The European Union's Geoeconomic Turn: Less Openness and More Realpolitik

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Abstract 197
Keywords 198
I. Introduction 198
II. Open Strategic Autonomy as a Doctrine That Integrates Geoeconomic Awareness 203
III. The (New) Security Continuum. From CFSP/CSDP to the CCP 209
1. The CFSP/CSDP: Highest Autonomy Level in the Most Geopolitically Charged Area 209
2. Integration in Security and Defence: Falling Short of Supranationalism 212
3. Security Creep Through the 'Backdoor': Geoeconomic Thinking in a Supranational Context 213
IV. The Commission's Balancing Act 219
V. Conclusion 224

Abstract

The European Union's (EU) geoeconomic turn has had a considerable impact on decision-making that involves security considerations. Tools such as the Foreign Subsidies Regulation or the Anti-Coercion Instrument address the weaponisation of chokepoints in a globally interdependent economy and safeguard economic security. Geopolitical developments such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine have become stealthy drivers of integration in the Union. As a result, an exceedingly larger no man's land is created where the bound-

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aries between the Common Foreign and Security Policy and its intergovernmental features, on the one hand, and the Common Commercial Policy's supranational paradigm, on the other, are increasingly blurred. This land is claimed by actors such as the European Commission through the Open Strategic Autonomy doctrine. Nonetheless, legitimacy issues arise when specific policy instruments are leveraged for purposes other than those envisaged for. This account of integration as a reaction to geopolitical imperatives contrasts the approach seen in the Commission's Legal Service book, '*70 Years of EU Law – A Union for Its Citizens*'. The latter frames European integration in a highly dominant neofunctionalist understanding, emphasising the primacy of law, but minimising the role of geopolitics. Considering the importance of the Book for the narrative of ever-deeper integration, the analysis suggests an enrichment of its theoretical background through an expanded lens that also considers how geopolitics can lead to further integration.

Keywords

European Integration – European Union Law – Common Foreign and Security Policy – Common Commercial Policy – Geopolitics – Geoeconomics

I. Introduction

The European Union's geoeconomic turn (the use of market instruments for ulterior geopolitical and geostrategic purposes[1]) has had a considerable impact on decision-making involving security considerations. It has also blurred the boundaries between the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and their intergovernmental features,[2] on the one hand, and the Common Commercial Policy (CCP) which follows a supranational paradigm, on the other hand. By presenting this development as a consequence of the Union operating in an increasingly geopolitically volatile world, we aim to shed light on a missing perspective of the Legal Service's book, '70 Years of EU

1 For a similar, encompassing, definition, see Sarah Bauerle Danzman and Sophie Meunier, 'The EU's Geoeconomic Turn: From Policy Laggard to Institutional Innovator', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 62 (2024), 1097-1115.

2 Any reference to the CFSP in this article also implicitly entails a reference to the CSDP.

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Law – A Union for Its Citizens':[3] that geopolitics (also) drives integration.[4] The Book represents a major exercise in narrative-building by the Commission's Legal Service, framing integration in terms of a citizen-focused, law-driven process,[5] reflective of a neofunctionalist account of integration. However, the increasingly politicised transfer of power to central actors such as the Commission,[6] coupled with the increased salience of transnational geopolitical threats that cause security risks,[7] have also created the impetus for further integration.

Securitisation processes also contribute to the reshuffling of the *status quo*. They entail an extension of the scope of security interests from a

3 European Commission Legal Service (ed.), *70 Years of EU Law – A Union for Its Citizens* (2nd edn, Publications Office of the European Union 2023) hereinafter 'Legal Service's Book' or 'Book']. The present article does not overlook the fact that the Book is a collaborative project of the Legal Service of the European Commission and that it is cautiously presented as not representative of the Commission's official position. Nonetheless, this article makes a couple of linkages between the Book and the Commission, further expanded in Section IV. At this point, it is sufficient to mention that the letter and the spirit of the Book's preface by President von der Leyen makes any denial of connection between the views of the Legal Service members and of the Commission's official stance less plausible. Additionally, the Legal Service's position is already reflective of the Commission's selective framing of integration through law. Despite the formal denial of connection, underlying premises are common in narrative-building exercises by both bodies. At the same time, the article also contextualises the Book, especially be reference to other official Commission positions where geopolitical events become acknowledged and more central to the framing of integration.

4 In this article, we understand integration as the transfer of decision-making power to Union institutions, such as the Commission, and agencies, especially when such capabilities empower these decision-makers to adopt new instruments to react to geopolitical threats that create security risks, such as the Anti-Coercion Instrument (Regulation 2023/2675/ of 22 November 2023 on the Protection of the Union and its Member States from Economic Coercion by Third Countries, OJ 2023 L 2675 ('Anti-Coercion Instrument'). See, also, Viktor Szép, 'The Legislative History of the EU's Anti-Coercion Instrument', ERA Forum 25 (2024), 127-139. Aspects such as the widening of European integration through enlargement as a result of geopolitical contingencies (see, for instance, Dmytro Panchuk, 'The Impact of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine on Public Support for EU Enlargement, Journal of European Public Policy 31 (2024), 3128-3150 (3128-3130) are beyond the scope of this article; Antoaneta L. Dimitrova, Seda Gürkan and Joachim Koops, 'Stuck on the Stairway of Change: The EU's Enlargement and Security and Defence Policies Post 2022', European Politics and Society (2025), 1-19.

5 See, also, Jacob van de Beeten, 'Festschrift or Fiction? Omissions, Gaps and Blind Spots in 70 Years of EU Law', HJIL 86 (2026), 167-196.

6 Sabine Saurugger, 'Politicisation and Integration Through Law: Whither Integration Theory?', W. Eur. Pol. 39 (2016), 933-952 (935-40); Vivien A. Schmidt, 'Theorising European Integration: The Four Phases Since Ernst Haas' Original Contribution', Journal of European Public Policy 31 (2024), 3346-3371 (3360-3364).

7 This includes, for instance, the US-China competition, or the development of EU-Russia relations. See, for instance, Anna Herranz-Surraellés, Chad Damro and Sandra Eckert, 'The Geoeconomic Turn of the Single European Market? Conceptual Challenges and Empirical Trends', JCMS 62 (2024), 919-937 (924-927).

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traditionally military and defence-oriented nexus to a wider, more open one, which includes economic security,[8] or digital sovereignty.[9] Such developments also lead to a transfer of epistemic authority to identify and address security threats beyond the traditional defence-military nexus.[10] In the EU, it is the Commission that is turning into an increasingly relevant securitisation actor.[11] As a result, one can witness an expansion of the types of instruments through which security goals are pursued that the Commission can leverage as part of the Union's geoeconomic toolkit. For instance, the Anti-Coercion instrument enables the Union to adopt measures such as tariffs or export controls in reaction to economic coercion by third countries.[12] Another example is the European Chips Act, which envisions a series of measures, such as the building of integrated production facilities, deemed to ensure resilience and security of supply in the semiconductor supply chain.[13]

In turn, the dynamic interplay between the CFSP and the CCP when security considerations inform decision-making changes. The CFSP reserves sovereignty space to Member States. While emphasising loyal cooperation,[14] it is characterised by an intergovernmental decision-making process, with unanimity the rule and the removal of the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union over CFSP decisions, save for the imposition of targeted sanctions.[15] The CCP is characterised by a supranational paradigm (with qualified majority voting in the Council and considerable agenda-

8 Guri Rosen and Sophie Meunier, 'Economic Security and the Politics of Trade and Investment Policy in Europe', Politics and Governance 11 (2023), 122-128; Emilia Korkea-aho and Luigi Lonardo, 'How Russia's War Against Ukraine Changed EU Sanctions Decision-Making', Journal of European Integration 47 (2025), 1-22.

9 Jamal Shahin, 'Dancing to the Same Tune? EU and US Approaches to Standards Setting in the Global Digital Sector', Journal of European Integration 46 (2024), 1111-1131 (1116 f.); Georg Wenzelburger and Pascal D. König, 'Sending Signals or Building Bridges? Digital Sovereignty in EU Communicative and Co-Ordinative Discourse', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 63 (2025), 526-547 (528 f.).

10 J. Benton Heath, 'Making Sense of Security', AJIL 116 (2022), 289-339 (292 and 312).

11 See, generally, Thomas Verellen, 'Imperial Presidency Versus Fragmented Executive? Unilateral Trade Measures and Executive Accountability in the European Union and the United States', GLJ 24 (2023), 1127-1145.

12 Anti-Coercion Instrument (n. 4), Annex I.

13 Regulation 2023/1781/EU of 13 September 2023 Establishing a Framework of Measures for Strengthening Europe's Semiconductor Ecosystem […], OJ 2023 L 229, Art. 13.

14 Heidi Maurer and Nicholas Wright, 'How Much Unity Do You Need? Systemic Contestation in EU Foreign and Security Cooperation', European Security 30 (2021), 385-401 (393).

15 Art. 24(1) TEU; 275 TFEU. See, also, Peter van Elsuwege, 'Judicial Review and the Common Foreign and Security Policy: Limits to the Gap-Filling Role of the Court of Justice', CML Rev. 58 (2021), 1731-1760 (1732).

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setting powers for the Commission) and exclusive EU competence as the main pillars underlying decision-making in this area.[16] As a result of the EU's geopolitical awakening,[17] this division between the Member-State focused and politically driven foreign and security policymaking,[18] and the EU's trade and investment policies has become increasingly unclear.[19] Illustrative are developments such as those seeking to safeguard economic security interests.[20] These include measures taken to ensure supply chain resilience,[21] or to safeguard the Union's ability to defend itself from trade coercion[22] through the Anti-Coercion Instrument.[23] Examples also include the Foreign Subsidies Regulation (FSR),[24] foreign investment screening mechanisms,[25] or the use of

16 Billy A. Melo Araujo, *The EU Deep Trade Agenda: Law and Policy* (Oxford University Press 2016), 28, 59; Michal Ovádek and Akhil Raina, 'The Evolution of EU Trade Law Through the Prism of Competence: A Quantitative, Longitudinal Perspective', J. W. T. 53 (2019), 489-508 (493); Christian Freudlsperger, 'Failing Forward in the Common Commercial Policy? Deep Trade and the Perennial Question of EU Competence', Journal of European Public Policy 28 (2021), 1650-1668 (1655); Christian Freudlsperger and Sophie Meunier, 'When Foreign Policy Becomes Trade Policy: The EU's Anti-Coercion Instrument', J. Common Mkt Stud. 62 (2024), 1063-1079 (1067).

17 European Commission, 'Speech by President-Elect von der Leyen in the European Parliament Plenary on the "Occasion of the Presentation of her College of Commissioners and their Programme" <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/speech_19_6408>, last access 11 February 2026 ('This is the geopolitical Commission that I have in mind, and that Europe urgently needs.').

18 See, for instance, Katja Biedenkopf, Oriol Costa and Magdalena Góra, 'Introduction: Shades of Contestation and Politicisation of CFSP', European Security 30 (2021), 325-343 (332).

19 Andrea Christou and Chad Damro, 'Frames and Issue Linkage: EU Trade Policy in the Geoeconomic Turn', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 62 (2024), 1080-1096 (1087).

20 European Commission, 'Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council on "European Economic Security Strategy"', JOIN(2023) 20 final, 2-3; Andi Hoxhaj, '*Securitizing the Economy: The European Economic Security Strategy as a Zeitenwende in the EU's Foreign and Economic Policy*', Verfassungsblog, 19 July 2023, doi: 10.17176/20230719-132106-0.

21 Luuk Schmitz and Timo Seidl, 'As Open as Possible, as Autonomous as Necessary: Understanding the Rise of Open Strategic Autonomy in EU Trade Policy', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 61 (2023), 834-682 (846).

22 Ben Czapnik and Bryan Mercurio, 'The Use of Trade Coercion and China's Model of 'Passive-Aggressive Legalism', JIEL 26 (2023), 322-342.

23 Anti-Coercion Instrument (n. 4).

24 Regulation 2022/2560/EU of 14 December 2022 on Foreign Subsidies Distorting the Internal Market, OJ 2022 L 330 ('Foreign Subsidies Regulation').

25 Regulation 2019/452/EU of 19 March 2019 Establishing a Framework for the Screening of Foreign Direct Investments into the Union, OJ 2019 L 79I. Although the screening system hands over the decision-making power to the Member States, at the time of writing there is a legislative attempt towards more centralisation at EU level through the revision of the Screening Regulation.

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economic sanctions.[26] Ultimately, geopolitical and geoeconomic imperatives can drive integration through the 'backdoor', with the use of procedures typically not reserved for the pursuit of traditional security interests to still address such interests.[27]

In the process of reshuffling the boundaries between the CFSP and the CCP, the Commission gains a newfound importance. Not only does it remain a central decisionmaker in a Union acting within an increasingly geopoliticised global economy, but it also acts as an ideational entrepreneur.[28] The Commission plays an active role in contesting the status quo that has traditionally separated supranational decision-making from intergovernmental frameworks. Since geopolitics has been the domain of the CFSP, it paradoxically supports the Commission's interests to selectively minimise the role of geopolitics in integration, even as it attempts to refine and deploy the Union's geoeconomic toolkit. Otherwise, a widespread acknowledgment of the security threats that a 'Geopolitical Commission' faces can feed into the existing path dependencies that maintain power in the hands of the Member States acting in the European Council, and especially through the Council, to address security threats. This explains why the Commission remains selective in deploying language that indicates geopolitical awareness, depending on the target of the speech act and the goal behind the underlying narrative-building exercise. Such language is mostly missing from the Legal Service's Book. In it, European integration is presented as a neofunctionalist development, driven primarily through the adoption, implementation, and refinement of legal instruments.

At the same time, policy documents and declarations, such as Commission President von der Leyen's declaration before the EU Parliament prior to the start of her Commission's first mandate,[29] present a different, complimentary, narrative. This view acknowledges the fact that geopolitical threats (Russia's invasion of Ukraine, China's trade assertiveness, security of supply considerations in the energy sector etc.) are increasingly guiding EU action, or at

26 Since the latter has been institutionally integrated into the CFSP toolkit, the analysis does not focus on this geoeconomic tool. See, for more details, Luigi Lonardo, *EU Common Foreign and Security Policy After Lisbon. Between Law and Geopolitics* (Springer 2023), 73-88. Nonetheless, despite the centrality of the Council in sanctions decision-making, the Commission's role in this area has become more prominent. While this does not represent an example of the use of CCP procedures to achieve security goals, it remains an instance of ever-increasing transfer of competences to the Commission. See, for instance, Korkea-aho and Lonardo (n. 8), 1-6.

27 Generally, Julian Stueber, The Trade-Security Nexus in EU External Action: A Practice Approach (Springer 2022).

28 Ana E. Juncos and Sophie Vanhoonacker, 'The Ideational Power of Strategic Autonomy in EU Security and External Economic Policies', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 62 (2024), 955-972 (956-958, 960).

29 European Commission (n. 17).

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least Commission action.[30] In fact, in 2015, during the State of the Union Address, former Commission President Juncker went even further and explicitly linked the rise of geopolitical threats, such as Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, to a need for deepened integration: '[i]f we want to promote a more peaceful world, we will need more Europe and more Union in our foreign policy. This is most urgent towards Ukraine.'[31] Considering this tension in narrative-building exercises, the present analysis suggests an enrichment of the theoretical understanding of European integration – through an expanded lens that also considers the impact of geopolitics. Absent a more comprehensive theoretical account of integration, which also guides decision-making, the use of supranational procedures designed for goals other than safeguarding security to, nonetheless, achieve such objectives can affect the Union's legitimacy.[32]

Against this background, Section II explains how the EU's geoeconomic turn, particularly through the leveraging of market instruments under the umbrella of *Open Strategic Autonomy* (OSA), addresses security interests. Section III zooms in on the dynamic interplay between the CFSP and the CCP when security considerations influence decision-making. Section IV then explores the Commission's central role in this transition from intergovernmentalism to supranationalism. By particularly focusing on the Legal Service's Book, the analysis explores the extent to which the Commission leverages geopolitical and geoeconomic developments through narrative-building exercises.

II. Open Strategic Autonomy as a Doctrine That Integrates Geoeconomic Awareness

One threshold issue that needs to be clarified at the outset is the difference between 'geopolitics', 'geoeconomics', and 'OSA.' Understanding the exact scope of each, how they intersect, how they influence each other, and, especially, where they deviate from each other, becomes crucial to understanding their (acknowledged) role in the integration process. This analytical distinction is critical as geoeconomics increasingly blurs the boundaries between market policies and foreign policy. 'Geopolitics' refers to a view of

30 Ilias Alami et al., 'Geopolitics and the 'New' State Capitalism', Geopolitics 27 (2022), 995-1023 (1017).

31 Jean-Claude Juncker, 'State of the Union 2015' (9 September 2015), <https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/51a867db-890f-413d-89cf-0a6a0fa92a3f_en?filename=state_of_the_union_2015_en.pdf>, last access 11 February 2026, 20.

32 Ben Tonra, 'Democratic Foundations of EU Foreign Policy: Narrative and the Myth of EU Exceptionalism', Journal of European Public Policy 18 (2011), 1190-1207 (1190).

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international relations – and especially national interests – as determined by geographical constraints and by the interplay of various forces, such as ethnicity, economic (development), and state-specific internal politics.[33] In this case, territory plays a fundamental role in explaining how states (re)act and what drives their external action.[34] While not delving into the historical development of the concept, one aspect needs to be mentioned here: geopolitical views of the world have traditionally been associated with (historical and geographical) determinism.[35] Geographical positioning, resources, or the climate represented almost immutable forces around which states would craft their grand strategies, even determining expansionism to overcome such constraints.[36] In time, however, scholars have partially deviated from this highly deterministic view of international affairs, especially with the rise of what is known as 'critical geopolitics'.[37] Aspects such as the agency of

33 Antonia Colibăşanu, Geopolitics, Geoeconomics and Borderlands. A Study of Changing Eurasia and Its Implications for Europe (Springer 2023), 3-5.

34 Stefano Guzzini, 'Which Geopolitics?' in: Stefano Guzzini (ed.), *The Return of Geopolitics in Europe? Social Mechanisms and Foreign Policy Identity Crisis* (Cambridge University Press 2012), 18-44 (43-44); David Cadier, 'The Geopoliticisation of the EU's Eastern Partnership', Geopolitics 24 (2019), 71-99. For a more nuanced view, see John Agnew, 'Still Trapped in Territory?', Geopolitics 15 (2010), 779-784.

35 David T. Murphy, '"A Sum of the Most Wonderful Things": Raum, Geopolitics and the German Tradition of Environmental Determinism, 1900-1933', European Ideas 25 (1999), 121-133 (122-124); Harvey Starr, 'On Geopolitics: Spaces and Places', International Studies Quarterly 57 (2013), 433-439 (433-435, 437).

36 John Agnew, 'Capitalism, Territory and "Marxist Geopolitics"', Geopolitics 16 (2011), 230-233 (233). But see Lucian M. Ashworth, 'Realism and the Spirit of 1919: Halford Mackinder, Geopolitics and the Reality of the League of Nations', European Journal of International Relations 17 (2010), 279-301 (289-293) (rejecting the thesis that even Halford Mackinder, considered the main intellectual force behind modern geopolitics, premised his theses on an absolutely deterministic view of geopolitics); Tomasz Klin, 'Conducting the Study of Geopolitics: Three Approaches', Political Studies Review 16 (2018), 92-101 (98 f.) (arguing that early geopolitical theorists (from the beginning of the 20th century) were too readily qualified as determinists and that the intellectual landscape was much more sophisticated). See, also, Simon Dalby, 'History, Geopolitics and Climate Security', Environment and Security 3 (2025), 108-114 (109) (arguing that even climate determinism represents a flawed premise from which conclusions of geopolitical determinism are derived since climate change is a result of other developments, such as the evolution of human civilisation).

37 Vicki Squire, 'Reshaping Critical Geopolitics? The Materialist Challenge', