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THE POSITION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ENERGY SECURITY POLICY

Keywords: Parliament, security, energy, European Union.

Abstract: Ensuring the energy security is currently one of the EU's top priorities. The EU energy policy, after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, is regulated by Article 194 TFEU, which guarantees a solid legal basis for European Union actions in this area on the basis of the Community method. The European Parliament, within the scope of its Community competences, as a participant in the decision-making process, contributes to shaping the face of the EU energy policy. Furthermore, by adopting non-legislative resolutions, the EP expresses its position on the most crucial issues included in this policy and has an indirect influence on its shape. The aim of this article is the analysis of the content of these resolutions and presentation of the EP's opinion on the challenges facing the EU in the field of energy. It should be highlighted that the European Parliament is the EU body with a strong emphasis on a supranational approach to energy security. The European Parliament prefers the view that all Member States, in a spirit of solidarity, must take actions to guarantee the EU's common energy security. In favour of a common, integrated European energy market, the EP puts great emphasis on the necessity to implement ambitious climate policy objectives within its framework, the key element of which is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

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Security is an area of activity of the entity that aims to ensure the survival, development and freedom to implement the interests in specific conditions by taking advantages of opportunities, taking up challenges, reducing risks and foreseeing all kinds of threats to one's interests. The security of an entity, including individuals, social groups, states, nations, as well as international organisations, manifests in all areas of its activity (Koziej, 2011, pp. 20). Nowadays, in order to ensure the safety of an entity, the key issue is proper identification of the threats that could cause disruptions in its functioning or loss of specific values and potentials. In the new global era, these threats are often multidimensional and transnational in nature. They may also take the form of energy threats (Buczyński, 2011, pp. 55). It should be highlighted that in the contemporary world, energy supply issues are becoming of key importance for states and international organisations that define their economic development, which is the base for the stability of political and social order. The increase in demand for energy resources and fuels produced from them, as well as recurring oil and gas crises made energy security one of the most important aspects of national security, the provision of which turned out to be one of the strategic objectives of the state policy. We may define this security as the availability of energy at any time, in various forms, in sufficient quantity and at a reasonable price or payable price. It is also understood as the state of the economy which makes it possible to cover current and future consumer needs for fuels and energy in a technically and economically justifiable manner, while minimising the negative impact of the energy sector on the environment and living conditions of society. Therefore, energy security is, in general, the state's continuing ability to maintain its functioning without major disruptions. For an international organisation, which is the European Union, it means the security of supply, which is understood as uninterrupted availability of energy products on the market, at a price acceptable to all consumers, considering the influence of actions taken on the natural environment (Kraś, 2011, pp. 36–37). Energy security, which has multidimensional nature, as it includes both political, economic and environmental conditions, is a key element of the European Union's functioning on the international stage. It stems from the fact that this organisation is a major global consumer of fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas, which play a very crucial role in its energy balance. The constant increase in demand for

energy resources and limited share of renewable sources, as well as the controversies related to the use of nuclear energy and coal, have made the European countries dependent on imports of hydrocarbons to a great extent. It means that the challenges and threats connected with it determine the European Union's security policy (Misiągiewicz, 2013, pp. 488–489). The assumptions of "The Green Paper on Energy Policy" must be recognised as the beginning of this police, which placed particular emphasis on resource security, the creation of common European market rules and environmental issues. (Tylec, 2012, p. 228). However, the energy strategy adopted in 2010 focused on five priorities: 1. achieving energy efficiency in Europe, 2. creating an integrated and truly pan-European energy market, 3. empowering consumers and achieving the highest level of safety and security, 4. strengthening Europe's leadership in energy technologies and innovation, 5. strengthening the external size of the EU energy market (*Komunikat...*, 2010). For the development of the European Union's energy security, the adoption by the European Commission in 2014 of the document "Policy framework for the period 2020 – 2030 on climate and energy" was also crucial, in which it was stated, among other things, that the EU is striving successfully to achieve the following objectives: reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20%, increasing the share of energy from renewable sources to 20%, improving energy efficiency by 20%, improving energy security, while at the same time building a low-carbon and competitive energy system through common actions, integrated markets, diversification of foreign sources of supply, sustainable development of domestic energy sources, investment in the necessary infrastructure, energy-saving consumption, promoting research and innovation (*Komunikat...*, 2014a). The EU climate and energy framework is in line with the European Energy Security Strategy adopted by the European Commission (EC) in May 2014. The document stated that energy security issues, too often, are only addressed at national level without considering the interdependence of the Member States. That is why, a more Community approach based on a well-functioning internal market and better cooperation at regional and European level as well as more consistent external action is the key to improve the energy security. The strategy highlights that the EU's energy security must be perceived in the context of increasing global energy demand, which is expected to increase by 27% by 2030. This will have many consequences for the Member States, as the EU already imports 53% of

