

Vilnius University

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

European Studies Master Programme

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2nd year

**FRAMING ENERGY POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AFTER RUSSIA'S 2022
INVASION OF UKRAINE**

MASTER'S THESIS

Supervisor: Dr. Inga Vinogradnaitė

2026

Vilnius

MASTER'S THESIS INFORMATION PAGE

Thesis supervisor's conclusions for thesis defense:

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(date)

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(n. surname)

.....

(signature)

Thesis handed to defense council:

.....

(date)

.....

(signature of the secretary of the defense council)

Thesis reviewer:

.....

(n. surname)

Thesis defense council rating:

..... Council's chair:

Council members:

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ENTRY

Žvinakevičius, Dominykas: Framing energy policy in the European Parliament after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine: Master in European studies program, Master thesis / Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science; tutor: Inga Vinogradnaitė. Vilnius, 2026. – 75 pages

Key words: European Parliament; Energy policy; Discourse; Frame Theory; Framing energy; Energy security; Energy independence; Energy crisis; Shaping energy; Energy solidarity; Energy affordability; Political Groups.

Abstract

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 created a new and highly consequential context for the European Union's energy debate. This thesis explores how the energy crisis has been understood and articulated within the European Parliament, focusing on the ways in which different political groups interpret its causes, consequences and possible solutions. Drawing on manual frame analysis of parliamentary speeches, the study combines quantitative analysis of frame frequency with qualitative analysis of how frames were constructed and translated into policy actions. In particular, the research highlights the coexistence of security, economic, social, climate, and solidarity-based interpretations of the crisis. The thesis demonstrates that the Parliament's discourse does not produce a single perception of the energy crisis, but reflects a significant variation in how political groups interpret both the nature of crisis and the appropriate policy response. Security emerges as the most frequently invoked frame, but its dominance does not come at the expense of economic or climate considerations, suggesting continuity with pre-existing patterns of European energy discourse rather than a fundamental post-invasion shift. Qualitative findings reveal two recurring patterns of political differentiation. Economic, socio-economic and climate perceptions largely follow an ideological left-right trajectory, with left-wing groups placing greater emphasis on social protection, market intervention and renewable energy, while right-wing groups place greater emphasis on competitiveness, economic stability and nuclear or conventional energy sources. By contrast, security and solidarity reveal a stronger distinction between mainstream and fringe factions, particularly in their understanding of Russia, energy dependence, European cooperation and integration. The findings therefore demonstrate that the energy crisis is not understood uniformly across the Parliament, but is interpreted through competing political perspectives that both converge and diverge across ideological and political boundaries. The study highlights how energy crises function not only as material challenges but also as arenas of political contestation in which competing understandings of security, prosperity, social welfare, climate responsibility and European integration are articulated.

Rusijos invazijos į Ukrainą sukeltos energetikos krizės akivaizdoje, Europos energetikos politika pradėta svarstyti naujame kontekste. Diskusijos neaplenkė ir vienos pagrindinių ES institucinių šakų – Europos Parlamento, kur karo sukelta krizė virto aršia polemika skirtingas pažiūras atstovaujančių grupių sukuryje. Nūdienos literatūroje ES atsakas į energetikos iššūkius didžiaja dalimi pateikiamas kaip vieningas, nors 2022-ųjų polemika taip pat analizuota. Visgi, ties čia didesnis dėmesys skirtas nuomonių sankirtoms tarp valstybių narių, ES institucijų, verslo grupių ir piliečių. Diskusijos ES institucijų viduje, ypač plačiu politiniu pliuralizmu ir ideologine įvairove pasižyminčiame Parlamente, liko nuošaly. Todėl šis darbas nagrinėja kaip energetinė krizė, jos priežastys, pasekmės ir sprendimai, suvokiami ir pateikiami būtent Parlamento viduje. Tyrimui atlikti pasitelkta įrėminimo teorija, kuria remiantis parlamentarų kalbos analizuotos per penkis energetikos rėmus – saugumo, klimato, solidarumo, ekonomikos ir socialinio. Darbe atskleidžiama, jog Parlamento diskursas toli gražu neapsiriboja vienu dominuojančiu energetikos politikos suvokimu, tačiau atspindi skirtingų politinių grupių ir ideologijų sankirtą. Kiekybinė analizė parodo, jog saugumo rėmas išryškėja kaip plačiausiai naudojamas iš visų, tačiau jo dominavimas retorikoje neužgožia likusiųjų. Rėmų naudojimo pasiskirstymas iš tiesų labiau atspindi ankstesnių laikotarpių tendencijas, tad karo kontekstas nenustelbė kitų energetikos kampų ir nenulėmė stipraus pokyčio Parlamento diskurse. Tuo tarpu kokybinės analizės rezultatai atskleidė dvi ideologinio pasiskirstymo tendencijas politinių grupių tarpe. Ekonominio, socialinio ir klimato rėmų formavimai reflektuoja tam tikrą tradicinį išsiskyrimą tarp kairiųjų ir dešiniųjų partijų – kol kairės grupė daugiau akcentuoja atsinaujinančių energijos šaltinių svarbą, elektros ir šilumos kainų prieinamumą gyventojams bei valstybės intervenciją į energetikos rinką, dešinieji linksta link atominių jėgainių ar iškastinio kuro propagavimo, taip pat ekonominio stabilumo bei konkurencingumo stiprinimo. Visgi, saugumo ir solidarumo rėmų duomenys parodė visai kitą diviziją – tarp pagrindinių partijų ir radikaliųjų. Skirtumai pasireiškia ties geopolitinių grėsmių, taip pat Rusijos ir Ukrainos vaidmenų suvokimo bei požiūrio į Europos kooperaciją bei energetinę integraciją. Ties šiais aspektais visos politinės jėgos nuo socialdemokratų iki konservatorių ir reformuotojų esti kur kas arčiau nei radikali kairė ir dešinė, kurių rėminimai persipyna. Bendrai šie rezultatai tik įrodo kaip nevienareikšmiškai energetikos klausimai suvokiami Parlamente, kaip skirtingos interpretacijos ir požiūriai persipyna bei išsiskiria tarp įvairių politinių grupių. Tyrimas atskleidžia, koks gali būti kompleksyvus ir sudėtingas ES diskursas.

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1. *Introduction*

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022 had far-reaching consequences for the European Union (further referred to as the EU or the Union), triggering what is often described as a polycrisis affecting multiple policy areas simultaneously. Among these, the energy sector emerged as one of the most immediately impacted and politically sensitive spheres. The disruption of long-standing energy ties with Russia exposed structural dependencies and forced the Union to rapidly reconsider its energy strategy.

Energy policy in the EU has long been a contested and multi-dimensional field. Traditionally, it was primarily framed through an economic and security lens, focusing on market efficiency, prices, and supply stability, alongside important socioeconomic considerations such as affordability. Over time, however, this framing expanded. Climate considerations became increasingly central, introducing a new layer of debate structured around decarbonization, sustainability and the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources.¹ The 2022 invasion marked a turning point by accelerating energy debates to a whole new level. Energy was less than ever before treated as a commodity and instead increasingly as a tool of crisis. Russian energy supplies came

¹ Alberto Olivares, “The EU’s New Energy and Climate Policy: Energy Security and the Moderation of Environmental Standards,” *Global Energy Law and Sustainability* 4, no. 1–2 (2023), accessed January 25, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.3366/gels.2023.0091>.

to be widely understood as a tool of coercion, capable of influencing political decisions and constraining the Union's foreign policy choices. As a result, EU energy policy began to operate on the nexus of frames of security, climate, solidarity and economy. In response, the Union adopted a series of rapid and drastic measures aimed at reducing its dependence on Russian energy and strengthening its strategic autonomy. The European Commission (further referred to as the Commission or the EC) introduced the REPowerEU plan,² which outlined key strategies such as supplier diversification, accelerated deployment of renewable energy, and reductions in overall energy consumption. These measures significantly reshaped the structure and priorities of EU energy policy within a very short timeframe.

These transformations were reflected across the Union's institutional framework. The Commission played a central role in setting the agenda and proposing policy responses, while the European Council and the Council of the European Union (latter further referred to as the Council) were instrumental in coordinating political responses, including the adoption of sanctions and emergency measures.³ Within this context, the role of the European Parliament (further referred to as the Parliament) is often perceived as more limited or secondary.

However, such a view risks underestimating the Parliament's actual role during the crisis. From the very beginning, the institution has been proactive in calling for decisive action and shaping the political debate. For example, on 1 March 2022, it adopted a resolution on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, making one of the earliest institutional calls for strong measures against Russia and for support to Ukraine.⁴ This early intervention demonstrates that the Parliament was not merely reactive but positioned itself as a vocal actor on the unfolding crisis. Subsequently, it continued to address urgent energy-related issues, including the EU's response to rising energy prices in October 2022,⁵ and the opening of negotiations with the United States on critical mineral supply chains in September 2023.⁶ These resolutions show that the Parliament has consistently engaged with energy policy and related strategic questions throughout the crisis, highlighting its role in shaping the political agenda. Beyond these resolutions, the Parliament has also exercised crucial influence through the co-legislative process, participating directly in the adoption of core energy laws that have guided the EU's response. Among the most

² European Commission. "REPowerEU." European Commission. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://commission.europa.eu/topics/energy/repowereu_en.

³ Council of the European Union, *Council Regulation (EU) 2022/2576 of 19 December 2022 enhancing solidarity through better coordination of gas purchases, reliable price benchmarks and exchanges of gas across borders*, OJ L 2022/2576 (2022), accessed January 25, 2026, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2576/2023-12-31/eng>.

⁴ European Parliament, *European Parliament resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine (2022/2564(RSP))*, OJ C (2022), accessed January 25, 2026, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52022IP0052>.

⁵ European Parliament, *Resolution of 5 October 2022 on the EU's response to the increase in energy prices in Europe (2022/2830(RSP))*, OJ C (2022), accessed January 25, 2026, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52022IP0347>.

⁶ European Parliament, *Resolution of 14 September 2023 on the opening of negotiations of an agreement with the United States of America on strengthening international supply chains of critical minerals (2023/2772(RSP))*, OJ C, 2023/IP0326 (2023), accessed January 25, 2026, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52023IP0326>

important acts are the 2023 Directive on energy efficiency,⁷ the 2023 Directive on the promotion of renewable energy sources,⁸ the 2022 Regulation on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure,⁹ and the 2022 Regulation on gas storage.¹⁰ Most notably, in January 2026, the Parliament co-adopted the Regulation phasing out Russian gas imports, both pipeline and LNG, marking one of the most decisive legislative steps in reshaping the EU's energy landscape post-invasion.¹¹ These legislative acts illustrate that the Parliament is not just a forum for debate but an institution that actively shapes, legitimizes and implements the Union's energy strategy, directly affecting policy outcomes in times of crisis. Through both its early resolutions and its participation in legislative adoption, the Parliament demonstrates a dual role: agenda-setting and concrete policy-making.

At the same time, unlike other EU institutions, the Parliament provides a space where competing political ideologies openly confront one another. This internal diversity makes the Parliament a particularly valuable site for analysis. While official policy documents and adopted legislation may present a coherent and unified position, the debates and discussions within the Parliament reveal underlying disagreements, competing priorities, and alternative visions of the Union's energy future. Different political groups approach energy policy from distinct perspectives, framing the same issues in divergent ways, through different lenses. These differing frames do not operate in isolation and they often clash or overlap, reflecting broader ideological divides within the Union. Understanding how energy questions are framed within the Parliament is therefore essential. It provides insight not only into the policy positions of individual parties or coalitions, but also into the deeper political contestation that shapes EU energy strategy. Analyzing parliamentary discourse showcases how competing visions, priorities, and interpretations influence the formulation, negotiation, and adoption of legislation, ultimately affecting the Union's long-term response to crises and its strategic trajectory.

Despite Parliament's importance, current research on EU's response to the post-2022 energy crisis leaves this institution largely unexplored. Existing studies largely approach the EU as a relatively coherent actor, leaving the internal partisan and ideological contestation of energy policy insufficiently examined. This thesis addresses

⁷ European Parliament and Council of the European Union, *Directive (EU) 2023/1791 of 13 September 2023 on energy efficiency and amending Regulation (EU) 2023/955 (recast) (Text with EEA relevance)*, OJ L 2023/1791 (2023), accessed January 25, 2026, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2023/1791/oj/eng>.

⁸ European Parliament and Council of the European Union, *Directive (EU) 2023/2413 of 18 October 2023 amending Directive (EU) 2018/2001 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources*, OJ L 2023/2413 (2023), accessed January 25, 2026, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32023L2413>.

⁹ European Parliament and Council of the European Union, *Regulation (EU) 2022/869 of 30 May 2022 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure, amending Regulations (EC) No 715/2009, (EU) 2019/942 and (EU) 2019/943 and Directives 2009/73/EC and (EU) 2019/944, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 347/2013*, OJ L 152 (2022), accessed January 25, 2026, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022R0869>.

¹⁰ European Parliament and Council of the European Union, *Regulation (EU) 2022/1032 of 29 June 2022 amending Regulations (EU) 2017/1938 and (EC) No 715/2009 with regard to gas storage*, OJ L 173 (2022), accessed January 25, 2026, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/1032/oj/eng>.

¹¹ European Parliament and Council of the European Union, *Regulation (EU) 2026/261 of 26 January 2026 on phasing out Russian natural gas imports*, OJ L 2026/261 (2026), accessed January 25, 2026, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32026R0261>.

this gap by systematically comparing how different parliamentary groups interpret the causes, consequences and possible solutions to the energy crisis, examining where their positions converge, where they diverge, and whether these differences follow broader ideological or political patterns. In doing so, the study seeks to uncover this underexplored side of the EU.

To examine these dynamics, the thesis applies frame analysis through a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The empirical analysis is based primarily on individual speeches delivered by Members of the Parliament (MEPs) during the first year following Russia's invasion, from February 2022 to early 2023. Using a manual coding approach, the speeches are analyzed according to five predefined frames: security, climate, solidarity, economy/competitiveness, and affordability/socio-economic concerns. Quantitative analysis identifies the frequency and dominance of frames across political groups, while qualitative analysis examines how these frames are constructed, combined and translated into particular policy positions. This approach allows the study to move beyond identifying what frames are present and examine how different political factions understand and employ them in interpreting the energy crisis.

The aim of research: This thesis aims to to analyze how energy policy questions are framed and contested in the Parliament following the crisis caused by 2022 Russia's invasion, using the frame analysis to uncover underlying political and ideological divisions between Parliament's political groups. To fulfill this aim, the following *objectives* are set:

- To examine all relevant speeches by identifying frames used in each of them, outline said frames in a coding table.
- To count and analyze which energy frames are most frequently and prominently invoked by different political groups in the Parliament, including the combinations in which these frames appear.
- To examine how said groups construct and interpret these frames in defining energy problems, solutions and policy proposals or rejections.
- To compare framing patterns across political groups and identify ideological, cross-party and mainstream-fringe similarities and differences in energy policy perceptions.

2. *State of Art/Literature Review*

The consequences of Russia's 2022 invasion for EU energy policy immediately attracted scholarly attention. Academic engagement began as early as May 2022, shortly after the Commission launched the REPowerEU plan, signaling the start of an intense and rapidly expanding debate. Since then, at least nineteen publications, predominantly peer-reviewed journal articles, alongside several working papers and policy briefs,

have examined how the crisis reshaped EU energy governance, strategic priorities and policy framing. While differing in research focus, emphasis and normative evaluation, most scholars treat the war as a critical point for EU energy policy. The literature assesses both - the EU's immediate responses to the energy shock, such as supplier diversification and joint purchasing mechanisms, and the longer-term implications for energy security and climate policy.

Across this debate, several approaches can be identified. A group of publications analyzes the crisis through the lens of geopolitics and strategic autonomy, emphasizing energy security and external dependencies. Another fraction of literature examines the state of green transition in the face of crisis, while the third body of research focuses on crisis governance, institutional dynamics exploring how EU decision-making worked under emergency conditions. Finally, some authors situate the crisis response within broader political-economic and justice debates. Together, while providing a detailed account for the Union's response to the shock, they also reveal a notable gap. While the Commission's position, member state opinions and interest group influence receive considerable attention, parliamentary contestation, party dynamics in the Parliament are left completely unexplored. The following sections examine the existing literature further before turning to the overlooked dimension.

As mentioned above, the first group of publications approaches energy issue through the lens of geopolitics and strategic autonomy, conceptualizing Russia's weaponization of gas as an instrument of political coercion. In this perspective, energy becomes a structural challenge to the EU's strategic independence. Much of this scholarship evaluates the EU's response through the lens of resilience, economic decoupling from Russia - geopolitical repositioning. Several authors frame the post-invasion shift a strategic success. For instance, Geneletti¹² and Falkner¹³ praise the EU for its rapid reduction of Russia's pipeline gas imports presenting it as a proof of European resilience. While financially costly in short-term, the measures taken by the Union are considered as revolutionary in accomplishing energy, therefore strategic independence. Gazprom, losing its largest customer and its revenue plummeting, while the EU gaining alternative energy resources, indicates a win for the latter and a loss for Russia.

¹² Gianmarco Geneletti, "Energy As a Geopolitical Weapon," *EuropeanRelations.com*, August 24, 2025, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://www.europeanrelations.com/energy-as-a-geopolitical-weapon/>

¹³ Robert Falkner, "Weaponised Energy and Climate Change: Assessing Europe's Response to the Ukraine War," *LSE Public Policy Review* 3, no. 1 (2023): 1–8, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.31389/lseppr.78>

Other contributions move attention from a macro picture of geopolitics to concrete policy instruments taken. Vecchio¹⁴ and Sadowska¹⁵ offer a detailed examination of a broad variety of measures taken by the Union, highlighting especially demand-side governance: storage obligations, solidarity and shared purchasing mechanisms, price caps. Likewise, Kaveshnikov¹⁶ emphasizes instruments such as LNG supply diversification arguing that the EU response turned out more effective than anticipated. Together, they provide a timely explanation of every measure taken to combat the crisis. These accounts collectively portray the EU as capable of rapidly coming up with creative and diverse responses under pressure as well as managing effective institutional coordination.

Not all literature, however, portrays a strictly positive image. Gachechiladze's¹⁷ contribution here is extremely valuable as it complicates the view of rather unambiguous and linear transition. It does challenge the decoupling narrative by demonstrating the persistence of Russian energy imports (sudden increase in LNG purchases), as well as continued asymmetries between member states in relation to pipeline dependency. Gachechiladze's findings underscore uneven response to the crisis with the Union appearing more fragmented in practice. Various political and economic constraints complicate the shift towards collective energy autonomy by delaying cutting off Russian imports. This does not mean the EU's approach is perceived negatively, it is still viewed in a rather positive, yet cautious way, suggesting strategic autonomy is not to be achieved smoothly.

Finally, only one publication introduces an institutional and discursive dimension by examining the Commission's articulation of "geopolitical turn". Siddi and Prandin¹⁸ highlight how security and geopolitical frames evolved and expanded in the EC's discourse on energy, as well as how such frames enabled the expansion of executive authority.

