society and academia, and also its normative power by institutionalising the cooperation. My initial assumptions that this discourse will lie under liberalism emphasising mutual benefits and cooperation, turned out to be only a small fraction of reality. While environmental cooperation does appear, negative interdependence is highlighted there as well. Therefore, not even this theme can fall under liberalism clearly. On the contrary, similarly to the energy security discourse, realism is the dominant paradigm concerning security and self-interest, and mostly decarbonisation is even only perceived as a tool to reduce dependence, in relations to the RF.

5.3 Comparing the energy security and the decarbonisation discourses

As seen in *Table 5.* below, in line with my assumptions and the energy policy objectives of the Juncker Commission, there is a clear overlap between the energy security and the decarbonisation discourse. In both discourses the deployment of renewable technologies appears as a tool to reduce dependence on Russian supplies. There is even a clear statement that decarbonisation needs to be the answer to the geopolitical uncertainties on the EU's border. Also, both discourses are concerning security issues. While energy security is a key aspect in both of them, there is a strong reference to the need for economic security in the energy security discourse, and a clear call for improving environmental security in the decarbonisation discourse in relations to Russia. Furthermore, highlighting interdependence is present in both discourses. In addition to emphasising infrastructural, economic and geographical aspects within the energy security discourse, the decarbonisation discourse introduces a new aspect, environmental interdependence. In both cases this interdependence is perceived as a negative condition. Another overlap is the use of normative power to handle the situation, be it regulatory power, or the institutionalisation of cooperation on environmental issues. Lastly, political realism is the main theory that can be associated with both discourses, as a consequence of emphasising security issues and negative interdependence,

As for the differences, in the energy security discourse there is an easily identifiable overarching objective, namely diversification, which is present in all themes. On the other hand, the decarbonisation discourse consists of three somewhat individual topics. The second difference is the appearance of the usage of soft power in the decarbonisation discourse, which is absent from the energy security one. The latter deals only with issues through the Russian government and state-owned corporations which have direct influence, while through the cooperation with the Russian civil society within the decarbonisation discourse the EU pursues its indirect power through a "people-to-people" approach. And lastly, besides realism, the notion of an institutionalist

approach can be identified in the decarbonisation discourse, due to approaching cooperation with the RF within the framework of the Partnership Instrument and the Roadmap for EU - Russia Science & Technology cooperation.

Table 5. Summary of the overlaps and differences between the energy security and the decarbonisation discourses

	Energy security discourse	**Decarbonisation discourse**
Overlaps	- emphasising the overlaps between energy security and decarbonisation in order to reduce dependence on a single supplier and vulnerability on geopolitical tensions - emphasising security, be it energy, economic or environmental	- emphasising interdependence, be it infrastructural, economic, geographical or environmental - negative interdependence - use of normative power - realism
Differences	- overarching objective of diversification	- soft power as a tool - institutionalist approach to cooperation

5.4 Summary of key findings

In light of the previous sections, *Table 6*. below summarises the key findings of the discussion - presenting the keywords, individual themes, dependence, interests, tools and theoretical concepts of the energy security and decarbonisation discourses.

Table 6. Summary of key findings

	Energy security discourse	**Decarbonisation discourse**
Keywords	- vulnerability - dependence - diversification - security of supply - Ukraine - natural gas - antitrust - Nord Stream 2	- science and technology - environmental interdependence - energy transition - renewables - energy security - natural gas - geopolitics
Individual themes/topics associated with the discourses	- Emphasising diversification to reduce dependence on Russian supply - Securing competition (the Gazprom Antitrust case) - Securing Ukrainian transit - The concerns with the construction of Nord Stream 2	- Environmental and scientific cooperation - Natural gas a transition fuel to a low-carbon economy - Geopolitical tensions accelerating energy transition
Dependence	(negative) economic and geographical interdependence	(negative) environmental and economic interdependence
Interest	security, economic	security
Tool	normative	soft power, normative
Theoretical concept	realism	realism, institutionalism

Source: based on Tichý (2019a)

6 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this thesis was to examine the EU-RF energy relationship by identifying the EU's perception on the RF concerning energy issues, focusing on the energy security and the decarbonisation discourse. As I stated earlier, the energy security discourse has been a quite well researched area, however, the decarbonisation discourse has been slightly examined in the literature regarding the EU-RF energy relationship. Considering the dual focus on security of supply and decarbonisation within the EU's energy policy objectives under the Juncker Commission, examining these two aspects was an obvious direction to take. Moreover, as has been pointed out, decarbonisation has the potential to fundamentally transform established energy relations, which is especially important in the case of the EU-RF relationship, as the RF is the single biggest supplier of fossil fuels to the EU. In line with this aim, my first objective was to set up a framework to conduct a comprehensive analysis, which has been accomplished by adjusting Tichý's (2019a; 2019b) theoretical and methodological framework to the aims of my own research. I was using discourse analysis to unravel this relationship, with additional methods involved, namely thematic and comparative analysis. The value of the findings of a discourse analysis lies in the fact that it has been argued that discourses set the directions for actions and identities, therefore, set the playing field to the EU to handle certain situations with the RF. Besides my own findings, I presented the literature regarding the relationship and also reflected on it during my discussion to set the context, to be able to make comparisons over time, and to place my research in the literature it aims to contribute to.

My study found out that energy security concerns still play the lead role in the energy relations of the EU and the RF, with a strengthening emphasis on the EU's vulnerability to supply disruptions due to the high level of dependence on Russian supplies and the geopolitical tensions and uncertainties on the EU'S borders, in which the RF had a role to play. The energy security discourse was strongly characterised by emphasising negative interdependence, both on

geographical and economic terms. These findings can be placed under the realist paradigm arguing that both actors are seeking to secure their energy security, where norms barely have a role to play. While these findings were present in the previous literature, the emphasis on the positive impacts of decarbonisation on energy security was a new addition. Similarly, within the decarbonisation discourse this interrelation occured, as the need to accelerate energy transition to reduce vulnerability on Russian imports and geopolitical exposure was highlighted by the Commission. The decarbonisation discourse also introduced environmental interdependence, emphasising the impacts of the RF on the EU due to geographical reasons, in addition to the economic, geographical and infrastructure interdependence the energy security discourse concerned. The key difference between the EU's approach to address the issues within the two discourses was the fact that in the decarbonisation discourse soft power as a tool to influence occurred, in addition to the normative tools I identified within the energy security discourse. Considering the findings, I was able to accomplish my objective on presenting a detailed analysis on the EU's perception on the RF regarding energy issues, as numerous factors were addressed, namely the key patterns, the type of dependence, interests and tools. In addition, by making comparisons and placing the discourses in theories of international relations, my other two objectives have been accomplished as well, namely placing my study in existing literature and reflecting on theories of international relations.

My study also identified potential topics for further research. Firstly, as I examined the relationship through the eyes of the European Commission only, the individual views of member states remain absent from the analysis. However, it would be valuable to conduct a study including sources from the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council of the European Union also to provide a full understanding of the relationship, as certain countries presumably have different perceptions of the RF than others. Also, only one side of the story was told, as the Russian perception was not addressed due to language barriers and time constraints. The inclusion of the Russian side could add another perspective to examining the relationship, which could be a great

topic to someone with a great knowledge in Russian language as a significant amount of documents are only available in Russian. Lastly, with a different corpus of documents, research on the general views of the EU on its external energy relationships under the decarbonisation objective could make a valuable addition to the literature to examine the transformation and reframing of energy relationships in the times of energy transition.

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