its energy consumption. The dependence on energy imports is the highest in the case of crude oil (about 90%) and natural gas (66%). Additionally, there is the issue of dependence of countries on supplies of raw materials from a single source. That is why the EU should take specific actions to strengthen the solidarity mechanisms, reduce energy demand, build an integrated internal market, increase energy production in the EU countries, develop energy technologies, diversify external supplies, coordinate Member States' national energy policies within the EU and carry out a single external energy policy (*Komunikat.*, 2014b). According to the European Commission, the long-term goals of the EU energy policy, such as security of supply, sustainable development and competitiveness, should be implemented considering the adopted climate and energy framework 2030 as well as the energy security strategy based on the five pillars of the energy union: 1. Energy security, solidarity and trust (diversification of supplies, cooperation between states to increase the security of supply, transparency of supplies), 2. Integrated European energy market (development of interconnections, implementation and execution of regulations related to energy, cooperation between states in the development of energy policies, enabling consumers to choose their energy suppliers), 3. Energy efficiency reducing energy demand (low-carbon transport sector, increase of efficiency in the construction sector), 4. Decarbonising (preventing climate change, development of renewable energy), 5. Scientific research, innovation and competitiveness (development of clean fossil fuel technologies, ecological transport, safe production of nuclear energy) (*Komunikat.*, 2015). Striving for creating an energy union was also stated in the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy, adopted by the European Council in June 2016, which identified the security of the Union itself as one of its priorities. The course of action within this priority include, among others, energy security (*Globalna strategija...*, 2016, p. 19). It should be highlighted that the real creation and functioning of an energy union requires a unified position on energy issues by the Member States. This is difficult due to the fact that the competences in the field of energy are left to the Member States. The states individually determine their own energy needs, have the right to choose energy sources and build their own supply structure. The EU competences are limited to ensuring the functioning of the energy market, security of supply, supporting the development of new and renewable energy sources, energy saving and the construction of energy

interconnections between states. The EC indirectly influences the energy market through its shared competence with national governments in the field of environmental protection (Turowski, 2013, pp. 103–104). The action to protect and prevent climate change remains a crucial challenge for the EU's modern energy policy. The co-responsibility of both the Member States and the EU institutions for the shaping of the EU energy policy, differences in interests and priorities, diversity of raw materials resources, economic preferences, favouring bilateral relations with states exporting raw materials, diversified level of social and economic development make the EU policy not effective enough in this area. The afore-mentioned factors and increasing problems with ensuring secure supply (gas crises) make it necessary to implement mechanisms that strengthen it and to develop a single EU vision of energy security (Pach-Gurgul, 2016, pp. 214–216).

For the European Parliament (EP), which is an element of the EU institutional system sharing legislative powers with the EU Council, energy security issues are a crucial object of interest. Within its powers under the Treaty, this body co-shapes, as a participant in the legislative procedure, the areas of energy policy which are subject to EU regulations. Furthermore, by adopting non-legislative resolutions, it expresses its position on key issues related to energy security, indirectly influencing EU policy in this area. The aim of this article is to analyse the content of selected resolutions and to present the EP's opinion on the challenges facing the EU in the field of energy. It should be highlighted that, according to the EP, the EU energy policy should ensure general accessibility to energy and affordability of energy for the benefit of consumers. The citizens should be placed in the centre of the energy union and they should gain the access to secure, sustainable and affordable energy. The European Parliament advocates that the energy union should adopt a comprehensive approach focusing on the things such as achieving a fully integrated internal energy market, security of supply, making best use of EU energy sources, reducing energy demand, reducing greenhouse gas emissions based on renewable energy sources and an EU-wide carbon market, as well as research and innovation to achieve leadership in energy technologies. Furthermore, it calls on the European Commission (EC) and the Member States to ensure that all legislative proposals on the energy union are subject to the ordinary legislative procedure which will ensure the full involvement of the European Parliament

and effective democratic oversight. It expects the post-2020 governance framework for the energy union to be ambitious, reliable, transparent, democratic and fully involve the Parliament and ensure that the 2030 climate and energy objectives are met, in particular thanks to the full implementation, enforcement and updating of existing climate and energy legislation. The European Parliament agrees with the opinion that national energy and climate plans for the period of 2021–2030 should not only be focused on achieving the 2030 objectives, but also reflect a longer-term perspective, in particular the agreed EU target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80–95% by 2050 in comparison with emission levels from 1990 (*Rezolucja...*, 2015a). In the context of the climate and energy framework, the European Parliament called for a binding EU target of at least 40% reduction of domestic greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 in comparison with emission levels from 1990. In order to achieve this, a decarbonisation programme should be carried out consistently in the Member States, which should be based on different degrees of use of renewable energy technologies, nuclear energy and carbon dioxide reduction. That is why, the EU needs a comprehensive policy framework for the period up to 2030 to encourage the decarbonisation of non-ETS sectors and investment in the decarbonisation of these sectors, which are responsible for 60% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions. The EP position stresses the necessity to guarantee the EU's energy security and to strive for self-sufficiency by promoting energy efficiency, energy saving and the use of renewable and alternative technologies to reduce import dependency. The European Parliament advocates that the Member States should be able to choose their national energy mix and use their own energy sources, provided that the EU's energy and climate objectives and environmental standards are met (*Rezolucja...*, 2014). The EP highlights that energy efficiency, if it is properly implemented, is a cost-effective way for Europe to achieve its long-term energy saving, climate change and economic as well as energy security objectives. It admits that a shift to a more energy-efficient economy can lead to the faster promotion of innovative technological solutions, a reduction in fossil fuel imports and an improvement in the competitiveness and growth of industry in the European Union. The European Parliament considers that the shift to a policy of greater energy efficiency should focus on the whole energy supply and demand chain, including processing, transmission, distribution and supply, including the industry, buildings and households. It

highlights that one of the main elements of the EU's long-term energy efficiency policy should be the reduction of energy consumption in buildings, as the renovation of existing buildings may be the source of huge energy savings (*Rezolucja...*, 2013). The EP considers that renewable energy, increased energy efficiency and a sustainable energy mix, as well as an internal energy market allowing free movement of energy, are important means to create a stable, secure, independent, inclusive, transparent and competitive EU energy system that generates high quality workplaces and prosperity for a sustainable economy of the future. The European Parliament highlights that a higher level of electricity interconnection, transmission networks and a new electricity market design are essential for the construction of the energy system, the creation of which must become the main political priority of the energy union. According to the European Parliament, the creation of electricity interconnections is one of the basic conditions for the completion of an integrated internal electricity market. It must be designed to help achieve the climate targets, in order make EU a world leader in renewable energy sources. The creation of such a market determines the improvement of the EU's geopolitical position, as it increases energy security and reduces energy isolation as well as the possibility of energy system disruptions. According to the European Parliament, electricity interconnections must be planned and built through close and coordinated regional cooperation, respecting the competences of national authorities and considering the EU's long-term climate and energy objectives (*Rezolucja...*, 2015b). In the resolutions adopted, the European Parliament highlights that energy efficiency is of key importance for reducing the EU's dependence on foreign energy supplies and increasing geopolitical independence and energy security. That is why, the EP pays special attention to the development of the EU's external energy policy, which should contribute to ensuring secure, sustainable and accessible energy and be consistent with the EU's overall energy policy objectives related to competitiveness, security of supply and the EU's energy and climate objectives to be achieved by 2050. According to the European Parliament, the implementation of the EU's energy objectives requires taking common international actions, in particular strengthening the external dimension of energy policy and adopting a single position in order to increase diversification of energy supply sources and routes, increase security of supply and promote sustainable production and consumption. The European Parliament be-

believes that energy policy must be an integral and essential part of the common foreign policy and that it should be formulated and implemented in accordance with other policies of an external dimension. It is necessary due to the fact that security of supply measures taken at national level only prove to be insufficient and do not guarantee the protection of the interests of all the Member States of the European Union. That is why, solidarity among Member States in the field of external energy policy and energy security as well as the functioning of an integrated internal energy market in Europe are essential. Only then will it become impossible to use energy supplies and prices as a tool of pressure. Owing to this fact, the European Parliament stresses the necessity to build European gas and energy infrastructure networks. According to the European Parliament, there is a need to speed up actions to diversify suppliers, routes and sources of energy supply to the EU, including priority energy infrastructure corridors. Furthermore, the cooperation in the field of energy policy should be implemented with states that share the same values and want to engage in democratic reforms and the promotion of the values on which the European Union is based. The EP considers that diversification should mean new non-Russian oil, gas and electricity sources for those Member States that are too dependent on this single supplier. It stresses that the EU-Russia dialogue, in which the EU should speak with one voice, should take into account the specific situation and dependence of the EU Member States in Central and Eastern Europe (*Rezolucja...*, 2012).

Analysing the position of the EP expressed in the resolutions, it should be pointed out that this supranational body considers that EU actions in the field of energy security should be directed towards the implementation of the objectives such as: creating a single energy market, ensuring security of supply, energy efficiency and savings, developing new renewable forms of energy, promoting the development of integrated energy networks, ensuring affordable energy prices for all consumers, reducing dependence on energy imports and increasing domestic energy production. These actions should be based on dialogue and cooperation between the Member States and the EU institutions. The European Parliament considers that the EU's energy policy should primarily contribute to meeting the EU's obligations in the field of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. First of all, this policy should be implemented in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility, as only the development of a common

approach by the Member States to its issues can guarantee the achievement of the EU's strategic objective which is ensuring energy security. A key condition for its implementation is the development of a model of cooperation between the Member States that would guarantee the rapid completion of the EU internal energy market, including, in particular, the construction of interconnections and the removal of cross-border barriers. According to the European Parliament, energy security will guarantee Europe the creation of an integrated low-carbon economy based on modern technologies, which would be able to compete with other developing regional economic systems. Therefore, the EU actions should be directed towards implementing low-carbon technologies and increasing investment in research and development in this area. It can be assumed that the European Parliament considers that a common EU energy policy should be an instrument for achieving the objective of an innovative, low-carbon, sustainable and green economy, within which the process of maximum reduction of greenhouse gases will be carried out. This means subordinating EU energy policy to climate protection and building an innovative economy, with the consequence of favouring the development of the renewable energy sector and modern clean technologies, as well as aiming at decarbonising the economy. The EP also pays special attention to the external dimension of the EU energy policy. In this matter, it needs to be stressed that the EP is trying to overcome the selfish interests of the Member States which prefer bilateral relations with states exporting energy resources, by creating a policy aimed at protecting the interests of all EU Member States, especially those for which dependence on a single supplier is a problem. Analysing the EP's position on the functioning of energy policy, the fact that a large part of the competence in this area remains with the Member States should be considered. However, in those areas of energy security which are affected by the EU regulations, the European Parliament is active in formulating a coherent, albeit controversial, vision of the EU energy policy for a number of the Member States.

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