A second strand of literature puts emphasis on environmental angle of the crisis. It analyzes how the energy shock interacted with the Union's climate agenda and asks whether the war constituted a setback, an acceleration, or a structural transformation of the green transition. While some scholars express concerns over

¹⁴ Alberto Vecchio, "Changing the Flow: The European Response to the Russian Weaponization of Gas," *European Papers* 9, no. 1 (2024): 39–52, accessed January 25, 2026,

https://www.europeanpapers.eu/system/files/pdf_version/EP_EF_2024_I_003_Alberto_Vecchio_00741.pdf

¹⁵ Ewelina Sadowska, "The Impact of the Russian Ukrainian War on the European Union's Energy Security," *Energy Policy Studies* 2, no. 10 (2022): 41–52, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.62316/SJDE2421>

¹⁶ Nikolay Kaveshnikov, "The EU's Response to the 2022 Energy Crisis," *SSRN Scholarly Paper*, May 11, 2023, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4432135>

¹⁷ Mariam Gachechiladze and Alexander Latsabidze, "EU Energy Policy After the Russian Invasion of Ukraine," *Dunya: The Journal of Free University Institute of Asia and Africa* 2 (2024), accessed January 25, 2026, <https://journals.org.ge/index.php/dunya/article/view/405/343>

¹⁸ Marco Siddi and Federica Prandin, "Governing the EU's Energy Crisis: The European Commission's Geopolitical Turn and Its Pitfalls," *Politics and Governance* 11, no. 4 (2023): 286–296, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v11i4.7315>

how securitization of energy might derail decarbonization, others believe the EU's response showcases resilience and adaptivity of its climate governance framework.

A significant number of authors support the resilience thesis.¹⁹ The collective argument is that despite economic pressures, geopolitical instability, and the immediate need to secure energy supplies, the EU did not abandon its Fit for 55 package, nor dilute it. The emission reducing targets remained intact and even got expanded, climate objectives were constantly highlighted and were never sidelined in favor of geopolitics/economy nexus. On the contrary, it is suggested that the invasion accelerated pre-existing renewable governance trends rather than reversing them. Energy security and decarbonization became fused, with renewables now framed as an instrument of strategic autonomy. Instead of being competing priorities, security and climate objectives were merged with a common policy logic.

Some authors, however, share a more sceptic stance towards the crisis response.²⁰ They fear that prioritization of security might undermine climate action as short-term stabilization measures may prevail over decarbonization objectives. The expansion of LNG infrastructure, temporary return to coal and new contracts with fossil fuel providers (e.g. Australia, Saudi Arabia), raise concerns about carbon-lock in and the risk that emergency measures could slow the structural transformation of the energy system. In other words, it is feared that temporary instruments may become prolonged. Additionally, some literature approaches the question through climate justice perspective.²¹ Rather than focusing on Europe alone, it analyzes how the EU's responses to the crisis affect climate policy on a global scale. Here it is suggested that both - increasing LNG imports to Europe and switching to renewables, could deprive the Global South from acquiring resources needed for decarbonization.

¹⁹ Aron Buzogány, Stefan Četković, and Tomas Maltby, "EU Renewable Energy Governance and the Ukraine War: Moving Ahead Through Strategic Flexibility?" *Politics and Governance* 11, no. 4 (2023): 263–274, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v11i4.7361>; Ingmar von Homeyer, Sebastian Oberthür, and Claire Dupont, "EU Climate Policy in Turbulent Times: Understanding the Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic and Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine," *Environmental Politics* 34, no. 7 (2025): 1238–1258, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2025.2510063>; Matúš Mišík and Andrej Nosko, "Post-pandemic Lessons for EU Energy and Climate Policy After the Russian Invasion of Ukraine: Introduction to a Special Issue on EU Green Recovery in the Post-Covid-19 Period," *Energy Policy* 177 (June 2023): 113546, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2023.113546>

²⁰ Caroline Kuzemko, "The Russia-Ukraine War: An Inflection Point for Sustainable Energy Transitions," policy brief, Foundation for European Progressive Studies, December 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://fepps-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/FEPS_PB_Geopolitics-of-Energy.pdf;

Caroline Kuzemko, Mathieu Blondeel, Claire Dupont, and Marie Claire Brisbois, "Russia's War on Ukraine, European Energy Policy Responses & Implications for Sustainable Transformations," *Energy Research & Social Science* 93 (2022): 102842, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2022.102842>; GLOBSEC, "EU Climate Policy amid Russia's War in Ukraine: A Critical Overview of Key REPowerEU Challenges and Trajectories towards Net Zero," policy report, December 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://www.globsec.org/sites/default/files/2022%2012/FIN%20The%20EU%20climate%20policy%20amidst%20Russia's%20war%20in%20Ukraine%20ver2%20spreads.pdf>

²¹ Kuzemko, "The Russia-Ukraine War," 2022.

One distinct line of argument complicates climate governance issue by examining the changes with the governance itself. Olivares²² emphasizes that REPowerEU speeds up renewable deployment by simplifying permitting procedures and treating renewable projects as overriding public interest. In practice, this allows member states to ease certain biodiversity and environmental standards. Therefore, the tension is not only between fossil fuels and renewables but also between climate and environmental action. In this view, the EU's climate ambition is intact, but it prioritizes energy security and decarbonization over some environmental standards.

A smaller part of literature contains research on political-economic side of energy response. Scholars²³ point out trade-offs between energy security and socioeconomic stability, noting risks for vulnerable households. High energy prices, industrial competitiveness are highlighted as factors influencing policymaking regarding energy. Wojtowicz's article²⁴ stands out as a publication that focuses on the role of interest groups – lobbyists. She explains their influence (especially of Fossil fuel businesses) to be significant in influencing the response of the Eun in solving energy crisis.

The final strand of literature covers crisis response not through policy substance analysis, but institutional dynamics. It particularly examines how the Union's governance adapted under crisis conditions. Instead of focusing primarily on energy diversification or climate ambition, this part analyzes how decision-making structures evolved, how supranational and intergovernmental actors influenced the response the shock. Academia²⁵ portrays the crisis as coordination and executive power-driven. The Commission is presented as a central figure, being agenda-setter, reframing energy policy and accelerating implementation. The scholarship agrees that crisis governance was characterized by rapidly adopted measures, streamlined procedures, flexibility in instruments as well as strengthened tools for coordination (joint gas purchases, sharing gas storage etc.). Rather than signaling institutional breakdown, the adopted strategy showcases adaptive capacity and policy resilience.

²² Alberto Olivares, "The EU's New Energy and Climate Policy: Energy Security and the Moderation of Environmental Standards," *Global Energy Law and Sustainability* 4, no. 1–2 (2023), accessed January 25, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.3366/gels.2023.0091>

²³ Arthur Sullivan, "War in Ukraine: Why Is the EU Still Buying Russian Gas?" *DW*, April 29, 2024, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://www.dw.com/en/war-in-ukraine-why-is-the-eu-still-buying-russian-gas/a-68925869>; Euractiv, "Europe's High Energy Prices Are Hardening into a Structural Competitiveness Risk," advocacy lab commentary, January 20, 2026, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://www.euractiv.com/news/europes-high-energy-prices-are-hardening-into-a-structural-competitiveness-risk/>; Katherine Lonergan, Paolo Gabrielli, and Giovanni Sansavini, "Energy Justice Analysis of the European Commission REPowerEU Plan," working paper, ETH Zurich, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000551952>; Sharmistha Hazra and Pramod Kumar, "Navigating Energy Transition: EU's Lessons in the Wake of the Russia Ukraine Conflict," *Journal of Strategic Security* 18, no. 4 (2025): 146–160, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.18.4.2603>

²⁴ Anna Wójtowicz, "EU Energy Security After Russia's Invasion of Ukraine – Substance, Strategy and Lobbying," *Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs* 28, no. 2 (2024): 157–171, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://journalse.com/pliki/pw/2%202024%20Wojtowicz.pdf>

²⁵ Buzogány, Četković, and Maltby, "EU Renewable Energy Governance," 2023; Siddi and Prandin, "Governing the EU's Energy Crisis," 2023; Vecchio, "Changing the Flow," 2024; von Homeyer, Oberthür, and Dupont, "EU Climate Policy in Turbulent Times," 2025.

At the same time, academia does acknowledge that crisis framing allowed to narrow political deliberation. The emphasis on urgency and security helped bypass political contestation and prioritize rapid and efficient measures.

Taken together, the existing literature provides a comprehensive and multi-dimensional assessment of the EU's energy response to Russia's invasion. Scholars approach the question from geopolitical, climate, governance and political-economic perspectives, covering the full spectrum of usual energy frames. Questions of effectiveness, coordination, equity, resilience and sustainability are widely addressed. In this sense, the state of art captures crisis as a complex, multi-layered transformation of Union's energy policy and offers a rich explanation of it.

That being said, despite its analytical richness, the existing literature shares an important weakness. Most of contributions, even when critical, tend to treat the Union as a coherent, unified, pretty much monolithic actor. The crisis is often viewed through the lens of "the European response", implying a common framing, priorities and institutional alignment. While dilemmas of trade-offs, differences between some actors and the classic supranational vs intergovernmental clash are acknowledged, internal ideological clashes, partisan contestation and party conflicts are rarely at the center of analysis. Some studies do move beyond a monolithic view. Wojtowicz showcases the influence of lobbying from businesses; Siddi and Prandin examine how the Commission's framing of energy policy and institution's governing role has evolved over the years, as well as how did the EC influence the response to the crisis; von Homeyer and others analyze member state variations and challenge simplified East-West divide narratives.

Yet, what remains completely absent from the literature is any research of the European Parliament, let alone a systematic examination. This gap is striking, given how energy policy has been widely debated in the EP ever since the beginning of the invasion. Unlike the commission, which often presents a relatively unified position, the Parliament is the arena for ideological contestation. It is here that competing visions of energy policy are frames in various ways, questions are debated, opinions confronted. Party groups frame some questions differently, prioritize different instruments, assign different meanings. By overlooking the European Parliament, the current state of art underestimates the degree of political pluralism within the EU's response. The internal discursive dynamic remain unexplored and this constitutes a clear analytical gap in today's literature.

3. *Theoretical framework*

This study adopts framing theory as its primary theoretical framework for analyzing political discourse. Frames, as conceptualized by D. Chong and J. N. Druckman,²⁶ refer to the selective presentation of reality,

²⁶ Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, "Framing Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 10 (2007): 106–107, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054>.

emphasis on certain aspects, through which the political issues are constructed, defined, interpreted and evaluated. In this sense, frames promote particular problem definitions, causal interpretations, normative evaluations and, perhaps most importantly, policy solutions. Therefore, frames do not just outline particular issues, they provide a whole interpretation through which an issue is given a meaning. Political actors can discuss the same topic in different ways, emphasizing different causes, consequences, values or solutions. In this sense, framing involves a process of selection and emphasis – some certain elements of an issue are elevated to the foreground while others are downplayed. The resulting frame influences the perception of a problem – how it is understood, who or what is responsible, which values are regarded as relevant, which actions are justified as needed. Thus, frames establish a connection between the interpretation of an issue and the policy response to address it. To clarify, framing should not be understood as the distortion of factual information, altering of data or in other words – lying. It should not be mistaken for falsification, though this practice can go alongside. Instead, however, framing should specifically be perceived as selective emphasis of certain aspects of reality, highlighting some considerations while downplaying others, thereby shaping how audiences understand and assess political questions.

This theoretical approach was chosen as the most suitable for the study for two main reasons. Firstly, energy policy constitutes a highly salient and politically contested policy domain. As shown in the literature review above, it is an area of competing interpretations reflecting broader economic, geopolitical and environmental priorities. In multiple examples,²⁷ Chong and Druckman demonstrate how above-mentioned frames appear in political rhetoric when covering housing, energy and development fields. They argue that political actors frequently frame issues such as energy to advance their distinct ideological and partisan positions, by persuading that one consideration (for example economy) is more important than another (environment). These findings make energy policy seem theoretically rich for research of competing frames. Secondly, framing theory is particularly well suited for the analysis of institutions characterized by deep political pluralism and party contestation. The Parliament, as one of the central bodies of the EU, brings together a wide range of political groups spanning across the ideological spectrum, as well as representatives from diverse national contexts. This plurality allows a space where competing frames are actively constructed, articulated and contested. As a result, parliamentary debates provide a valuable empirical site for examining how different political actors seek to impose their preferred interpretations of policy issues. This is supported by the work of Chong and Druckman, who primarily illustrate framing dynamics through example cases from United States politics, particularly partisan competition between Democrats and Republicans.²⁸ Their analysis demonstrates how even within a two-party system, political actors advance competing frames that reflect distinct ideological positions. Building on

²⁷ Chong and Druckman, “Framing Theory” 113,115.

²⁸ Chong and Druckman, “Framing Theory” 110-113.

this insight, the EP, characterized by a multi-party system and a broader range of ideological positions, can be expected to provide an even greater diversity of competing frames, making it a particularly relevant place for the application of framing theory.

Framing theory has already been adopted in multiple studies exploring EU's energy policy discourse. The current literature demonstrates that political debates in this area are structured through a set of recurring frames that showcase how energy-related issues are defined and contested. Across the key contributions examined, four principal frames can be identified: security, climate/sustainability, solidarity and economy/market. While their importance varies across the publications, the security frame appears consistently and often dominates the discourse, whereas climate and solidarity considerations are also invoked often. The economic frame, although less emphasized in some works, appears more important dimension in recent analyses.

Sonia Florian²⁹ proposes three main frames structuring EU foreign energy policy: security, climate and solidarity. Importantly, the author introduces the notion of *master frame* to highlight the different positions of frames, suggesting that certain ones, most notably security, tend to dominate discourse. However, the key theoretical insight in her findings lies in challenging the assumption that frames necessarily compete or clash. Instead, Florian showcases that in the context of energy policy, frames do not necessarily cancel each other out, but on the contrary, most often they coexist and even mutually reinforce each other. For instance, the promotion of renewable energy production can simultaneously be framed as climate action, but at the same time it can be, and often is framed as both security and solidarity as well. The argument would be that expanding renewables would reduce dependence on foreign energy supplies thus making the EU more resilient to external threats (security frame), but such a drastic change can only be achieved through mutual action (solidarity frame). In this sense, framing does not necessarily produce polarization, but can also generate discursive alignment across policy goals.

In contrast, Michał Naturski and Anna Herranz-Surrallés³⁰ place greater emphasis on conflictual and contested side of framing, particularly in the Parliament. They similarly point out security as the dominant frame, alongside elements of climate and solidarity (a fraction of economy frame as well), their analysis stands out as a showcase that the presence of shared frame does not imply consensus. Just because different actors interpret the issue using the same frame, does not mean they will envision similar policies. On the contrary, their study demonstrates that actors may agree on a common problem definition (e.g. security frame – the need to reduce dependency on Russian gas) while diverging significantly in proposed solutions. In context of the Parliament, as

²⁹ Sonia Florian, "The Quest for a Single Voice in EU Foreign Energy Policy: The EU Commission and Its Framing Strategies," *Journal of European Public Policy* 17, no. 6 (2010): 846–864, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44838580>

³⁰ Michał Naturski and Anna Herranz Surrallés, "Securitizing Moves To Nowhere? The Framing of the European Union's Energy Policy," *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 4, no. 2 (2008): 71–89.

authors note, that this institution was the most vocal actor advocating the energy security perspective (circa 2006) which shows how central this frame was in parliamentary discourse. And yet, the Parliament was divided internally. This division is reflected in disagreements on whose competence should it be to solve security issues – whether to take a more supranationalist stance and address security through deeper integration, such as creating Common Energy Policy (similar to Common Agricultural Policy); or to take a more intergovernmental approach and allow nationally-driven strategies to prevail. Their findings thus reveal that frames function not only as tools of persuasion as areas of contestation, within which competing ideologies and institutional preferences are articulated. In this sense, framing structures political conflict instead of eliminating.

Michele Knodt and Marc Ringel³¹ also cover climate and security frames as the recurring in energy discourse, but they more explicitly include competitiveness frame which could also be called economy or market frame. This consideration revolves around questions of affordability, market efficiency, and the functioning of internal energy markets, thereby highlighting the pragmatic dimension of energy policy. This perspective introduces additional tensions and trade-offs, for example between market liberalization and state intervention. Building on the theoretical insights of frame theory as well as its academic applications, the study employs framing as its central approach. The reviewed contributions provide a clear guidance for which frames to look out for – which are the most relevant in this context. Accordingly, the analysis focuses on four core frames: security, sustainability, solidarity and competitiveness which are treated as primary analytical categories. While these frames structure the analysis, the study remains open to any additional considerations that might appear relevant throughout. In addition, it is another study that incorporates the term *master frame* to assess which considerations appear most dominant within EP's discourse, that is, which perspectives are most frequently invoked or serve as overarching interpretive lenses. However, identifying master frame does not imply normative superiority, bigger argument validation over other frames. In other words, this label does not objectively elevate one frame above the others as “better”, it is not to be used as indicator of objective truth. Attaching label simply makes it more accurately determine which frames best reflect political alignments, strategic interests and ideologies inside the Parliament.

Importantly, following the theoretical insights, frames are not examined in isolation. Instead, particular attention is paid to the ways in which frames overlap, coexist or even reinforce each other, as political actors might combine them to either strategically strengthen their argumentation or because it aligns with their ideology. The analysis, therefore, considers not only individual frames, but also possible groups, clusters, configurations of frames within parliamentary discourse. Frames are also not to be assumed to necessarily correspond to uniform

³¹ Michèle Knodt and Marc Ringel, “European Union Energy Policy: A Discourse Perspective,” in *Handbook of Energy Governance in Europe*, ed. Michèle Knodt and Jörg Kemmerzell (Cham: Springer Nature, 2022), 121–142.

policy preferences. The presence of a shared frame, such as solidarity, does not imply agreement on policy solutions. Instead, actors mobilizing the same frame may advocate for divergent and even conflicting policy approaches, reflecting their interests or ideological stance. Frames thus are not perceived as an indicator of political consensus but another discursive level of political contestation.

Empirically, frames are identified through the analysis of how political actors define problems, assign causes, articulate solutions and normative evaluations. In this way, the study applies frame theory not only to categorize discourse but to uncover how competing interpretations of energy policy are constructed and contested within the Parliament.

4. Methodology

This research applies frame analysis using a dual method of both - quantitative frequency and qualitative content analysis. To process the data, a manual coding approach was chosen. The primary empirical material consists of plenary debates of the Parliament, more specifically individual speeches delivered by MEPs. Each speech is treated as a single unit of analysis. The timeframe considered for this study spans from February 2022, marking the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, until early 2023, marking the first anniversary of the war. In this sense, the research examines the first year of the invasion as a critical period of discursive and policy formation. In addition to parliamentary speeches, other sources such as party group newsletters and articles were initially considered. However, due to the richness and sufficiency of the parliamentary data, their inclusion was disregarded.

The selection of speeches follows a manual screening process based on a clear substantive criterion. In order to be included in the dataset, a speech must establish a link between energy-related issues and the war in Ukraine. Speeches that discuss the war without referring to energy are excluded, as are speeches that address energy issues without connecting them to the war. Only those contributions that explicitly or implicitly relate both dimensions and present identifiable problems and/or solutions are coded. Importantly, this selection is not limited to the presence of specific keywords such as "energy," "war," or "Ukraine." Instead, speeches may include directly related terminology, such as references to electricity, fossil fuels, or renewables on the one hand, and to Russian aggression, invasion, or conflict on the other. This flexible but structured approach allows for the inclusion of relevant variations in language while maintaining analytical consistency. At the same time, speeches that focus solely on broader climate policy or economic developments without linking them to the war-energy nexus are excluded.

Once the relevant speeches are identified, each unit is coded according to the presence of five predefined frames: security, climate, solidarity, economy/competitiveness, and affordability/socio-economic concerns. The

security frame captures references to strategic autonomy, energy (in)dependence on external actors, safe supply of energy and geopolitical threats. The climate frame includes references to renewable energy, decarbonization, environmental sustainability, and climate-related objectives. The solidarity frame refers to European cooperation, joint action and collective responses at the EU level, as well as further integration. The economy or competitiveness frame captures arguments related to markets, industry, investment and overall economic performance. Finally, the affordability or socio-economic frame covers energy prices, cost of living, households and vulnerable social groups. As speeches often contain multiple lines of argumentation, each unit (speech) can be assigned more than one frame, reflecting the complexity of political discourse.

To ensure transparency and, more importantly, consistency in the coding process, frame identification followed a structured interpretive procedure. Each speech was closely read analyzed for recurring themes, problem definitions and proposed solutions corresponding to selected frame categories. Frames were identified based on the presence of specific key words, rhetorical patterns and references associated with each category (e.g. references to “joint action” and “united response” for solidarity frame). The key words are not limited to fixed set of keywords mentioned in the above paragraphs. All synonyms and semantically equivalent expressions were considered relevant indicators of a given frame. For instance, affordability frame may be identified through references to electricity/heating cost, price, living standards, financial burden or inability to pay. However, the presence of such terms alone is not sufficient. In order to qualify as affordability frame, these references must be explicitly linked to societal groups, that is citizens, households, families, vulnerable populations. Financial considerations attributed to states, EU institutions, markets or businesses, are therefore not coded under this category.

At the same time, coding is not restricted to keyword detection, but relies on contextual interpretation of meaning within the broader argument. This approach allows for the identification of implicit framings where explicit terminology is absent, while also helping avoid misunderstanding and miscategorization. For example, references to households or vulnerable groups do not automatically indicate an affordability frame, when linked to issues such as air pollution. A statement referencing to households breathing polluted air or living in environmentally degraded areas would therefore be coded under the climate frame rather than socioeconomic one. An even clearer illustration of this distinction is a formulation such as “the price citizens pay with their health by inhaling toxic emissions from fossil fuels”. Despite containing keywords “price”, “pay” and “citizens”, that suggest socioeconomic frame, the underlying logic here is environmental. Accordingly, this study prioritizes contextual meaning over the mere presence of keywords with assigning frames. For this reason, manual coding method was chosen, as it is believed to be the most accurate for capturing contextual meaning.

In cases where multiple frames are present, all relevant frames are assigned. Accordingly, a single coding unit may contain several frames, some of which are associated with problem definitions, while others correspond to proposed solutions. The distinction between problems and solutions is once again determined through a combination of keyword indicators and contextual interpretation. For instance, a critical tone, often expressed through terms such as “costly”, “weak”, “inadequate” or “lacking”, typically signals the identification of a problem. Conversely, a more action-oriented or forward-looking tone, reflected in expressions such as “we need to”, “we must”, indicates the articulation of a solution. For instance, economic considerations may be framed as a problem when they are seen as undermining climate goals, or as a solution when they are associated with strengthening European competitiveness. This approach makes it possible to capture not only which frames are present, but also how they function within the argument.

In addition to identifying multiple frames, each speech is assigned a dominant – master frame. As outlined in the theoretical part, the purpose of this is to capture the primary perspective structuring the overall argument. The master frame is determined through contextual analysis, taking into account the relative prominence of each frame within the speech. In particular, emphasis is placed on the frequency of references, the centrality of the argument and the extent to which a given frame shapes the problems or solutions. While multiple frames may coexist within a single speech, the master frame reflects the one that most strongly organizes its message.

Following the completion of the coding process, the analysis proceeds with a quantitative examination of the data in order to identify broader patterns and tendencies. This includes measuring the frequency of individual frames across the dataset, as well as assessing how often specific frames are assigned as master frames. By systematically quantifying these occurrences, the study is able to compare the relative prominence of different frames both within and across political groups. In addition, the analysis explores how frames are distributed between problem definitions and proposed solutions. This makes it possible to identify whether certain frames are primarily used to diagnose issues or, alternatively, to advance policy responses. The quantitative dimension also allows for the examination of how political groups prioritize particular frames, as well as how they combine multiple frames within single speeches. These patterns are visualized through charts and tables derived from the coding dataset, providing a clear and structured overview of frame distribution and variation across political actors.

Building on the quantitative analysis, the study proceeds with a qualitative examination of the coded material. This stage focuses on the speeches themselves, analyzing how political actors articulate their positions and how different frames are employed in practice. Particular attention is paid to identifying commonalities and divergences in policy positions across political groups, and to linking these patterns to the frequency and distribution of frames identified in the quantitative section. The qualitative analysis aims to uncover how each

political group understands, interprets, and strategically employs the five frames. Rather than treating frames as purely descriptive categories, this approach examines how they are used to construct meaning, justify policy choices, and shape political narratives. For the sake of analytical clarity and coherence, this section is structured by individual frames, allowing for a systematic comparison of how each frame is perceived and mobilized across the Parliament

5. *Quantitative findings*

5.1. *Frame distribution*

Building on the methodology outlined above, the research was conducted and the empirical findings are presented below. The chapter examines how political groups frame the issue, focusing on the distribution of frames, differences between parties and the ways in which frames are combined. The chapter proceeds in four steps: First, it outlines the overall distribution of speeches (units) and frames in them across the dataset; second, it compares how different political groups emphasize specific frames; third, it examines the balance between problem and solution-oriented framing; and finally, it explores patterns of frame co-occurrence in order to identify broader framing strategies.

Before diving into frame distribution, it is first logically useful to start off with the dataset of speeches – coding units, by explaining how many units were gathered for analysis and how they represent the parties in question, how they reflect the activity of those parties. Throughout the selected period, ranging from 16 of February 2022 up to 18 of April 2023, the total findings consist of 1005 relevant speeches. This means that a little more than a year, during the most intense debates that took place in the Parliament, around a thousand speeches combining the topics of energy and Ukraine war, were officially delivered during the plenary debates. A much higher number of speeches contained either references to the Ukraine war or energy questions separately, but for this research, in order to keep the data coherent and not overextended, only speeches combining both elements were selected. Many more relevant texts appeared across individual party news outlets and social media posts as well as speeches of politicians outside of the plenary rooms. However, as mentioned above in the methodological section, a thousand coding units seemed more than enough data to extract sufficient research results.

Out of these 1005 coding units, the number of speeches made by each party differs significantly, with the highest number being over 200 (EPP) and the lowest 68 (The Left). Still, all parties have thankfully surpassed the minimum requirement of providing at least 50 speeches – coding units, meaning that their representation can be considered sufficient for conducting the analysis. As was expected, the number of units attributed to parties reflects the size of these factions in the Parliament. For instance, EPP (Christian Democrats) and S&D

(Socialdemocrats), having the most members in the Parliament, and being the only parties with more than 100 MEPs each, respectively share 1st and 2nd place in the volume of speeches, with both providing over 100 units each. A slightly more interesting pattern emerges when moving to the middle range of factions. Renew (Liberals/Centrists) is in the 3rd place by number of MEPs, but it shares the exact same number of speeches as ECR (Conservatives), which has significantly fewer MEPs and into even in a fourth place, but rather in the fifth by number of members. Interestingly, Greens actually have fewer speeches in raw numbers than Conservatives despite being almost identical in size to ECR (literally only one MEP difference). This finding already suggests how active Conservatives were in discussing the issues of energy in relation to the Ukraine war. At the lower end of the party spectrum, ID (Far-Right) and The Left (Far-Left), having the fewest members, also display a noticeably smaller number of units. Meanwhile NI (Non-Attached members) has a somewhat similar volume of speeches while having significantly more members than compared to the smallest faction – The Left, which suggests smaller activity on the non-inscrits side. While the raw number of speeches is useful to display who is overall the most active and whose views are most frequently presented, to fully understand the picture it is crucial to assess these units proportionally, by counting the ratio between the number of members and the number of said units.

When we look at representation proportionally, a quite different picture emerges (see Figure 1). In this view, it is The Left that appears to be the most active, with 1.84 speeches per member. Despite being the smallest faction in the Parliament, The Left appears to be the most vocal and to make the most use of its allocated speaking time on the related issues. In contrast, S&D has only 1.48 speeches per member, while EPP only 1.3, making it the lowest ratio among political groups. The only lower category is NI, but since it is not a political group nor a party, EPP can actually be seen as the least represented among the structured groups. This creates a somewhat surprising twist in the findings, because when we look only at raw numbers, one could intuitively assume that Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and Liberals are the most active and engaged when it comes to the Ukraine war-energy nexus, especially considering that these factions are among the strongest supporters of Ukraine. However, the picture changes once we take into account that in parliamentary debates each group is assigned a number of speaking slots in proportion to its size. This means that all groups have equal opportunities to speak and express themselves; none of them are structurally marginalized as speaking times and slots are distributed proportionally. Therefore, if EPP appears to have the lowest ratio, it suggests that it actually spoke less frequently on the Ukraine-energy nexus relative to its size compared to other parties. This is important to highlight, because although larger parties will be represented with a greater number of speeches in absolute terms, it should not be assumed that they are more active or that they care more about the issue. Parties do not necessarily care less about a topic simply because they produce fewer speeches in raw numbers.

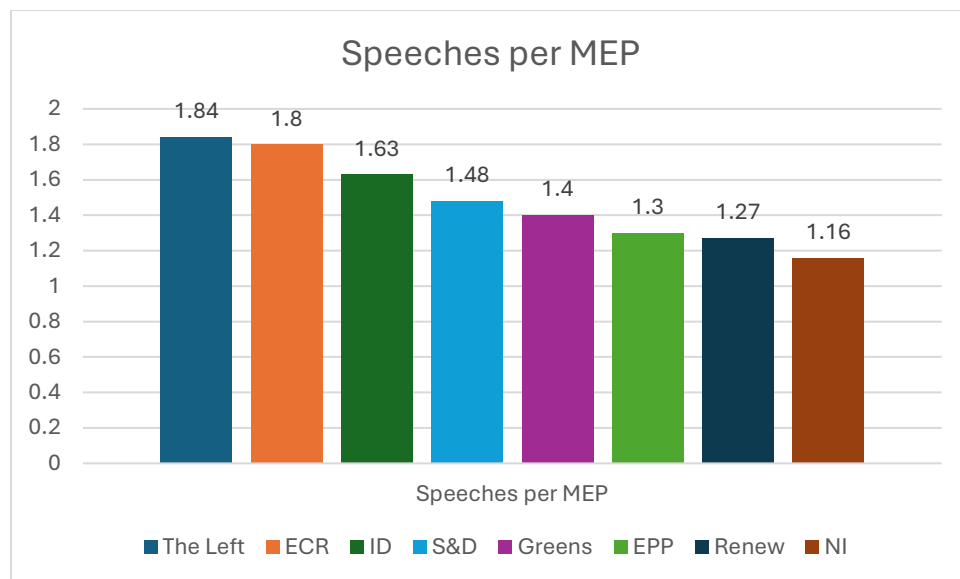


Figure 1. The graph shows each political group's ratio between members in the Parliament (2019-2024) and energy-war related speeches made by that group. The chart is supposed to showcase how active each group was in shaping energy-war related issues.

Additionally, it is important to note that ECR is not far behind The Left, in fact, their levels of activity are almost identical. This was already partially visible in raw numbers as mentioned above – ECR, despite being fifth in terms of membership size, produces more speeches than the Greens (4th) and the same number of speeches as Renew (3rd). Proportions show similar results – Conservatives have a ratio of 1.8, only slightly behind The Left. Other factions are somewhat less vocal, though surprisingly it is EPP that appears overall the least vocal among the main groups. Non-attached MEPs, if treated as a group, appear the least vocal in total, with significantly fewer speeches per member. This can likely be explained by the lack of coordination, internal structure and group strategy, which usually allow political groups to distribute speaking roles, address different aspects of an issue, and collectively cover a broader range of arguments. Non-Inscrits operate individually and therefore their speeches do not necessarily follow a shared logic or coordinated framing strategy in the same way as those of political groups. In other words, other factions have internal party meetings where they discuss certain issues often combining similar topics (i.e. discussing Ukraine war and alongside energy). These discussions then can be reflected in similarly written speeches. Non-Inscrits follow their own individual logic, therefore they do not necessarily combine Ukraine with energy as much.

Now moving towards the distribution of frames themselves, these 1005 speeches contain 2515 frames in total. This large number suggests that most of the speeches actually contain more than one frame – combinations of one, two, three, up to even five frames. The number of frames within each unit differs quite drastically, which

confirms what was outlined earlier in the theoretical part, namely that frames are rarely used in isolation and are instead combined with each other. The total count of frames that parties invoke (see Figure 2) largely reflects the volume of speeches: EPP and S&D dominate the chart with over 500 frame uses each, Renew and ECR both have close to 300, Greens follow with close to 250, and then ID, NI, and The Left line up with fewer than 200 frames each.

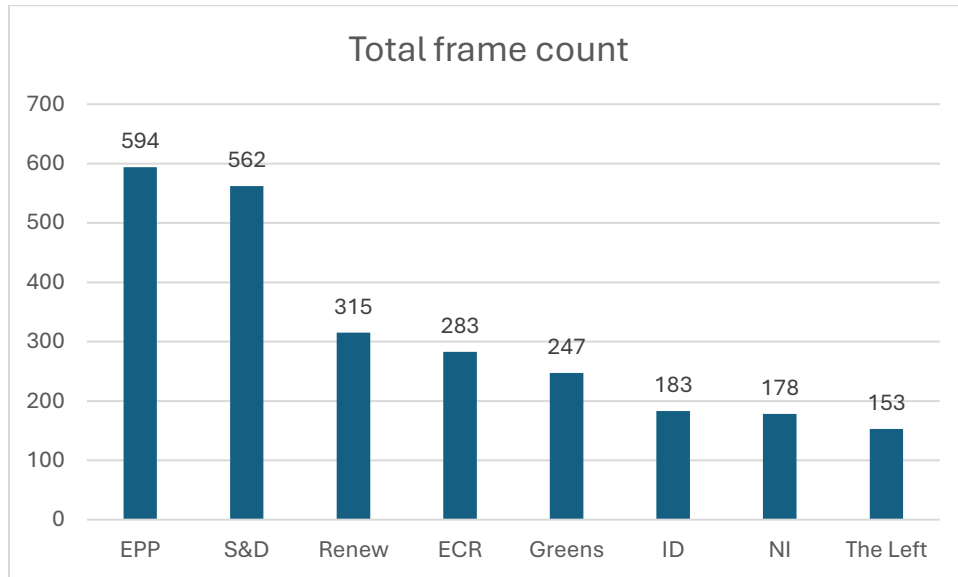


Figure 2. The figure shows a total number of times frames were invoked by each political group.

Florian, and similarly Natorski and Herran-Surrales, suggest security as a dominant frame occurring in the EU’s energy discourse. This research compliments their claims by showing that their theoretical expectations have not become irrelevant over time. Indeed, in 2022 security remains the most frequently invoked frame, appearing significantly more often than any other, with more than 200 additional counts compared to the second place. This is not particularly surprising given that energy is being discussed in direct relation to a military conflict. However, other frames are certainly not marginalized, let alone abandoned. Climate and economy frames go hand in hand and are roughly equally popular among MEPs. Knodt and Ringel place particular emphasis on the market frame, arguing that pragmatic considerations tend to accompany more ideological ones such as climate. Interestingly, this also aligns with the findings of this research, as market, as market-related and climate frames appear to be invoked at similar rates.

Affordability, a frame that was not always treated as a separate category by earlier researchers of EU energy discourse, also accounts for a significant share of mentions. Solidarity, on the other hand, appears to have received fewer mentions than expected. According to Florian, solidarity was among the key frames shaping EU energy policy, and therefore one could expect that during a crisis, especially one as significant as a large-scale

military operation, solidarity would appear more frequently in political discourse. However, solidarity accounts for less than 10% of all mentions, which challenges these earlier assumptions and stands out as one of the more surprising empirical findings so far.

An interesting pattern emerges when looking at how different political groups prioritize frames (see Figure 3). The security frame clearly prevails as the most commonly invoked narrative across all of the so-called mainstream parties: EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens and ECR. In contrast, the often-labeled populist, fringe, anti-establishment and eurosceptic groups – ID and The Left, tend to place more emphasis on economic considerations when defining energy-related issues. That said, there is an important distinction between the two – The Left places a much stronger emphasis on affordability, highlighting energy in relation to citizens’ struggles, the ability to pay bills and general living conditions, whereas ID prioritizes broader economic performance, including industrial competitiveness and business growth. This is where the classic economic divide between the far-left and far-right becomes particularly visible. Interestingly however, their data somewhat mirrors each other. While ID places the market frame first and The Left prioritizes affordability, ID ranks affordability only in fourth place, just as The Left places market considerations in the same fourth spot. Nonetheless, these two parties diverge from the mainstream primarily in that they do not emphasize security concerns to the same extent. NI once again falls outside of a clear pattern, placing economic competitiveness as its most frequently invoked frame.

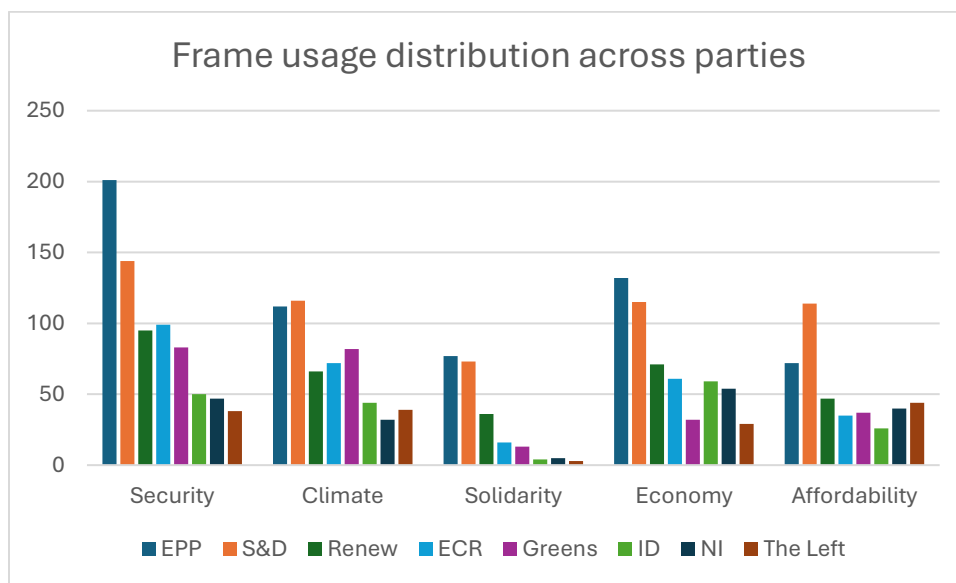


Figure 3. The figure shows

how popular each frame is among every political group.

At first glance, S&D might appear to be the least security-oriented group, with only 26% of its frames falling into this category – the lowest share among all groups. However, focusing on a single percentage can be misleading. The reason for this relatively low share is the high level of diversity in S&D’s framing. Compared to

other parties, S&D distributes its frames more evenly and invokes climate and solidarity more frequently, resulting in a more balanced overall profile. This does not mean that security is marginalized, on the contrary, it still ranks as the most frequently used frame within the group. What this suggests is that even a party traditionally associated with climate and social concerns still places security at the center, aligning it with broader mainstream tendencies.

As for the climate frame, which ranks second overall, it is not surprising that the Greens emerge as the party with the highest usage. With 33%, the climate frame almost matches the security frame within the Greens, with only 1% difference between them. This is entirely consistent with the party's ideological orientation. It is also interesting that climate is invoked a lot significantly more frequently by the Greens than by other groups, with ECR coming in second at 25% - a notable 8% gap. What is more surprising, however, is precisely this: that it is ECR which takes second place. One might have expected other left-wing groups or centrist liberals to occupy this position rather than a conservative party. This raises an important question – how does ECR invoke climate frames so frequently despite not being widely associated with green politics? This will become clearer in later sections when the actual meaning and function of these frames are examined in more detail. For now, it is more important to note that invoking a frame does not necessarily imply support for a corresponding policy. For example, a solidarity frame could theoretically be used in arguments advocating for reduced integration.

Looking at the broader distribution, right-leaning parties tend to place climate in third position, which aligns with expectations, while NI once again deviates from the general trend by ranking climate quite low. The economic frame shows a clearer ideological pattern: it is less emphasized by left-wing parties, with Greens, S&D and The Left, all placing it near the bottom, whereas centrist and right-leaning parties rank it among their top frames. ECR again stands out as an exception, placing climate above economy.

Affordability follows a somewhat expected pattern, though not as clearly as one might anticipate. The Left is the only party that places it first, which aligns with its ideological focus. S&D ranks it slightly lower than expected, though this again reflects its overall balanced distribution. The Greens place affordability third, which again corresponds with their primary focus on environmental issues. NI also ranks it third, while right-wing parties place it lowest, with EPP invoking affordability the least.

Finally, solidarity, which already appeared as the least used frame overall, consistently ranks at the bottom across almost all parties. EPP is the only group that places it slightly higher, though in reality both EPP and S&D mention solidarity at roughly similar rates (around 13%), with Renew following closely with 12%, while the rest remaining around 5%. This suggests that the three largest groups – strongholds of the mainstream – EPP, S&D and Renew are the ones sustaining the presence of solidarity within the discourse.

Another important aspect is frame diversity – that is, how evenly frames are distributed within each party’s discourse. This reflects not only rhetorical style, but also strategic choices: whether parties focus heavily on a small number of frames or distribute their arguments across multiple dimensions. To assess this, frames were grouped into high usage (above 20%), medium usage (at least 10%) and low usage (below 10%). Parties with at least four frames in the high-usage category can be considered highly diverse. Based on this classification, S&D emerges as the most diverse group, with four frames in the high-usage category and only solidarity falling into medium one. The Left shows similar pattern but ranks slightly lower due to the particularly low usage of solidarity. The Greens, in contrast, display the lowest diversity, relying mainly on two dominant frames – security and climate. Other factions fall somewhere in between, generally with three high-usage frames and a mix of medium and low categories. This suggests that left-leaning parties tend to employ a wider range of frames, incorporating security, climate, affordability and others to an extent to construct more layered arguments. Interestingly, the Greens stand out as an exception, focusing more narrowly on the climate-security nexus.

Finally, the concept of master frame was introduced to identify the dominant frame within each speech. While many speeches contained a clearly identifiable primary frame, others did not, particularly when multiple frames were used with equal emphasis. To avoid subjective interpretation, such cases were left out without a designated master frame. In total, 931 master frames were identified, meaning that over 70 speeches did not have a clearly dominant frame. Security, unsurprisingly dominates with roughly 400 instances, constituting a simple majority. Economy and affordability follow, each with over 100 cases. Climate, interestingly, falls far behind with less than 100 instances. The reason for this will be explained in a further chapter, but this could already signal that climate frame is often invoked as a supportive frame to accompany or empower another. Solidarity, with 63 cases, still represents a meaningful presence (see Figure 4).

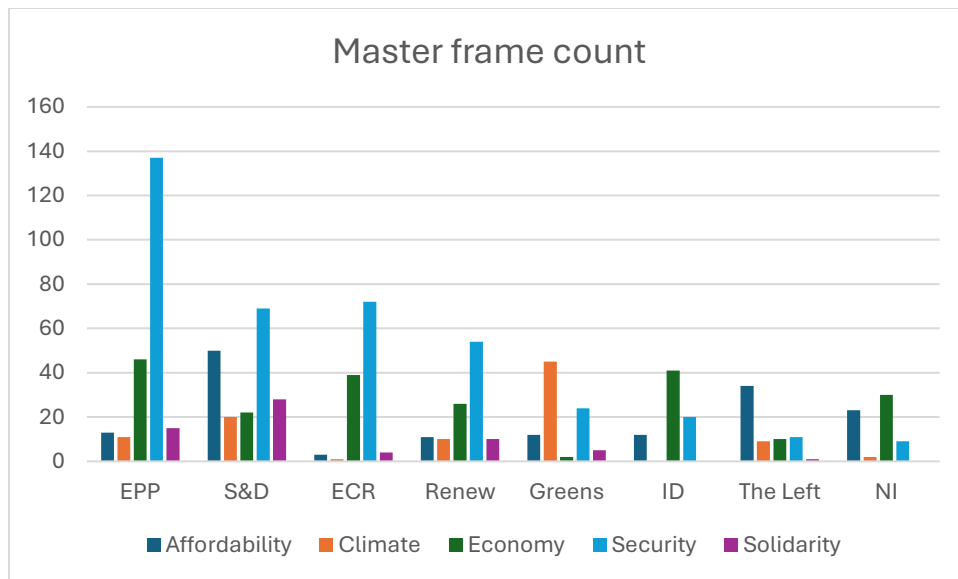


Figure 4. The chart shows how often each frame is invoked as a dominant-master frame by every group. In other words, which frames are prioritized by parliamentary groups the most.

Not all parties follow the same pattern. The Left prioritizes affordability significantly more than security, while NI emphasizes both economy and affordability. ID also favours economic framing and is the only party that never uses climate as a dominant frame. Interestingly, Greens show more climate than security master frames, suggesting that security may sometimes be used to support climate arguments than the other way around. Among mainstream parties, security remains clearly dominant, with Renew emerging as the most security-oriented.

Overall, these findings confirm existing theories while also adding nuance. Even in the context of a major military conflict, security does not fully overshadow other considerations. Economic, social and environmental frames continue to play an important role and different parties maintain distinct priorities. Not all actors converge on a single dominant narrative, and even under crisis conditions, ideological differences remain clearly visible in framing strategies.

5.2. Problem-solution asymmetry

Building on the previous section, having examined the overall distribution, it is now possible to move further. The above analysis captured how different factions prioritize frames, highlighting their general focus and the relative importance they assign to specific energy related issues. As much as they were useful for mapping the landscape of political discourse, they remain limited in what they can reveal about the actual function of these

frames within speeches. Frame distribution captures emphasis, but not direction – a high frequency of a single frame may indicate its importance, but will not clarify whether that frame is primarily used to define problems, to propose solutions, or to perform both roles simultaneously. For this reason, the next step of the analysis shifts towards examining frames through a problem-solution perspective. By distinguishing whether frames are invoked as problem definitions or proposed solutions, the section provides a more nuanced understanding of how political actors construct meaning around energy-related issues. This approach allows us to clearly move on from identifying what is being prioritized to understanding how it is being interpreted and acted upon within parliamentary discourse. Analyzing problem-solution patterns allow uncovering whether parties rely on certain frames predominantly to diagnose challenges, to justify policy responses, or to connect both dimensions within a coherent argumentative structure. It also opens the door to identifying potential asymmetries, where the framing of problems does not necessarily align with the framing of solutions. Such mismatches then often reveal important differences in political strategy and ideological positioning.

The overall results for a problem-solution framing appear uneven, although still relatively balanced (see Figure 5). In total, there are 994 instances of problem and 962 of solution framing. This suggests out of 1005 speeches, the overwhelming majority contain a clear problem definition that is subsequently followed by a related solution. Such a structure reflects a typical parliamentary speech pattern, where the speaker not only seeks to highlight an issue but also attempts to persuade by proposing a course of action or policy response. In both problem articulation and solution proposals, frames are actively invoked to strengthen and legitimize the argument. However, a closer look reveals small but meaningful deviations of this pattern. Around ten units contain solutions without any explicit problem definition, whereas there are approximately four to five times more units that present a problem without offering a corresponding solution. This asymmetry of having more problems than solutions is intuitively understandable. Outlining an issue, assigning blame, warning of consequences, or criticizing existing policies is generally easier than proposing concrete solutions, alternatives or actionable policy adjustments. Criticism is generally easier than improvements.

At the same time, this asymmetry is not solely a reflection of rhetorical convenience. It is also influenced by the nature of the data itself. The analysis is based on parliamentary debates, which mostly consist of earlier prepared speeches. Mostly, but not exclusively. Alongside those pre-made speeches, spontaneous remarks and questions aimed at said speeches are included. They are included in the debates because of the blue-card procedure. This procedure allows MEPs to pose questions to a colleague immediately after their speech. Such interventions are often more critical or sceptical in tone, frequently challenging the arguments or proposals presented. As a result, the blue-card format naturally produces a higher concentration of problem-oriented framing, thereby contributing to the observed imbalance.

When examining individual frames, three out of five analyzed frames are more frequently represented through a problem lens than solution. Affordability shows an almost equal distribution between problem and solution although the former slightly exceeds the latter (389 vs 352 instances). The economy frame exhibits a somewhat larger, yet still moderate gap with approximately 50 more problem instances than solution. Security, however, displays a much more pronounced difference, with nearly 200 more problem instances than solutions. This indicates that security is far more often constructed as a threat or a challenge than as a basis for concrete policy proposals. However, this does not necessarily mean that actors who emphasize security concerns fail to propose solutions altogether. Rather, it may suggest that security is frequently used as a supporting frame rather than a primary one. For instance, a speaker may focus primarily on rising prices or climate concerns while simultaneously invoking security, such as uncertainty in energy supply, to reinforce their argument. In this sense, security can function as a strategic amplifier of other frames, strengthening the urgency or legitimacy of a claim without necessarily serving as the central policy focus. This interpretation aligns with the idea of frame combinations, where multiple frames are used together to construct a more persuasive narrative. Security, in this context, may serve as a powerful problem frame but appear less frequently as a standalone solution because solutions typically signal a clear policy direction or ideological commitment. The distinction will be explored further in the subsequent section of frame combinations.

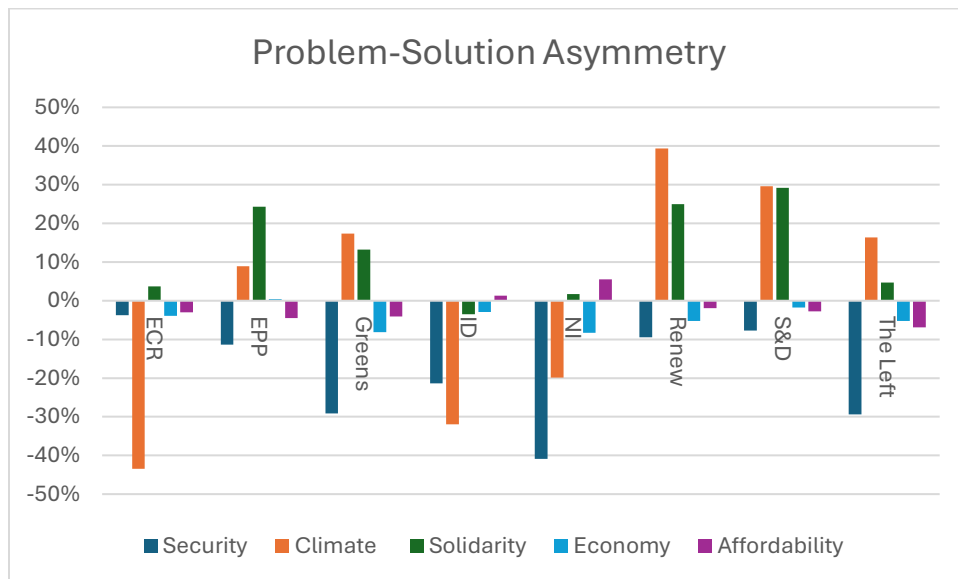


Figure 5. The graph shows how each group tends to invoke frames, whether to outline certain problems or to justify particular solutions.

In contrast, two frames – climate and solidarity, are more frequently invoked as solutions rather than problems. Climate framing appears in 408 solution compared to 348 problem instances, indicating a moderate, but noticeable preference for presenting climate as a solution-oriented frame. Solidarity, however, shows the most striking imbalance, with 215 solution compared to only 52 problem instances. This makes it the most solution-oriented frame by a significant margin. This pattern is not particularly surprising given the nature of solidarity.

Unlike other frames, solidarity is inherently action-oriented and is more naturally expressed through calls for collective effort, cooperation and shared responsibility. It is commonly associated with statements such as “we must act together” or “joint measures are necessary”, which clearly align with solution-oriented discourse. While a lack of solidarity can indeed be framed as a problem, this occurs less frequently in practice.

In the context of the energy crisis following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, solidarity was predominantly framed as a solution, particularly in relation to joint actions such as shared energy procurement, coordinated gas storage, and collective efforts to reduce dependence on Russian energy imports. These policy responses were both novel and urgent, which likely contributed to the strong emphasis on solidarity as a solution rather than as a problem. Furthermore, solidarity differs from other frames in that it does not require a directly corresponding problem frame to be invoked. In many cases, frames operate as two sides of the same coin: a problem is identified, and a solution within the same frame is proposed. For example, rising energy prices (affordability problem) are addressed through subsidies or price caps (affordability solution). However, solidarity does not follow this mirrored structure as strictly. It can be invoked as a complementary solution alongside other frames without requiring an explicit “lack of solidarity” problem. For instance, a proposal for a coordinated European transition to renewable energy may primarily reflect a climate frame, but if it emphasizes joint action, it simultaneously invokes solidarity. While such a proposal could theoretically stem from criticism of insufficient coordination, this is not a necessary condition for solidarity to appear. In contrast, it would be less common for a speaker to propose affordability-based solutions without first identifying affordability as a problem.

Turning to party-level asymmetries, all political groups invoke security more frequently as a problem than as a solution. However, the degree of this asymmetry varies considerably across parties. Conservatives show the smallest gap, with a problem–solution ratio of approximately -4%, indicating a relatively balanced use of security framing. This aligns with their strong emphasis on security, support for Ukraine, and opposition to Russian influence. Liberals and Social Democrats display similar patterns, reflecting their shared stance on reducing dependence on Russian energy and criticizing Russia’s role in the crisis. Although their broader policy approaches differ, they converge on the importance of energy security and diversification. Christian Democrats, somewhat surprisingly, show a slightly less problem-oriented pattern despite their comparable emphasis on energy independence. The far-right occupies a middle position, while the Greens and The Left exhibit more pronounced asymmetries, with security being significantly more problem-oriented. For the Greens, this may indicate that security is used primarily to support climate arguments rather than as a central policy focus. The Left, given its more divided stance on geopolitical issues, as well as controversial stances on Ukraine war, may emphasize security risks without consistently aligning on corresponding solutions. Non-attached members show the strongest asymmetry (-41%), suggesting that security is rarely developed into concrete policy proposals within this group.

In the case of climate framing, the results are somewhat unexpected. While the Greens do show a positive ratio, they are not the most solution-oriented group, not even the second most oriented. Instead, Renew leads with a significantly higher positive ratio (39%), indicating a strong emphasis on climate solutions, particularly in promoting renewable energy. This suggests that climate may function more as a forward-looking policy tool rather than a diagnostic frame within this group. S&D follows a similar pattern, reinforcing the importance of clean energy transitions. The Left aligns more closely with the Greens, also emphasizing solutions over problems. Even the EPP shows a moderately positive ratio. In contrast, ECR displays a strongly negative ratio (-43%), indicating that climate is used far more often as a problem than as a solution. This finding is particularly important, as it suggests that although ECR frequently invokes climate frames, it may do so primarily to critique existing policies rather than to advocate for green solutions.

Regarding solidarity, all parties except ID exhibit positive ratios, confirming their strong association with solution-oriented discourse. ID's negative ratio may reflect a more critical stance toward collective European approaches. Meanwhile, mainstream parties show consistently high positive ratios, reinforcing the role of solidarity as a key policy response. Finally, economy and affordability display relatively balanced patterns across parties. The EPP stands out with a perfectly balanced ratio (0%) in economic framing, suggesting equal emphasis on diagnosing and addressing economic issues. Other parties show slight negative ratios, indicating a marginal tendency toward problem framing. Affordability follows a similar pattern, although The Left exhibits the strongest negative ratio, which may reflect a focus on critique rather than policy proposals. In contrast, ID and non-attached members show slightly positive ratios, possibly indicating a more populist emphasis on proposing measures aimed at protecting consumers.

Building on this problem–solution analysis, it is next important to finally look into frame combinations, that is, how frames interact with each other within a single speech and what combinations are most often used. Rather than appearing in isolation, frames are often combined to construct more complex and persuasive arguments, linking issues such as security, affordability, and climate. Political parties have used all kinds of different frame combinations, and listing them all here would obviously be too difficult and analytically confusing. Therefore, it is necessary to extract only the main combinations that are most frequently invoked by parties. If no clear combinations stand out from the rest, then parties should be labeled as having a mixed and diverse record, invoking relatively random frame combinations.

To sum up, Renew and EPP invoke very similar problem combinations, both often combining security with economy as the most frequently used frame pairing. At the same time, both also tend to include affordability as a third pillar in speeches already structured around the economy–security nexus. Greens, on the other hand, in their problem framing mostly invoke security and climate, as opposed to Liberals and Christian Democrats, who

clearly prioritize more material frames. ECR here appears somewhat as a middle ground, as they very often combine security with climate, but at the same time they also have a comparable number of speeches that include economy alongside these two pillars. A similar situation can be observed with ID, which most often uses economy in combination with either climate or security, although here economy appears to be more central than security. The Left mostly invokes the two material frames -affordability and economy, although climate is also frequently aligned, sometimes even replacing economy in these combinations. NI displays a very diverse pattern of frame combinations, making it difficult to distinguish a dominant pairing, although the most prominent still appears to be affordability and economy, with climate to a lesser extent aligning with these two. S&D emerges as the most difficult case to evaluate, as it is clearly the most diverse. Social Democrats appear to use the widest range of combinations, which may be explained by the broad and far-reaching nature of their ideology. They tend to prioritize affordability and climate, but at the same time, especially in the context of war, security also becomes highly relevant, while solidarity, as mentioned previously, is extremely prominent, and economy remains an important component as well. When it comes to solutions, however, a larger number of parties display mixed frame combinations. This includes S&D, unsurprisingly, but also Renew, ECR, and EPP. The Greens stand out as the only mainstream party where the same security–climate nexus clearly dominates the discourse in solution framing as well. The Left and NI largely mirror their problem combinations in the solution dimension, with the affordability–economy nexus remaining dominant. ID, on the other hand, stands out as having a dominant security–economy nexus in its solution combinations.

Now tendencies of frame usage among the political groups, including the preference of master frame and frame selection for problems and solutions are much clearer. However, while these findings appear extremely useful for understanding which frames and how often groups incorporate them in representative speeches, a lot remains unanswered. The numbers and charts do not fully define the true strategic trajectories applied by the parties. They present the skeleton, but lack the body – they showcase overview, but lack depth. To dive deeper into framing strategies of each political power, the research now moves from quantitative findings to qualitative. The following results will showcase how political groups actually form frames, how they construct and portray reality.

6. *Qualitative findings*

6.1. Security-Energy Nexus

Firstly, let's outline a comparative examination of how political groups in the Parliament frame the security–energy nexus, with particular attention to problem construction, blame attribution, and competing understandings of what security actually means. This analysis highlights how shared concerns of dependence, vulnerability, danger and negative influence, are interpreted through distinct ideological lenses, ultimately producing different diagnoses of the crisis and, by extension, different pathways toward “securing” Europe’s energy future. The convergence and divergence is what to be looked at the most.

Security is perceived differently across EP’s political spectrum, however, once again there is a core difference between mainstream and fringe groups that cannot be overlooked. Across the mainstream parties there is a shared core understanding of the energy–security nexus centered on Russia as the primary source of threat. Despite important differences in emphasis, tone, and policy solutions, these parties converge in identifying European dependence on Russian fossil fuels as the fundamental vulnerability causing the current energy crisis. In this common framing, the Russian invasion of Ukraine represents not only a geopolitical rupture but also a moment of confirmation: it exposes the risks of long-standing energy interdependence and transforms energy policy into a matter of urgent security concern.³²

Within this shared perspective, energy security is defined through a combination of strategic autonomy and supply reliability. Dependence on Russian oil and gas is portrayed as inherently dangerous because it ties European stability to a hostile and revisionist actor. Russia is consistently constructed as both an unreliable supplier and an active geopolitical adversary, capable of weaponizing energy flows through supply disruptions, price manipulation, and political coercion. As a result, the security of supply is no longer understood as a purely economic or technical issue, but as deeply embedded in geopolitical relations. The risk is not only that energy may become scarce or expensive, but that it can be deliberately used against Europe.³³

A second key element of this shared securitization logic is the moral and strategic linkage between energy imports and the war in Ukraine. Across all mainstream groups, there is a recurring argument that European purchases of Russian fossil fuels directly or indirectly finance Russia’s military aggression. This transforms energy dependence into a matter of complicity, elevating the reduction of imports from a policy preference to a

³² Bas Eickhout, statement in European Parliament debate. *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “REPowerEU chapters in recovery and resilience plans (debate).” Brussels, November 9, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-11-09-ITM-014_EN.html.

³³ Ryszard Antoni Legutko, statement in European Parliament debate. *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia’s military threat against Ukraine (debate).” Strasbourg, February 16, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-02-16-ITM-004_EN.html

strategic and ethical aspect. Energy policy thus becomes inseparable from foreign policy: reducing reliance on Russian energy is framed as necessary both to weaken Russia's capacity to wage war and to uphold European security and values.³⁴

At the level of problem attribution, mainstream parties also broadly agree that this vulnerability is the result of past policy choices. Long-standing reliance on Russian energy, often justified by assumptions about mutual economic interdependence and stability, is now widely portrayed as a strategic miscalculation. Infrastructure projects such as Nord Stream are implicitly or explicitly criticized as emblematic of this flawed approach, reflecting a broader failure to anticipate the geopolitical risks of dependency. While the degree of internal critique varies between parties, there is a general acknowledgment that European energy policy contributed to the current crisis by enabling excessive reliance on a single external supplier.³⁵

In sum, mainstream parties share a common narrative in which Russia constitutes the central “energy enemy” and dependence on Russian fossil fuels is the core problem. The securitization of energy is driven by two mutually reinforcing arguments: first, that reliance on Russia undermines the stability and reliability of energy supply, and second, that it strengthens a hostile actor engaged in military aggression against Ukraine. This dual framing, combining material vulnerability with moral responsibility, forms the foundation upon which different parties build their distinct policy responses, which diverge more clearly in their proposed solutions than in their diagnosis of the problem itself.

In contrast to the relative coherence observed among mainstream political groups, the fringe factions in the European Parliament present a far more fragmented and contested understanding of the relationship between energy security and Russia. While mainstream parties converge in identifying Russia as the central source of energy insecurity and a clear geopolitical adversary, fringe actors diverge both in how they interpret Russia's role and in whether dependence on Russian energy constitutes a security threat at all. A defining feature across these groups is the absence of a stable and universally shared securitization of Russia. Although elements of the mainstream narrative are present, particularly in some NI and Left speeches that condemn Russian aggression and support reducing dependency, these positions coexist with alternative interpretations that significantly dilute

³⁴ Morten Petersen, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “The REPowerEU Plan: European solidarity and energy security in face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including the recent cuts of gas supply to Poland and Bulgaria (debate),” Brussels, May 19, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-19-ITM-005_EN.html.

³⁵ Iratxe García Pérez, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Debriefing of the European Council meeting in Paris on 10 March 2022 – Preparation of the European Council meeting 24–25 March 2022 (debate),” Brussels, March 23, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-23-ITM-016_EN.html; Pilar del Castillo Vera, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate),” Strasbourg, March 8, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html

or even reject the framing of Russia as the primary “energy enemy.” As a result, the link between Russian energy and European insecurity becomes conditional, contested, and often subordinated to other concerns.³⁶

Within the ID group, this manifests as a relatively weak and inconsistent securitization of Russia. While dependence on Russian energy is occasionally acknowledged in speeches here and there,³⁷ it is not systematically framed as a pressing geopolitical threat. Instead, the focus shifts toward the economic consequences of EU policy responses, particularly sanctions and energy transition. Russia’s role in the crisis is therefore often downplayed in favour of a narrative that emphasizes internal policy failure. In this framing, the main source of insecurity is not external dependence on a hostile actor, but the European Union’s own decisions, which are portrayed as having triggered price increases, industrial decline, and social hardship. Consequently, Russia is not consistently constructed as an adversary, and energy relations with Russia are sometimes implicitly normalized as economically rational or even necessary.³⁸

The Left group exhibits an even more pronounced internal division regarding Russia’s role in the energy–security nexus. On one hand, a segment of the group aligns with the mainstream position, recognizing Russian aggression, supporting Ukraine, and advocating for the phase-out of Russian fossil fuels.³⁹ On the other hand, a substantial portion advances a fundamentally different interpretation, in which responsibility for the crisis is distributed across a broader geopolitical system that includes the European Union, the United States, and NATO. In this alternative framing, Russia is not the sole or even primary source of insecurity; rather, the war and the energy crisis are seen as products of systemic geopolitical competition and militarization. It is Western actors that are blamed for igniting war and hostilities towards Russia for imperial goals. This perspective often leads to heavy scepticism towards sanctions and the portrayal of continued access to Russian energy as a pragmatic,

³⁶ Pernando Barrena Arza, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “The Power of the EU – Joint European Action for More Affordable, Secure and Sustainable Energy (debate),” Brussels, March 24, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-24-ITM-002_EN.html; Kostas Papadakis, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “The Social and Economic Consequences for the EU of the Russian War in Ukraine – Reinforcing the EU’s Capacity to Act (debate),” Strasbourg, May 4, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-04-ITM-004_EN.html.

³⁷ Marco Zanni, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Conclusions of the European Council Meeting of 24–25 March 2022: Including the Latest Developments of the War against Ukraine and the EU Sanctions against Russia and Their Implementation (debate),” Strasbourg, April 6, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-04-06-ITM-003_EN.html.

³⁸ Tom Vandendriessche, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Keep the Bills Down: Social and Economic Consequences of the War in Ukraine and the Introduction of a Windfall Tax (debate),” Strasbourg, October 18, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-10-18-ITM-002_EN.html.

³⁹ Nikolaj Villumsen, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia’s military threat against Ukraine (debate),” Strasbourg, February 16, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-02-16-ITM-004_EN.html

economically preferable, secure or even moral option. As a result, the securitization of Russia is both partial and contested, coexisting with narratives that relativize or challenge the dominant geopolitical interpretation.⁴⁰

Among Non-Attached members, this fragmentation is even more pronounced. The group encompasses both positions that closely mirror mainstream securitization, depicting Russia as an unreliable supplier and supporting diversification away from Russian energy,⁴¹ and positions that directly oppose it. In the latter case, Russia is not primarily framed as a threat; instead, EU sanctions and policy choices are identified as the main drivers of insecurity. Energy security is redefined in predominantly socio-economic terms, centered on affordability, price stability, and the immediate well-being of citizens. Within this logic, Russian energy can be reframed as a stabilizing factor, offering relatively cheap and reliable supply in contrast to more expensive alternatives such as liquefied natural gas imports. This leads to arguments in favour of maintaining or even restoring energy ties with Russia, at least in the short term, as a means of protecting domestic economies.⁴²

Across these fringe groups, a common pattern emerges: the displacement or relativization of Russia as the central security threat. While not universally rejected, the idea that dependence on Russian energy constitutes a fundamental danger to European security is no longer taken for granted. Instead, it competes with alternative problem definitions that prioritize economic stability, critique EU governance, or situate the crisis within a broader geopolitical or systemic context. This results in a fundamentally different securitization logic from that of mainstream parties. Rather than framing energy dependence on Russia as an urgent geopolitical and moral issue requiring rapid disengagement, fringe actors frequently reinterpret or challenge this narrative, emphasizing the costs, trade-offs, and unintended consequences of such a strategy.⁴³

⁴⁰ Clare Daly statement in European Parliament debate, “Conclusions of the European Council Meeting of 24–25 March 2022: Including the Latest Developments of the War against Ukraine and the EU Sanctions against Russia and Their Implementation (debate),” Strasbourg, April 6, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-04-06-ITM-003_EN.html; Mick Wallace statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia’s military threat against Ukraine (debate).” Strasbourg, February 16, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-02-16-ITM-004_EN.html

⁴¹ Kostas Papadakis, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “The Social and Economic Consequences for the EU of the Russian War in Ukraine – Reinforcing the EU’s Capacity to Act (debate),” Strasbourg, May 4, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-04-ITM-004_EN.html.

⁴² Balázs Hidvéghi, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Debriefing of the European Council meeting in Paris on 10 March 2022 - Preparation of the European Council meeting 24-25 March 2022 (debate).” Brussels. March 23, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-23-ITM-016_EN.html

⁴³ Elnök Úr, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia’s military threat against Ukraine (debate).” Strasbourg, February 16, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-02-16-ITM-004_EN.html; Mick Wallace, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “The surge in commodity and input prices in the agricultural sector (G 001004/2021 — B9 0005/2022).” Strasbourg, February 17, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-02-17-ITM-016-02_EN.html

In sum, the divide between mainstream and fringe factions is best understood not as a disagreement over policy instruments, but as a fundamental clash in how energy security itself is conceptualized. Mainstream parties construct a coherent and largely uncontested securitization of Russia, framing dependence on Russian energy as an urgent geopolitical and moral threat that necessitates rapid and structural disengagement. In contrast, fringe actors destabilize this consensus by fragmenting both the identification of threats and the meaning of security: Russia is no longer consistently positioned as the central adversary, but is instead relativized, de-centered, or embedded within broader critiques of EU policy, global power relations, or economic governance. As a result, while mainstream discourse transforms energy policy into a unified project of strategic autonomy and geopolitical resilience, fringe perspectives recast it as a contested terrain where security competes with affordability, sovereignty, and systemic critique.

And yet, while mainstream political groups converge in identifying Russia as the central source of energy insecurity, there are still notable differences that reveal distinct conceptualizations of what energy security entails and how it should be achieved. These differences are not marginal, but reflect varying priorities regarding the relative importance of geopolitical risk, socioeconomic stability, market structure, and the long-term transformation of the energy system.

EPP presents the most restrained and comparatively neutral framing among the mainstream groups. Its discourse acknowledges the strategic miscalculation underlying Europe's past reliance on Russian energy, particularly the assumption that economic interdependence would foster political stability, but does not develop a highly elaborated or ideologically distinctive interpretation beyond this core diagnosis. The EPP's approach remains relatively pragmatic, combining recognition of geopolitical vulnerability with an implicit concern for economic stability. Compared to other groups, its argumentation is less expansive and less normatively driven, focusing more on correcting past dependency and ensuring reliable supply than on redefining the broader structure of the energy system.⁴⁴

In contrast, the Socdems articulate a more multidimensional understanding of energy security by explicitly integrating its socioeconomic consequences. While they share the core assumption that dependence on Russian energy constitutes a geopolitical vulnerability, they place significantly greater emphasis on how this vulnerability translates into internal instability through rising energy prices, inflation, and social inequality. A key element of their framing is the notion that Russia actively weaponizes energy not only by threatening supply, but by

⁴⁴ Andrius Kubilius, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Preparation of the European Council meeting of 20–21 October 2022 (debate)." Strasbourg, October 19, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-10-19-ITM-003_EN.html

manipulating prices to generate broader economic disruption. As a result, energy security is constructed as a deeply intertwined geopolitical and social issue, where external threats and internal resilience are inseparable.⁴⁵

Renew Europe, by contrast, advances a more structurally transformative and forward-looking interpretation. While strongly aligned with the mainstream securitization of Russia, Renew shifts the focus from the specific problem of Russian dependence to the broader issue of fossil fuel dependency as such. In this framing, insecurity is not limited to one supplier but is inherent to reliance on fossil fuels, which are associated with authoritarian regimes and geopolitical volatility. Renewable energy is therefore elevated from a policy option to the central solution, presented as the only viable path to achieving genuine strategic autonomy. Unlike S&D, which balances transformation with short-term considerations, or EPP, which prioritizes stability, Renew's logic is more linear and systemic: security concerns drive the argument, and the green transition emerges as the necessary and singular response. This is further reinforced by a strong emphasis on deeper European integration, which is portrayed as essential for delivering energy security.⁴⁶

The Greens push this logic even further by embedding energy security within a comprehensive climate–security nexus. For the Greens, fossil fuels are not only a source of geopolitical vulnerability but the fundamental driver of insecurity across multiple dimensions, including environmental degradation, economic instability, and conflict. This leads to the most radical redefinition of the problem among mainstream groups: insecurity is not simply caused by dependence on Russian energy, but by the continued use of fossil fuels altogether. Unlike Renew, however, the Greens extend this critique to nuclear energy, which they reject as a viable solution due to its associated geopolitical dependencies and security risks. This positions the Greens as the most ideologically consistent and far-reaching in their approach, advocating a complete transformation of the energy system as a prerequisite for security.⁴⁷

Finally, the Conservatives introduce a distinct variation by broadening the scope of security concerns beyond Russia to include structural dependencies within the global economy. While they share the mainstream critique of reliance on Russian energy, ECR places strong emphasis on the unintended consequences of EU climate policy, arguing that the Green Deal and rapid decarbonization risk creating new forms of dependency-

⁴⁵ Marek Paweł Balt, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “EU response to the increase in energy prices in Europe (debate).” Strasbourg, September 13, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-09-13-ITM-015_EN.html

⁴⁶ Morten Petersen, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “The REPowerEU Plan: European solidarity and energy security in face of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, including the recent cuts of gas supply to Poland and Bulgaria (debate).” Brussels, May 19, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-19-ITM-005_EN.html

⁴⁷ Thomas Waltz, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia’s military threat against Ukraine (debate).” Strasbourg, February 16, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-02-16-ITM-004_EN.html

particularly on China for renewable technologies and critical materials. This results in a more sceptical and geopolitically expansive framing, where energy insecurity is understood not only in terms of past reliance on Russia but also in terms of future vulnerabilities embedded in global supply chains. In contrast to Renew and the Greens, ECR is therefore less focused on accelerating the energy transition and more concerned with preserving sovereignty and avoiding “dependency substitution.”⁴⁸

Taken together, these differences reveal that the apparent consensus among mainstream parties masks a set of competing logics. EPP represents a relatively pragmatic and stabilizing approach; S&D integrates social resilience into the security framework; Renew advances a market-driven and integrationist vision centered on renewables; the Greens articulate a comprehensive climate–security paradigm; and ECR emphasizes sovereignty and the risks of new global dependencies. While all share the same core diagnosis of Russian energy dependence as a strategic vulnerability, they diverge significantly in how they define the broader problem and, consequently, in the pathways they propose to resolve it.

To understand how non-mainstream, fringe factions perceive security, we must move away a bit from geopolitical terms. In contrast to mainstream parties, which construct energy security primarily in said geopolitics, fringe factions advance alternative conceptions of security that shift the focus towards economic stability, systemic structures, and immediate societal resilience. While these approaches diverge significantly from the dominant securitization of external threats, they nonetheless remain deeply security-oriented, redefining insecurity in ways that prioritize different referent objects and causal mechanisms.

For ID, energy security is fundamentally understood through the lens of economic stability and national control. While, again, the group acknowledges Europe’s past dependence on Russian energy, this dependency is not consistently elevated to the level of an existential geopolitical threat. Instead, insecurity is constructed primarily as the result of internal policy failures at the EU level, including sanctions, climate measures, and regulatory interventions. Within this framework, rising energy prices, inflation, industrial decline, and the risk of recession are not treated as secondary economic side-effects, but as the core manifestations of insecurity itself! Economic disruption is thus explicitly securitized: policies that undermine affordability and industrial capacity are portrayed as direct threats to societal stability and national well-being. This leads to a reversal of mainstream logic, in which measures such as sanctions are not seen as enhancing security, but as actively producing it. Closely linked to this is a strong emphasis on national sovereignty, where control over energy policy becomes a key

⁴⁸ Grzegorz Tobiszowski, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate).” Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026.
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html

condition for ensuring security, and EU-level coordination is viewed as a potential source of vulnerability rather than protection.⁴⁹

The Left advances a structurally distinct understanding of energy security, rooted in a critique of systemic economic and geopolitical dynamics. Rather than locating insecurity primarily in external actors (although as said previously, a significant portion is allocated to the blame of the US and NATO), energy insecurity is framed as an outcome of neoliberal governance, market liberalization and the influence of corporate actors. In this perspective, security is not simply about securing supply or reducing dependence, but about transforming the underlying system that produces vulnerability. Corporate power and profit-driven energy markets are constructed as key sources of insecurity, particularly in times of crisis, where they are seen to exploit volatility and exacerbate inequality. This results in a form of structural securitization, where the referent object of security shifts towards democratic control, social justice, and public ownership. Energy security is thus understood as the capacity to shield societies from both geopolitical conflict and market-driven exploitation. At the same time, this framework is embedded within a broader critique of militarization and global power competition, further reinforcing the idea that insecurity is systemic rather than actor-specific.⁵⁰

For NI members, again, the perception of the energy–security nexus is the most fragmented, yet it consistently reveals a strong tendency to define security in terms of immediate socio-economic protection and pragmatic stability. While some NI members adopt a conventional geopolitical understanding similar to mainstream parties, a substantial portion advances an alternative logic in which security is primarily equated with affordability, price stability, and the protection of citizens from economic hardship. In this framing, secure energy systems are those that ensure reliable supply at manageable costs, regardless of the geopolitical origin of that supply. Economic pressures like rising prices, inflation and declining living standards, are therefore explicitly securitized as direct threats to societal cohesion and political stability. This leads to a pragmatic interpretation of energy security, where continued access to cheaper energy sources, including Russian imports, can be framed as contributing to stability rather than undermining it. At the same time, skepticism towards diversification reflects a broader concern that alternative dependencies may reproduce insecurity in different forms, particularly if they come at higher economic cost.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Aurélia Beigneux, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate).” Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html

⁵⁰ Fernando Barrena Arza, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “The Power of the EU – Joint European Action for More Affordable, Secure and Sustainable Energy (debate).” Brussels, March 24, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-24-ITM-002_EN.html

⁵¹ Milan Uhrík, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate).” Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html.

Taken together, these perspectives demonstrate that fringe factions do not reject the energy–security nexus, but fundamentally redefine its core logic. Instead of prioritizing geopolitical autonomy and external threat mitigation, they shift the focus towards economic resilience, systemic transformation, and immediate societal stability. Security, in these accounts, is not diminished but relocated: from the realm of strategic confrontation to that of economic protection, structural reform, and social safeguarding.

Now that we uncovered how groups perceive security as such, we can turn to how these differences in framing translate into concrete policy proposals, revealing more clearly where political groups converge and where they diverge in their preferred solutions to the energy–security crisis. Christian Democrats advance the most immediate and operationally focused response, prioritizing the rapid reduction of dependence on Russian fossil fuels through a broad mix of short-term and long-term instruments. Its approach is characterized by urgency and pragmatism: diversification of supply, expansion of liquefied natural gas imports, and strengthened infrastructure are treated as essential tools for quickly restoring stability. Temporary measures, including increased coal usage and intra-EU energy sharing, are accepted as necessary trade-offs under crisis conditions. At the same time, EPP assigns a central long-term role to nuclear energy as a stable and domestically controllable source, while treating renewables as important but insufficiently responsive to immediate security needs.⁵²

In contrast, S&D places less emphasis on rapid substitution and instead prioritize structural transformation aimed at achieving long-term energy sovereignty. While they do not reject diversification outright, it is clearly subordinated to systemic solutions such as the expansion of renewables, the development of a fully integrated European energy market, and the institutionalization of joint procurement mechanisms. Compared to the EPP, S&D draw clearer boundaries around acceptable policy options – coal is excluded and nuclear energy remains marginal, reflecting a more constrained and sustainability-oriented security logic that integrates socioeconomic considerations with long-term resilience.⁵³

Renew occupies a distinct position by pushing the transformative logic further and more consistently than either EPP or S&D. While it acknowledges short-term diversification measures, these are explicitly subordinated to the overarching objective of eliminating fossil fuel dependence altogether, which is identified as the root cause of insecurity. Liberals thus differ from the EPP’s pragmatic mix and from S&D’s more balanced approach by presenting renewable energy not simply as a priority, but as the only viable pathway to achieving genuine security

⁵² Sandra Kalniete, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “The Social and Economic Consequences for the EU of the Russian War in Ukraine – Reinforcing the EU’s Capacity to Act (debate),” Strasbourg, May 4, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-04-ITM-004_EN.html

⁵³ Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Statement in Verbatim report of proceedings, “REPowerEU chapters in recovery and resilience plans (debate).” Brussels, November 9, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-11-09-ITM-014_EN.html

and strategic autonomy. This results in a more linear and uncompromising policy orientation, where transitional measures risk being seen as counterproductive if they reproduce new dependencies.⁵⁴ At the same time, Renew places a stronger emphasis than both EPP and S&D on deepening European integration as a core component of energy security, advocating for the completion of the Energy Union, removal of national barriers, and expansion of cross-border coordination mechanisms. Consequently, while all three groups share the objective of reducing dependence on Russia, they diverge significantly in how this goal should be achieved: the EPP prioritizes speed and flexibility, S&D emphasizes structured and socially embedded transformation, and Renew advances a systemic, integration-driven transition centered on the elimination of fossil fuel dependence.⁵⁵

Speaking on fossil fuel dependence, we must extend our comparison by once again bringing in the Greens. They advance the most uncompromising and transformation-oriented policy agenda among all groups. While Greens share with others the objective of eliminating dependence on Russian energy, they reject the broader logic of substitution that underpins EPP, S&D and, albeit more cautiously, Renew proposals. Instead of replacing Russian fossil fuels with alternative external suppliers, the Greens advocate for a direct and accelerated transition away from fossil fuels altogether, framing this not only as a strategic necessity but as a moral imperative. Short-term stabilization measures are acknowledged but consistently subordinated to systemic change, reinforcing a policy hierarchy in which immediate crisis management must not undermine long-term transformation. In contrast to Renew, where security concerns drive the argument and renewables emerge as the solution, the Greens reverse this logic: decarbonization constitutes the primary objective, while energy security operates as a reinforcing justification. This results in a policy framework where renewable energy becomes the cornerstone of both climate and security strategy, simultaneously addressing geopolitical vulnerability, environmental sustainability and, implicitly, economic stability.⁵⁶

Conservatives, by contrast, articulate a policy approach grounded in pragmatism, sequencing, and economic realism. While formally supporting the reduction of dependence on Russian energy, ECR rejects the feasibility and desirability of rapid decarbonization, arguing instead for a staged approach in which immediate stability and affordability take precedence. This is reflected in a broad acceptance and even endorsement of fossil

⁵⁴ Nicola Danti, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “The REPowerEU Plan: European solidarity and energy security in face of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, including the recent cuts of gas supply to Poland and Bulgaria (debate).” Brussels, May 19, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-19-ITM-005_EN.html

⁵⁵ Martin Hojsík, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate).” Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html.

⁵⁶ Bas Eickhout, Statement in Verbatim report of proceedings, “REPowerEU chapters in recovery and resilience plans (debate).” Brussels, November 9, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-11-09-ITM-014_EN.html.

fuels such as coal and liquefied natural gas, alongside strong support for nuclear energy as reliable components of the energy mix. Unlike the Greens or Renew, which view transformation as the primary pathway to security, ECR reverses the sequencing: security must first be ensured through stable and controllable energy sources, creating the conditions for a gradual transition at a later stage. Economic stability is explicitly securitized within this framework, with rising prices, industrial decline, and inflation treated as direct threats to national resilience and competitiveness. This produces a policy logic that prioritizes continuity over disruption and control over rapid change. Additionally, ECR introduces a strong concern with avoiding new external dependencies, particularly in relation to renewable technologies, reinforcing its preference for diversification and domestic capacity over accelerated transformation.⁵⁷

Finally, turning to the remaining fringe factions, their policy proposals further illustrate how alternative security logics translate into distinct policy orientations. Advances a relatively clear, though narrowly defined, policy framework centered on sovereignty and industrial stability. ID's strongest and most consistent proposal is the prioritization of nuclear energy, which is elevated beyond a mere policy option to a cornerstone of energy security. Nuclear power is framed not only as reliable and low-carbon, but as a guarantor of technological independence and national control, directly linking energy policy to broader notions of sovereignty.⁵⁸ At the same time, ID expresses deep scepticism towards renewable energy, portraying it as unreliable, economically burdensome, and geopolitically risky due to external supply chain dependencies, particularly on China. While this concern overlaps partially with ECR's warnings about dependency substitution, ID's policy stance is less embedded in a comprehensive strategic framework and more closely tied to its broader rejection of EU climate policies.⁵⁹ As a result, its solutions reflect a securitization of economic and industrial resilience, where security is achieved through stable, domestically controllable energy sources and the avoidance of disruptive transitions.

The Left, by contrast, presents a more fragmented and internally contested set of policy proposals, reflecting its broader structural understanding of energy security. On one level, there is a relatively strong emphasis on renewable energy as the long-term solution, framed in terms of achieving independence from both Russian and American fossil fuels. This dual rejection of external dependency distinguishes The Left from other groups, as it explicitly challenges substitution strategies and instead promotes a more autonomous and sustainable

⁵⁷ Jessica Stegrud and Grzegorz Tobiszowski, statements in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate)." Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html

⁵⁸ Sylvia Limmer, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Batteries and waste batteries (debate)." Strasbourg, March 9, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-09-ITM-010_EN.html

⁵⁹ Paolo Borchia, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate)." Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html

energy system. However, this position coexists with significant internal divergence. Some members oppose rapid disengagement from Russian energy or express scepticism towards sanctions, framing continued access to cheaper energy sources as a pragmatic way to protect living standards and economic stability.⁶⁰ Beyond the question of supply, The Left's policy proposals are strongly shaped by its securitization of social justice and systemic inequality. Energy security is linked to public control, redistribution, and the regulation of corporate power, leading to proposals such as taxing excess profits, expanding state involvement in energy systems, and supporting community-based renewable models. Unlike ID, where economic stability is framed in national and industrial terms, The Left embeds it within a broader critique of market structures, positioning security as the protection of society from both external shocks and internal economic exploitation.⁶¹

Among Non-Attached members, policy proposals are the most heterogeneous and lack a coherent strategic direction, yet they consistently reflect a securitization of immediate stability and affordability. Positions range from support for mainstream measures, such as sanctions and diversification,⁶² to more alternative approaches that prioritize maintaining economic ties, avoiding escalation, or relying on all available energy sources, including nuclear power. Despite this diversity, a common thread can be identified in the emphasis on protecting citizens from rising energy costs and ensuring uninterrupted supply. Policy choices are therefore evaluated primarily through their short-term socio-economic impact, rather than their contribution to long-term transformation or geopolitical strategy. This leads to a pragmatic and often ad hoc approach, where security is equated with the capacity to maintain affordable and reliable energy in the present, even if this entails trade-offs that other groups would consider strategically problematic.⁶³

To sum up, across the political spectrum, energy security is never rejected, but fundamentally reinterpreted through different priorities and reference points. Mainstream factions largely converge in framing security as geopolitical resilience and strategic autonomy, centered on reducing external dependency, particularly on Russia,

⁶⁰ Clare Daly statement in European Parliament debate, "Conclusions of the European Council Meeting of 24–25 March 2022: Including the Latest Developments of the War against Ukraine and the EU Sanctions against Russia and Their Implementation (debate)," Strasbourg, April 6, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-04-06-ITM-003_EN.html; Mick Wallace statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military threat against Ukraine (debate)," Strasbourg, February 16, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-02-16-ITM-004_EN.html

⁶¹ Marc Botenga and Sira Rego, statements in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate)," Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html.

⁶² Kostas Papadakis, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "The Social and Economic Consequences for the EU of the Russian War in Ukraine – Reinforcing the EU's Capacity to Act (debate)," Strasbourg, May 4, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-04-ITM-004_EN.html

⁶³ Milan Uhrík, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate)," Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html.

through a mix of diversification, integration, and, to varying degrees, structural transformation. In contrast, fringe groups shift the locus of security towards economic stability, sovereignty, and systemic critique: for ID and parts of NI, security is primarily the protection of national economies and citizens from price shocks and instability, while The Left embeds security within broader concerns of social justice, public control, and structural inequalities. As a result, the energy–security nexus emerges not as a single shared concept, but as a contested field in which security is consistently invoked, yet differently defined, ranging from geopolitical independence to economic protection and systemic transformation.

6.2. *Climate-Energy Nexus*

Compared to the previous section on security, the following chapter on the climate–energy nexus adopts a more concise approach, as the perception of climate issues and related policies appears both narrower and more structured. Unlike the multifaceted and highly contested concept of security (where meanings, threats, and responsibilities were subject to significant interpretation), the climate frame presents a more clearly defined field of political discourse. As a result, parliamentary speeches are more straightforward to interpret, and patterns of alignment emerge more clearly. Most notably, the analysis reveals a different axis of division than in the security case. While the security discourse was structured around a divide between mainstream and fringe parties, reflecting disagreements over threat perception and responsibility, the climate–energy nexus is instead organized along ideological lines. In other words, instead of dividing analysis into mainstream vs fringe, in this chapter the two pillars will be left vs right. The key distinction lies between right-wing and left-wing parties, whose positions diverge significantly in both their understanding of the problem and proposed responses. Consequently, unlike in the previous section, far-right (ID) and far-left (The Left) factions are not analytically grouped together. Rather, the division runs through the center of the political spectrum itself. In this context, the Renew, despite its centrist positioning, aligns A LOT more closely with left-leaning parties in its approach to climate-energy nexus, so analytically liberals-centrists will be examined alongside the left side. The right side, therefore, starts from EPP.

Across the right-wing spectrum, the climate–energy nexus is framed through a shared concern with economic stability, feasibility, and sovereignty; however, significant differences emerge in how strongly climate policy itself is problematized and to what extent decarbonization is treated as a viable objective. At the more moderate end, EPP articulates a pragmatic and balancing approach, in which climate change is recognized as a legitimate long-term challenge while the transition towards a greener energy system remains a strategic objective and a long term solution.⁶⁴ That being said, it is viewed as gradual. Christian Democrats consistently distinguish between temporal horizons, supporting decarbonization in principle but subordinating it to short-term stability

⁶⁴ Pilar del Castillo Vera, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Question Time (Commission) — Europe’s Energy Autonomy: The strategic importance of renewables and energy interconnections and efficiency.” Strasbourg, May 3, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-03-ITM-011_EN.html

concerns. In this context, the war in Ukraine serves as a critical point that effectively allows climate ambitions (in practice it is the expansion of renewables), to be politely postponed in favor of immediate energy security needs. Transitional solutions such as natural gas are therefore legitimized as necessary “bridge fuels,” while nuclear energy is elevated as a reliable, low-carbon cornerstone of the future energy mix.⁶⁵ Although renewable energy is not rejected, it is approached with caution, and emphasis is placed instead on complementary strategies such as energy efficiency, particularly in the building sector, as a more controlled and economically sustainable pathway toward emissions reduction.⁶⁶ In other words, fossil fuels, particularly LNG, are perceived as negatively affecting the environment, but as a necessary evil – as a temporary tool until the time the transition kicks in. The above used word “politely” reflects EPP’s general tone as it does not attack climate policies, only diplomatically tries to slow them down. This tone in speeches is necessary to highlight because it clearly distinguishes EPP from the remaining two right-wing factions. Their expressions are much less “neutral”.

ECR adopts a lot more critical and securitized stance, in which the climate policy itself becomes the central object of concern. In the quantitative section a somewhat unexpected pattern was presented: Conservatives dominated in the usage climate frame. While climate-related discourse does appear more than frequently in ECR speeches, its high frequency should not be interpreted as evidence of heightened concern for climate change, environmental degradation or energy-related emissions. On the contrary, climate frame is predominantly mobilized to construct green policies, rather than the climate crisis, as the primary problem. What this means is that EU’s climate agenda itself is portrayed as problematic, that is economically damaging, socially destabilizing, and strategically misguided, imposing disproportionate costs on households and undermining industrial competitiveness.⁶⁷ The war in Ukraine reinforces this framing by introducing a clear trade-off logic: Europe is depicted as incapable of simultaneously pursuing an ambitious green transition while responding to geopolitical conflict, as doing so would amount to “fighting two wars at once” and risking failure in both. Consequently, renewable energy is frequently criticized as unreliable, premature, and dependent on external actors, especially China, which dominates key renewable energy technologies such as solar panel and battery industry.⁶⁸ And since China is aligned with Russia, supporting it by purchasing these products then means green policies are

⁶⁵ Siegfried Mureșan, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Objection pursuant to Rule 111(3): Amending the Taxonomy Climate Delegated Act and the Taxonomy Disclosures Delegated Act (debate).” Strasbourg, July 5, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-07-05-ITM-014_EN.html

⁶⁶ Pernille Weiss, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Energy efficiency (recast) (debate).” Strasbourg, September 12, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-09-12-ITM-017_EN.html.

⁶⁷ Robert Roos, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022: including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation (debate).” Strasbourg, April 6, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-04-06-ITM-003_EN.html.

⁶⁸ Alexandr Vondra, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “EU response to the increase in energy prices in Europe (debate).” Strasbourg, September 13, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-09-13-ITM-015_EN.html

strengthening Russia. In contrast, nuclear energy is strongly promoted as a stable and climate-compatible alternative, while fossil fuels, including coal and gas, are re-legitimized as necessary components of a secure and affordable energy mix in the short to medium term.⁶⁹

This dynamic becomes even more pronounced in the discourse of ID, where scepticism transitions into outright opposition and the tone significantly becomes more confrontational, not only compared to EPP, but to ECR as well. Similarly to ECR, ID frequently invokes the climate frame, however, this frequent invocation once again does not signal concern for neither global warming nor environmental degradation. Rather, it reflects a discursive strategy in which climate policies themselves, particularly Green Deal, as well as carbon pricing mechanisms, are constructed as direct threats to economic stability and social welfare. Green policies are explicitly linked to inflation, rising energy prices, and declining living standards, with particular emphasis placed on their impact on ordinary citizens.⁷⁰ Unlike the more structured and policy-oriented critique advanced by ECR, ID's framing is less technocratic and more openly political, often attributing responsibility to European elites and portraying climate action as an ideologically driven project disconnected from economic realities. Renewable energy is not merely questioned but actively discredited as unreliable, inefficient, and strategically dangerous due to its dependence on foreign supply chains.⁷¹ At the same time, nuclear energy is elevated even more emphatically as a symbol of national sovereignty and technological strength, while fossil fuels are implicitly or explicitly defended as indispensable for maintaining economic stability.⁷²

Taken together, these positions reveal a clear ideological progression within the right-wing spectrum: from the EPP's conditional and managed support for decarbonization, through ECR's securitization of climate policy as an economic threat, to ID's overt rejection of the green transition as a whole. While all three groups prioritize stability, affordability, and sovereignty, they diverge sharply in whether climate change itself constitutes the central problem or whether the policies designed to address it are instead the primary source of insecurity. One last thing that is important to clarify here is that, despite scepticism to rejection of green politics, not once in any

⁶⁹ Beata Szydło, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate)." Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html.

⁷⁰ Jordan Bardella, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Preparation of the European Council meeting of 15 December 2022 (debate)." Strasbourg, December 14, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-12-14-ITM-003_EN.html

⁷¹ Paolo Borchia, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, "The REPowerEU Plan: European solidarity and energy security in face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including the recent cuts of gas supply to Poland and Bulgaria (debate)," Brussels, May 19, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-19-ITM-005_EN.html, Georg Mayer, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate)." Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html.

⁷² Gunnar Beck, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate)." Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html.

of the speeches there was any climate change denialism. Decarbonization or battling global warming was never rejected by any politicians during the analyzed period. They usually expressed support for decarbonization, but in their perception, it was nuclear energy that was supposed to solve the problem. Whether this perception is a general concern for the environment or simply a justification remains unclear, further research required.

In contrast to the linear progression observed among right-wing parties, which goes from moderate and pragmatic positions to increasingly confrontational and dismissive attitudes towards climate policy, the left-wing spectrum presents a more complex and less uniform configuration. While all factions on this side broadly support renewable energy and the objectives of the green transition, the extent, justification, and framing of this support vary significantly and do not follow a clear ideological progression. Rather than a simple intensification of a shared position, left-wing parties diverge in how they conceptualize the relationship between climate policy, economic structures, and social justice.

It is best to start off with Greens as they expectedly represent consistent and uncompromising position within the climate–energy nexus, constructing climate change as the central and overriding priority even in the context of a huge geopolitical crisis such as the Ukraine war. Unlike other factions, whose commitment to the energy transition is often moderated by short-term concerns, the Greens maintain a firm and uninterrupted support for decarbonization, treating renewable energy not only as a long-term objective but as an immediate and necessary solution to the ongoing crisis. In their framing, the war in Ukraine does not justify a postponement or recalibration of climate goals, rather, it enforces the urgency of abandoning fossil fuel dependence altogether.⁷³ Consequently, the Greens are the only group to consistently reject all forms of fossil fuel substitution, opposing both Russian imports and their replacement with alternative suppliers, and instead advocating for a rapid and comprehensive transition to renewable energy sources. This position is further reinforced by a clear rejection of nuclear energy, which is framed not as a transitional or complementary solution but as a source of environmental and geopolitical risk.⁷⁴ They are the only party that really puts climate concerns above the rest during the war. As a result, climate policy is not treated as one policy domain among many, but as the primary lens through which both security and economic resilience must be understood.

Greens, however, are not alone in such perspective. Another faction shares very similar views and that is Renew. As mentioned previously, its position within climate-energy spectrum places unexpectedly close to Greens

⁷³ Ville Niinistö, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “The REPowerEU Plan: European solidarity and energy security in face of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, including the recent cuts of gas supply to Poland and Bulgaria (debate),” Brussels, May 19, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-19-ITM-005_EN.html.

⁷⁴ Thomas Waitz, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia’s military threat against Ukraine (debate).”Strasbourg, February 16, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-02-16-ITM-004_EN.html

in terms of its strong support for the energy transition. Across the speeches analyzed, renewable energy is not only framed as a long-term objective but also as an immediate and necessary response to the ongoing crisis, a position that closely mirrors the urgency found in Greens' discourse. Indeed, the overlap in rhetoric is at times so pronounced that distinguishing between the two groups based solely on individual statements becomes difficult.⁷⁵ This convergence is particularly notable given Renew's centrist positioning between the more cautious approach of the EPP and the more radical environmentalism of the Greens. However, despite this apparent similarity, Renew's framing retains a distinctly liberal logic that differentiates it from the Greens' more normative and uncompromising stance. While both groups emphasize decarbonization and the expansion of renewable energy, Renew more explicitly embeds this transition within a broader framework of innovation, competitiveness, and market efficiency. The energy transition is not only a moral or environmental imperative, but also a strategic opportunity for economic modernization and technological leadership. In contrast to the Greens' outright rejection of fossil fuels and nuclear energy, Renew tends to adopt a more flexible and less absolutist position, occasionally acknowledging transitional measures where necessary, even if these are not foregrounded as strongly as in EPP discourse. As a result, Renew can be understood as advancing a form of "accelerated pragmatism," combining a high level of ambition with a willingness to operate within existing economic and institutional constraints.⁷⁶

S&D and The Left are then left together as each having more complex and less uniform articulations of the climate–energy nexus. In the case of S&D, support for the green transition remains present but is less singularly dominant and more frequently mediated by socioeconomic considerations. Renewable energy and decarbonization are clearly endorsed; however, unlike the Greens or Renew, this support is less emphatically foregrounded and instead embedded within a broader discourse centered on social equity, affordability, and the protection of vulnerable groups. As a result, the climate–energy nexus is not framed primarily through urgency or technological transformation, but through the need to ensure that the transition is socially just and economically manageable.⁷⁷ This shifts attention away from renewables as the core solution and towards the conditions under which the transition should occur. In line with this more pragmatic orientation, S&D also displays a more

⁷⁵ Claudia Gamon, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Renewable Energy, Energy Performance of Buildings and Energy Efficiency Directives: amendments (REPowerEU) (continuation of debate)." Strasbourg, December 13, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-12-13-ITM-004_EN.html

⁷⁶ Ivars Ijabs, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, "Tackle the cost of living crisis: increase pay, tax profits, stop speculation (topical debate)." Strasbourg, December 14, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-12-14-ITM-011_EN.html

⁷⁷ Iratxe García Pérez, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Debriefing of the European Council meeting in Paris on 10 March 2022 - Preparation of the European Council meeting 24-25 March 2022 (debate)." Brussels. March 23, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-23-ITM-016_EN.html

ambivalent stance on nuclear energy, more sceptical than EPP, yet not as categorically opposed as the Greens, indicating a willingness to tolerate a more diversified energy mix under certain conditions.⁷⁸

The Left, on the other hand, stands out as possibly the most unique case with its internal fragmentation over climate policies. Unlike S&D, whose position towards renewable energy might slightly move due to socioeconomic considerations, but nonetheless will remain positive, far-left faction has a large inconsistency among its members. While a significant portion of its members strongly supports rapid decarbonization and the expansion of renewable energy, often aligning rhetorically with the Greens,⁷⁹ this position is not uniformly shared across the group and it prevents The Left being aligned with Renew and Greens. It is a smaller but notable subset of voices who diverge sharply, expressing support for continued reliance on fossil fuels, including maintaining flows such as Nord Stream pipelines, thereby prioritizing affordability and economic stability (or perhaps Russian relations) over rapid transition.⁸⁰ This internal division reveals a fundamental tension within The Left's climate discourse: between a structurally transformative, climate-driven agenda and a more traditional economic perspective focused on energy access and cost. Consequently, unlike other factions, The Left does not project a coherent vision of the climate–energy nexus, but rather exposes competing interpretations of what should take precedence.

So, to sum up, in contrast to above examined right-wing parties, the left-leaning factions present a less linear and more internally differentiated approach to the climate–energy nexus. The Greens and Renew form the most cohesive segment, both strongly supporting rapid decarbonization and the expansion of renewable energy as immediate as well as long-term solutions, with rhetoric that often converges to the point of near indistinguishability. Except that one takes more normative and uncompromising stance, while the other one has similar ambitions within a more flexible, market-oriented framework. Socdems then maintain support for the energy transition but place significantly greater emphasis on its socioeconomic implications, thereby reducing the centrality of renewables within their discourse and allowing for a more ambivalent position on nuclear energy. Finally, The Left stands out for its internal fragmentation, as strong pro-renewable and pro-decarbonization positions coexist with more dissenting voices that prioritize fossil fuel dependence. It does not reflect the same

⁷⁸ Nicolás González Casares and Jens Geier, statements in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate),” Strasbourg, March 8, 2022, accessed January 25, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html

⁷⁹ Manon Aubry, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Objection pursuant to Rule 111(3): Amending the Taxonomy Climate Delegated Act and the Taxonomy Disclosures Delegated Act (debate),” Strasbourg, July 5, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-07-05-ITM-014_EN.html

⁸⁰ Clare Daly, statement in European parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Major interpellations (debate)”. Strasbourg, December 15, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-12-15-ITM-009_EN.html

clear ideological gradient observed on the right, but rather a spectrum shaped by differing priorities between environmental ambition and some other financial ones.

Finally, we once again have Non-Attached members. They seem to be a lot more divided than The Left, which is self-explanatory knowing how ideologically diverse and uncoordinated NI is. The speeches from this group range from vast support for renewables and decarbonization⁸¹ to outright rejection of green politics.⁸² This wide range allows us to make only one analytical point to make and that is that Non-Attached members really do not share any particular policy stances.

6.3. *Solidarity-Energy Nexus*

Next, we turn to the least invoked frame-solidarity. Its limited presence across the dataset is clearly visible. Liberals dominate this frame, while Social Democrats and Christian Democrats follow with relatively strong and diverse usage. Other political groups, however, rely on this frame far less. Whereas the climate and security frames provided a sufficient number of units (speeches) to construct well-defined and representative positions for all factions, the solidarity frame remains unevenly distributed, with the above-mentioned groups accounting for the overwhelming majority of references. For this reason, the analysis is structured differently in this section. First, EPP, S&D, and Renew are examined together, as they combine both the highest frequency and the broadest range of solidarity interpretations. Second, the Greens and ECR are grouped due to their comparatively lower number of speeches, but still display some degree of internal consistency in how solidarity is invoked. Finally, The Left, ID, and NI are analyzed jointly, as each produces only a very limited number of references to solidarity, making standalone analysis insufficiently representative.

To start off with the first group, EPP, S&D and Renew each display the most extensive and multidimensional use of the solidarity frame, employing it as a central rhetorical tool to justify a wide range of policy responses to the energy crisis. Across all three groups, solidarity is articulated through several overlapping lenses. First, a moral dimension is clearly present, particularly in relation to Ukraine, where solidarity is framed as a duty to support the Ukrainian people and to curtail Russian energy imports in order to avoid financing the war.⁸³ Second, solidarity is expressed in functional terms, emphasizing joint action at the EU level, such as

⁸¹ Laura Ferrara, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Question Time (Commission) — Europe’s Energy Autonomy: The strategic importance of renewables and energy interconnections and efficiency.” Strasbourg, May 3, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-03-ITM-011_EN.html

⁸² Kostas Papadakis, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate),” Strasbourg, March 8, 2022, accessed January 25, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html

⁸³ Manfred Weber, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Debriefing of the European Council meeting in Paris on 10 March 2022 - Preparation of the European Council meeting 24-25 March 2022 (debate).” Brussels. March 23, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-23-ITM-016_EN.html; Iratxe García Pérez, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022: including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and

common gas purchases, coordinated storage, and collective crisis response, often accompanied by the argument that “acting together” increases efficiency and bargaining power.⁸⁴ Third, an infrastructural understanding of solidarity emerges, especially in calls for expanding cross-border interconnections, electricity grids, and hydrogen corridors, enabling member states to share energy resources more effectively across the Union.⁸⁵ Fourth, solidarity is framed in integrational terms, with repeated references to deepening the Energy Union and advancing a more unified European energy market, suggesting that long-term resilience requires further institutional integration.⁸⁶ Finally, all three groups invoke solidarity in a socioeconomic sense, highlighting the need to support households, families, and businesses facing rising energy costs, including through redistributive mechanisms such as windfall or “solidarity” taxes.⁸⁷

Taken together, this multidimensional usage indicates that for EPP, S&D, and Renew, solidarity is not a narrowly defined concept but a flexible and encompassing frame that legitimizes both immediate crisis management and longer-term integrationist ambitions. It reinforces a preference for coordination, shared responsibility, and collective European action, in contrast to more intergovernmental or nationally bounded approaches. Interestingly, there seems to be no real divergence between the factions. Solidarity may in fact be the only frame that fully aligns three factions, as their perceptions of solidarity seem practically the same – their speeches show virtually no meaningful divergence. The unique absence of divergence between these groups

their implementation (debate).” Strasbourg, April 6, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026.

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-04-06-ITM-003_EN.html

⁸⁴ Karin Karlsbro, statement in European Parliament, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Trans-European energy infrastructure (debate).” Strasbourg, April 5, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-04-05-ITM-004_EN.html; Jerzy Buzek, Statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “A truly interconnected Energy Single Market to keep bills down and companies competitive (topical debate).” Strasbourg, November 23, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-11-23-ITM-007_EN.html

⁸⁵ Carlos Zorrinho, statement in Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Conclusions of the special European Council meeting of 30–31 May 2022 (debate).” Strasbourg, June 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026.

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-06-08-ITM-005_EN.html; Karin Karlsbro, statement in European Parliament, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Trans European energy infrastructure (debate).” Strasbourg, April 5, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-04-05-ITM-004_EN.html

⁸⁶ Lukasz Kohut, statement in European Parliament, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate).” Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026.

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html; Emma Wiesner, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate).” Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html

⁸⁷ Billy Kelleher, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Keep the bills down: social and economic consequences of the war in Ukraine and the introduction of a windfall tax (debate).” Strasbourg, October 18, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-10-18-ITM-002_EN.html; Lara Komi, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Energy storage (debate).” Strasbourg, April 18, 2023. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2023-04-18-ITM-006_EN.html.

suggests a broad convergence around solidarity as both a practical necessity and a normative principle underpinning EU energy policy in the context of the war in Ukraine.

The grouping of the Greens and Conservatives may at first appear counterintuitive, given their ideological distance across the political spectrum. However, in the context of the solidarity frame, this pairing is analytically justified. Both groups invoke solidarity significantly less frequently than the parties analyzed above, yet still more than the remaining factions below. Moreover, despite this lower volume, both the Greens and ECR employ the solidarity frame in a relatively diverse manner, allowing for a meaningful comparative analysis.

Across both groups, solidarity is primarily articulated through three dimensions. First, a moral dimension is evident in expressions of solidarity with Ukraine, particularly in response to Russia's attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure and sovereignty.⁸⁸ Second, a socioeconomic dimension emerges, with calls to support European citizens, households, and businesses facing rising energy costs.⁸⁹ Third, a functional understanding of solidarity is present, emphasizing the need for joint European action and coordinated measures to address the energy crisis.⁹⁰

At the same time, important differences distinguish the two groups. The Greens' rhetoric largely aligns with that of EPP, S&D and Renew, particularly in framing solidarity as a basis for collective action and shared responsibility.⁹¹ However, compared to those groups, Greens employ the frame with less intensity and place less explicit emphasis on infrastructural integration, such as cross-border interconnections or the development of a unified energy market. This does not necessarily indicate lack of support, let alone opposition, to further

⁸⁸ Rasmus Andresen, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Preparation of the European Council meeting of 15 December 2022 (debate)." Strasbourg, December 14, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026.

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-12-14-ITM-003_EN.html; Beata Szydło, statement in European Parliament, Verbatim report of proceedings, "EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military threat against Ukraine (debate)." Strasbourg, February 16, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-02-16-ITM-004_EN.html

⁸⁹ Denis Nesci, statement in European Parliament, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Tackle the cost of living crisis: increase pay, tax profits, stop speculation (topical debate)." Strasbourg, December 14, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-12-14-ITM-011_EN.html; Verbatim report of proceedings, "Preparation of the European Council meeting of 20–21 October 2022 (debate)." Strasbourg, October 19, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-10-19-ITM-003_EN.html

⁹⁰ Bronis Ropė, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "The REPowerEU Plan: European solidarity and energy security in face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including the recent cuts of gas supply to Poland and Bulgaria (debate)." Brussels, May 19, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-19-ITM-005_EN.html; Joachim Stanisław Brudziński, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "The REPowerEU Plan: European solidarity and energy security in face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including the recent cuts of gas supply to Poland and Bulgaria (debate)." Brussels, May 19, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-19-ITM-005_EN.html

⁹¹ Bronis Ropė, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "The REPowerEU Plan: European solidarity and energy security in face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including the recent cuts of gas supply to Poland and Bulgaria (debate)." Brussels, May 19, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-19-ITM-005_EN.html

integration, rather, it suggests that such positions are less prominently articulated within the analyzed speeches, and would require further investigation beyond this dataset.

In contrast, Conservatives introduce a more critical and negative dimension to the solidarity frame. While it similarly invokes moral solidarity with Ukraine and acknowledges the need to support European citizens, it simultaneously questions the authenticity and effectiveness of EU-level solidarity. ECR speakers highlight what they perceive as inconsistencies and shortcomings, arguing that the Union “talks” about solidarity without delivering concrete results, or that it fails to respect the democratic choices of Parliamentary members.⁹² In this sense, solidarity is not only invoked as a principle to be upheld, but also as a standard against which the EU’s actions are judged and found lacking. This is the only mainstream party that invokes solidarity frame in a negative way.

So, although both Greens and Conservatives employ the solidarity frame across similar dimensions, their underlying orientations diverge. The Greens tend to reinforce a cooperative and implicitly integration-friendly understanding of solidarity, whereas the ECR adopts a more sceptical stance, using the frame to critique the EU’s performance and legitimacy.

Finally, we turn to the fringe parties which this time are grouped together due to their extremely limited use of the solidarity frame. Each of these factions invokes solidarity only a handful of times, making comprehensive analysis more difficult and less representative compared to previous groups. Nevertheless, the few available speeches still reveal distinct and, at times, strongly articulated positions.

Starting with ID, while ECR might be the only solidarity-sceptical faction across the mainstream spectrum, it certainly is not alone in the whole Parliament. ID represents the most explicitly critical stance in the Parliament. Across the analyzed speeches, solidarity is portrayed almost exclusively in negative terms, as artificial, ineffective, or even undemocratic. Rather than a genuine principle guiding EU action, it is framed as a rhetorical tool that masks unequal burden-sharing and policy failures.⁹³ This critique is closely linked to a broader rejection of integrational solidarity, with strong opposition to federalist ambitions and deeper European

⁹² Beata Szydło, statement in European parliament debate, Jordi Solé, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings, “Preparation of the European Council meeting of 20–21 October 2022 (debate).”* Strasbourg, October 19, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-10-19-ITM-003_EN.html

⁹³ Marco Zanni, statement in European parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings, “Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 20–21 October 2022 (debate).”* Strasbourg, November 9, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-11-09-ITM-011_EN.html

integration, including in the field of energy policy. In this sense, solidarity becomes synonymous with centralization and imposed decision-making, both of which are firmly rejected.⁹⁴

Non-attached members, by contrast, present a more fragmented picture, reflecting their inherently heterogeneous composition. On one hand, some NI speakers echo eurosceptic narratives similar to ID, criticizing solidarity as superficial and accusing the EU of using it to justify ineffective or contradictory policies.⁹⁵ On the other hand, alternative voices within NI support a more functional understanding of solidarity, advocating for joint measures such as common gas purchasing and coordinated European responses to the crisis.⁹⁶ This internal divergence makes NI difficult to categorize within a single coherent perspective.

Finally, The Left, despite its limited number of speeches, adopts a more consistent and constructive approach to solidarity. Its rhetoric primarily emphasizes functional solidarity, calling for common European responses modeled on previous crisis instruments such as joint borrowing or coordinated procurement. At the same time, it strongly invokes socioeconomic solidarity, focusing on redistribution, the regulation of excess profits in the energy sector, and the protection of citizens from the social consequences of the crisis.⁹⁷

Overall, while these three factions share a low frequency of solidarity usage, their interpretations diverge significantly—from outright rejection and critique (ID), through internal inconsistency (NI), to a more traditional, redistributive and collective understanding (The Left). This fragmentation contrasts sharply with the coherence observed among mainstream parties and further highlights the uneven distribution and contested nature of the solidarity frame within the Parliament.

6.4. Economy-Energy Nexus

Finally, we turn to the last section of the analysis, in which the remaining two frames – economy and socioeconomy, are examined. While these frames were coded and analyzed separately during the quantitative phase of the research, in qualitative part they are approached jointly due to their close conceptual proximity. This does not imply that the two frames are treated as identical. Instead, combining them allows for a more coherent

⁹⁴ Gunnar Beck, Statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Debriefing of the European Council meeting in Paris on 10 March 2022 - Preparation of the European Council meeting 24-25 March 2022 (debate).” Brussels. March 23, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-23-ITM-016_EN.html; Thierry Mariani, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Gas storage (debate).” Brussels, June 23, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-06-23-ITM-002_EN.html

⁹⁵ Kostas Papadakis, statement in European parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “The social and economic consequences for the EU of the Russian war in Ukraine – reinforcing the EU’s capacity to act (debate).” Strasbourg, May 4, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-04-ITM-004_EN.html

⁹⁶ Tiziana Beghin, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Gas storage (debate).” Brussels, June 23, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-06-23-ITM-002_EN.html

⁹⁷ Dimitrios Papadimoulis, statement in European Parliament debate, “Debriefing of the European Council meeting in Paris on 10 March 2022 - Preparation of the European Council meeting 24-25 March 2022 (debate).” Brussels. March 23, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-23-ITM-016_EN.html

interpretation, avoids unnecessary repetition, and prevents analytical overextension. Both frames belong to a similar conceptual domain and can be meaningfully compared within a single analytical framework without compromising the overall consistency of the research. In this section, the focus lies on identifying whether political factions lean more towards an understanding of the energy crisis in terms of economic competitiveness and market performance, or towards social standards and living conditions. Unlike previous sections, the structure here follows a more explicitly ideological logic, moving from left to right across the political spectrum. First, left-wing parties are examined, characterized by a predominantly social and redistributive approach. This is followed by centrist parties, which tend to combine economic and social considerations. Finally, right-wing parties are analyzed, where a stronger emphasis on economic performance, market logic, and competitiveness becomes more pronounced.

Starting with the left-wing parties, namely S&D and The Left, their approach is clearly situated on the socioeconomic side of the spectrum. Both groups consistently interpret the energy crisis primarily through its impact on living standards, inequality, and social justice, rather than through the lens of economic competitiveness or market performance. Rising energy prices are framed not simply as an economic disruption, but as a direct threat to households, particularly vulnerable groups already affected by energy poverty. A defining feature of their rhetoric is a strong critique of market-based energy systems. Liberalized markets and pricing mechanisms, especially gas trading structures, are portrayed as speculative and incapable of delivering fair outcomes in times of crisis.⁹⁸ Both S&D and The Left challenge the assumption that markets can self-regulate effectively, instead arguing that they facilitate excessive profiteering. Ukraine war in this context favours large companies. This is most evident in repeated references to windfall profits accumulated by energy companies, which are contrasted with the financial struggles of ordinary citizens. Consequently, both groups advocate for redistributive and interventionist measures, including windfall taxes, price caps, and stronger public control over pricing mechanisms.⁹⁹ Beyond immediate crisis responses, left-wing parties advance a broader normative argument by framing energy as a basic social right rather than a commodity. This perspective underpins calls for structural reform, including increased public ownership or regulation and a departure from long-standing policies of

⁹⁸ Sira Rego, statement in European Parliament debate Verbatim report of proceedings, “Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate).” Strasbourg, March 8, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026.

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html; Milan Brglez, statement in European Parliament debate Verbatim report of proceedings, “Presentation of the programme of activities of the Swedish Presidency (debate).” Strasbourg, January 17, 2023. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2023-01-17-ITM-003_EN.html

⁹⁹ Robert Hajšel, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Taxing windfall profits of energy companies (debate).” Strasbourg, July 6, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-07-06-ITM-019_EN.html; Dimitrios Papadimoulis, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Debriefing of the European Council meeting in Paris on 10 March 2022 - Preparation of the European Council meeting 24-25 March 2022 (debate).” Brussels. March 23, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-23-ITM-016_EN.html

privatization and deregulation. Importantly, the crisis is not understood as purely temporary or solely a consequence of the war in Ukraine, but as the result of deeper systemic flaws within the existing energy market framework. In other words, energy supply disruptions from Ukraine war just showed the lack of resilience of the market.¹⁰⁰

Economic instruments here are NOT absent from their proposals, they are simply consistently subordinated to social objectives. Calls for collective European action, especially on S&D's side, such as joint borrowing, coordinated investments and common crisis instruments, are framed primarily as tools to protect citizens and ensure fair burden-sharing, rather than to enhance competitiveness.

Moving towards the center of the spectrum, Greens and Renew occupy an intermediate position, combining both socioeconomic concerns and economic considerations, yet doing so in distinct ways. Unlike the clearly social orientation of the left, these two groups engage with both sides of the analytical spectrum, balancing concerns for citizens' welfare with questions of market functioning, investment, and long-term competitiveness.

Both groups acknowledge the social consequences of the energy crisis, particularly rising living costs and energy poverty. References to support for vulnerable households, targeted aid and the need to shield citizens from price shocks appear in both sets of speeches. At the same time, they also recognize the broader economic implications, including pressures on industry, supply chains, and overall market stability. This dual focus positions them as bridging actors between purely redistributive and purely market-oriented approaches.

However, despite these similarities, important differences emerge in how each group prioritizes and frames these concerns. The Greens remain closer to the socioeconomic pole (but nowhere near S&D/The Left level), maintaining a strong emphasis on social protection, market correction, and public intervention. Their rhetoric frequently highlights market failure, calling for measures such as price caps, windfall taxes, and stricter regulation of energy companies.¹⁰¹ At the same time, they are obviously notably critical of continued investments in fossil fuel infrastructure, opposing subsidies for LNG terminals and pipelines, and instead advocating for a rapid and uncompromising transition towards renewable energy. Economic considerations, such as

¹⁰⁰ Biljana Borzan, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "Taxing windfall profits of energy companies (debate)." Strasbourg, July 6, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-07-06-ITM-019_EN.html; Marisa Matias, statement in European Parliament debate, *Verbatim report of proceedings, "The REPowerEU Plan: European solidarity and energy security in face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including the recent cuts of gas supply to Poland and Bulgaria (debate)."* Brussels, May 19, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-19-ITM-005_EN.html

¹⁰¹ Sara Matthieu and Ernest Urtsun, statements in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, "The Social and Economic Consequences for the EU of the Russian War in Ukraine – Reinforcing the EU's Capacity to Act (debate)," Strasbourg, May 4, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-04-ITM-004_EN.html.

competitiveness, are present but are once again consistently subordinated to environmental and social objectives.¹⁰²

Liberals, by contrast, adopt a more economically balanced and market-conscious approach. While also supporting measures to protect vulnerable groups, particularly through targeted aid and redistributive instruments,¹⁰³ Renew places greater emphasis on maintaining market functionality, investment incentives, and industrial competitiveness. Rather than framing markets primarily as a source of failure, Renew tends to view them as mechanisms that can be steered and improved through appropriate policy tools, including public–private cooperation, incentives, and regulatory flexibility. This is reflected in its reluctance to “criminalize” industry and its focus on enabling the private sector to adapt to the energy transition.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, Liberals more explicitly acknowledge the trade-offs and costs associated with policy choices, such as energy embargoes or rapid decarbonization, emphasizing the need for preparedness and resilience in the face of inevitable economic consequences.¹⁰⁵

Overall, Greens and Renew illustrate the centrist balancing point of the analysis, where both socioeconomic protection and economic considerations are present. Yet, their internal divergence is significant: Greens lean more strongly towards a socially and environmentally driven logic of intervention and transformation, while Renew maintains a more market-oriented, pragmatic approach that seeks to reconcile social support with competitiveness and economic stability.

Moving on to the other end, center-right and right-leaning groups – EPP, ECR and ID, also engage with the socioeconomic consequences of the energy crisis, but they do so through a definitely different framing. While references to households, citizens and rising living costs are clearly present, these concerns are consistently aligned within a broader focus on market stability, competitiveness and energy security. In contrast to left-wing rhetoric, socioeconomic hardship is not treated as the central lens of the crisis, but rather as one consequence among several interconnected economic and geopolitical pressures. In other words, the emphasis is there, but it is not primary.

¹⁰² Ciarán Cuffe, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Renewable Energy, Energy Performance of Buildings and Energy Efficiency Directives: amendments (REPowerEU) (debate).” Strasbourg, December 13, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-12-13-ITM-002_EN.html de

¹⁰³ Ivars Ijabs, statement in European Parliament, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Tackle the cost of living crisis: increase pay, tax profits, stop speculation (topical debate).” Strasbourg, December 14, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-12-14-ITM-011_EN.html

¹⁰⁴ Stéphane Séjourné, statement in European Parliament, *Verbatim report of proceedings*, “Debriefing of the European Council meeting in Paris on 10 March 2022 - Preparation of the European Council meeting 24-25 March 2022 (debate).” Brussels. March 23, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-23-ITM-016_EN.html

¹⁰⁵ Luis Garicano, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “The Social and Economic Consequences for the EU of the Russian War in Ukraine – Reinforcing the EU’s Capacity to Act (debate),” Strasbourg, May 4, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-04-ITM-004_EN.html.

Across these groups, Ukraine war is presented as a key external shock disrupting energy supply, driving inflation, and threatening European economies. In this context, policy responses tend to prioritize restoring stability through measures such as reducing energy taxes, securing supply chains, and strengthening energy sovereignty, (rather than fundamentally restructuring market systems). Market mechanisms themselves are rarely rejected outright; instead, the emphasis lies on correcting distortions, improving efficiency, and ensuring fair competition within the internal market.

Within this broader framework, the EPP occupies a more centrist and policy-oriented position, combining recognition of social pressures with a strong emphasis on economic coordination and market integration. References to households and vulnerable citizens are present, particularly in relation to the cost-of-living crisis, yet these are consistently linked to the need for European-level solutions such as joint procurement, price caps on gas, and deeper energy market integration.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, the EPP places significant weight on competitiveness and industrial stability, warning against the risks that high energy prices pose to businesses and long-term economic performance.¹⁰⁷

By contrast, the ECR and ID groups articulate a more confrontational critique of existing policy frameworks. While they also invoke the socioeconomic struggles of households (often in more urgent or dramatic terms), these concerns are once again more directly tied to a rejection of EU climate policies and regulatory approaches. As mentioned in the climate section, the crisis is frequently framed not only as externally driven, but also as the result of political choices within the EU, particularly the Green Deal and market interventions such as emissions trading. In this perspective, climate ambitions appear to have been, due to the Ukraine war, politely postponed in favor of immediate priorities such as energy affordability, supply security, and economic survival.¹⁰⁸

Overall, while socioeconomic themes are clearly present across center-right and right-wing discourse, they are integrated into a broader framework that prioritizes market functionality and competitiveness. This positions

¹⁰⁶ Ivan Štefanec, statement in European Parliament, Verbatim report of proceedings, “A truly interconnected Energy Single Market to keep bills down and companies competitive (topical debate).” Strasbourg, November 23, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-11-23-ITM-007_EN.html

¹⁰⁷ Antonio Tajani, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “The REPowerEU Plan: European solidarity and energy security in face of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, including the recent cuts of gas supply to Poland and Bulgaria (debate).” Brussels, May 19, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-05-19-ITM-005_EN.html

¹⁰⁸ Robert Roos, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Rising energy prices and market manipulation on the gas market (debate),” Strasbourg, March 8, 2022, accessed January 25, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-03-08-ITM-013_EN.html; Antonio Maria Rinaldi, statement in European Parliament debate, Verbatim report of proceedings, “Keep the Bills Down: Social and Economic Consequences of the War in Ukraine and the Introduction of a Windfall Tax (debate),” Strasbourg, October 18, 2022, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-10-18-ITM-002_EN.html

these groups closer to a market-corrective approach, where social concerns are acknowledged but do not override economic and strategic considerations.

Finally, Non-Inscrits, due to their inherent heterogeneity, do not present a consistent or unified position across debates. However, in this case, a notable convergence emerges in the way economic and socioeconomic issues are framed, namely, in a strongly critical and often confrontational manner. Across different speeches, rising energy prices and declining living standards are acknowledged, but they are predominantly attributed to political decisions at the EU level, including sanctions, market liberalization, and the green transition. The Ukraine war is referenced, yet often as a secondary or instrumental factor OR if it is portrayed as a major cause of the crisis, then Pro-Russian rhetoric follows with proposals of ending sanctions. Speakers mostly emphasize systemic critiques, portraying the crisis as evidence of broader failures in EU governance, economic structures, and geopolitical alignment with Ukraine. As a result, socioeconomic hardship is not only highlighted but politicized, frequently linked to calls for price controls, national-level interventions, pragmatic approach to Russia or more radical structural change.¹⁰⁹

7. Conclusions

The findings of this study demonstrate that the European Parliament's energy discourse following Russia's 2022 invasion was characterized by both continuity and political variation. While the invasion created a new and highly significant context for energy policy, it did not produce a single unified understanding of the crisis or fundamentally replace existing priorities with new ones. Instead, the five frames examined in this study continued to coexist and compete, with their relative importance and interpretation varying across political groups. The findings further reveal that these differences do not follow a single ideological pattern. Depending on the frame, divisions within the Parliament are better explained either through a traditional left-right spectrum or through a distinction between mainstream and fringe political groups.

First, security remains the dominant lens through which energy policy is discussed in the Parliament following the invasion. However, the dominance of this frame does not appear to have been created by the war itself. Rather, security continues to occupy the leading position that previous research had already identified in

¹⁰⁹ Lefteris Nikolaou-Alavanos, Verbatim report of proceedings, "State of the Union (debate)." Strasbourg, September 14, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-09-14-ITM-002_EN.html; Ádám Kósa, Verbatim report of proceedings, "EU initiatives to address the rising cost of living, including the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (debate)." Strasbourg, July 5, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-07-05-ITM-008_EN.html

the Parliament's energy discourse. Despite the highly securitized context created by the invasion, the frame did not expand at the expense of other considerations. Economic and climate frames also remained strongly represented, indicating that the invasion did not fundamentally alter the broader distribution of energy-policy concerns in parliamentary rhetoric. In this sense, the empirical findings suggest continuity rather than a major post-2022 shift: the war reinforced the importance of an already dominant security perspective but did not elevate it to a position where it overshadowed competing understandings of energy policy. Solidarity, on the other hand, appears to have become comparatively less prominent in the rhetoric. Despite the war creating circumstances in which calls for European unity, joint action, and support for Ukraine might have been expected to become particularly prominent, solidarity was by far the least frequently invoked of the five frames. Rather than becoming a central rhetorical response to the crisis, it remained comparatively marginal and concentrated among a limited number of political groups. This finding therefore complicates previous research that has emphasized solidarity and collective action as important elements of European energy discourse.

At the same time, two broader patterns emerge in how the energy crisis is interpreted across the political spectrum. The first is a relatively traditional left–right division, which is particularly visible in the climate, socioeconomic, and economic frames. Left-wing groups tend to interpret the energy crisis through social protection, affordability, vulnerable groups, redistribution, and criticism of liberalized markets, while also expressing stronger support for renewable energy. Right-wing groups, by contrast, place greater emphasis on economic competitiveness, industrial stability, affordability through the expansion of energy supply, and the preservation or increased use of nuclear and fossil energy. Centrist groups generally occupy an intermediate position by combining socioeconomic concerns with economic and competitiveness-oriented considerations. The climate frame, however, provides an important qualification to this pattern, as the Greens and, to some extent, Renew demonstrate particularly strong support for the renewable transition. The distribution of positions therefore cannot be reduced entirely to a simple linear left–right model, even though ideological location remains an important explanation for differences in the use and interpretation of several frames.

A different pattern emerges in the security and solidarity frames, where the distinction between mainstream and fringe political groups appears more explanatory than their position on the traditional left–right spectrum. Mainstream groups largely converge around an understanding of Russia as a direct geopolitical threat and as an unreliable energy partner. Security is consequently associated with diversification, reducing dependence on Russia, protecting European energy sovereignty and, particularly among the major pro-European groups, strengthening European coordination and integration. Fringe groups, by contrast, are considerably more divided from this interpretation. Their security discourse more often emphasizes the physical and economic security of energy supply itself, including the preservation of affordable and uninterrupted supplies, while some advocate

continued reliance on Russian energy until alternative sources become available. Their proposed alternatives differ, with some favouring nuclear power and others renewable energy, but a common feature is their greater scepticism towards the mainstream interpretation of Russian energy dependence. The same mainstream–fringe distinction is particularly visible in the solidarity frame. Mainstream pro-European groups generally employ solidarity as a positive concept associated with joint purchasing, shared infrastructure, European energy integration, support for Ukraine, and assistance to households and businesses. Fringe groups, in contrast, are more likely either to use solidarity in a limited functional sense or to explicitly challenge the concept itself, portraying European solidarity as rhetorical, ineffective, or disconnected from citizens’ interests.

At the same time, the study acknowledges several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings and which provide opportunities for further research. First, the empirical material is limited to individual speeches delivered during European Parliament plenary debates. While these debates provide a valuable source for examining open political contestation and competing interpretations, they do not cover other important arenas in which political groups formulate and communicate their positions. Future research could therefore expand the source base by examining political group publications, manifestos, committee discussions and other parliamentary work, particularly given that a substantial part of the Parliament’s legislative and policy-making activity takes place at the committee level. Second, the study is limited chronologically to the first year following Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. As the war has continued, developments on the battlefield, changes in energy markets and the broader evolution of the political situation may have affected how political actors perceive and frame energy policy. The election of a new European Parliament in 2024 may also have introduced new political actors, altered the balance between political groups and potentially influenced the broader framing of energy-related questions. Extending the analysis over a longer period could therefore reveal whether the patterns identified in this study have remained stable or changed over time. Finally, the manual coding process itself represents a methodological limitation. Although a strict and consistent coding procedure was followed, as outlined in the methodology, manual coding conducted by a single researcher inevitably involves a degree of interpretative judgement, and some individual coding decisions could potentially be questioned or classified differently by other researchers. This issue is particularly relevant to the distinction between the economy/competitiveness and affordability/socioeconomic frames. While separating these two frames proved analytically useful and, in most cases, the intended meaning of a speech could be identified clearly, certain statements contained sufficiently broad or ambiguous wording to make the distinction less straightforward. Other researchers might therefore classify some individual speeches differently. These limitations do not invalidate the overall findings, but they underline the importance of interpreting frame analysis as an inherently interpretative method and demonstrate the value of further research using broader source material, longer timeframes and, potentially, multiple coders to compare and strengthen coding reliability.

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27. **European Parliament.** *Verbatim report of proceedings, “Objection pursuant to Rule 111(3): Amending the Taxonomy Climate Delegated Act and the Taxonomy Disclosures Delegated Act (debate).”* Strasbourg, July 5, 2022. Accessed January 25, 2026. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2022-07-05-ITM-014_EN.html
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64. **European Parliament and Council of the European Union.** *Regulation (EU) 2022/1032 of 29 June 2022 amending Regulations (EU) 2017/1938 and (EC) No 715/2009 with regard to gas storage.* OJ L 173 (2022). Accessed January 25, 2026. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/1032/oj/eng>
65. **European Parliament and Council of the European Union.** *Regulation (EU) 2024/1747 of 13 June 2024 amending Regulations (EU) 2019/942 and (EU) 2019/943 as regards improving the Union's electricity market design (Text with EEA relevance).* OJ L 2024/1747 (2024). Accessed January 25, 2026. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1747/oj/eng>
66. **European Parliament and Council of the European Union.** *Regulation (EU) 2026/261 of 26 January 2026 on phasing out Russian natural gas imports.* OJ L 2026/261 (2026). Accessed January 25, 2026. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32026R0261>

Annex 1. Excel sheet for coding frames with all 1005 units – speeches

[DominykasZvExcel.xlsx](#)

Annex 2. Declaration of Artificial intelligence usage

DECLARATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USAGE

Name: Dominykas Žvinakevičius Student

ID number: 1429531

Please tick 'x' for applicable items:

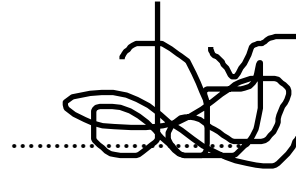
☐ I have not used any AI tools in this assignment.

☒ I have used one or more AI tools in this assignment.

ChatGPT

If yes, which ones?

I used AI tools critically, as an additional tool. I take full responsibility for the information, arguments and final results of my work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a vertical line, positioned above a dotted line.

Please tick 'x' for applicable items and explain how you used AI tools. I

used the AI tool as a(n)/for the purpose of:

1. ☐ **Idea generator** (e.g., generating arguments or counter-arguments, developing a plan for structure, generating potential research questions, etc.)

Please explain:

2. ☐ **Search engine** (e.g., to find additional literature or contextual information on a specific topic, etc.)

Please explain:

3. ☒ **Writing assistant** (e.g., to correct spelling mistakes and/or typos, to rewrite the text in a more formal or academic style, to restructure paragraphs, etc.) Please

Explain: ... I used it to correct grammatical, spelling and stylistic mistakes, improve academic tone
- make sentences sound academically correct.

4. ☐ **Designer** (e.g., to create a new, unique image or visualization, etc.) Please explain:

5. ☒ **Study buddy** (e.g., to ask for additional explanations with regard to specific learning contents, to generate self-check exercises, etc.)

Please explain: .I. used AI for reassurance... whenever I advanced with a..... new major step (forming thesis structure; coding frames etc.), I would ask AI whether what I do is logical enough, whether it aligns with what a master-level research should be. I did not take its responses for granted but its critical feedback would occasionally allow me to rethink my research plan.

6. ☐ **Data analysis tool** (e.g., to perform calculations, coding, create charts, graphs or other quantitative/qualitative data visualizations, etc.)

Please explain:

7. ☐ **For efficiency** (e.g., to summarize existing texts, format references, etc.)

Please explain:

8. ☐ **Other** (I used AI tools in a different way.)

Please explain:

9. What steps were taken to mitigate errors and minimize the chance of harm or inappropriate use of AI?

Please explain: I generally trusted AI with its ability to provide correct spelling and grammatical improvements, however, I would often still double-check if certain words or phrases are written the way AI proposes. I would also double check if AI's proposed "academically sounding" words really fit my text flow or do they sound off and would only accept AI's proposals if they really do.

Regarding reassurance part, I only accepted AI's criticism when it sounded logical to myself, at certain times I would reject AI's remarks noticing that it does not understand the context of my thesis and only makes a shallow point.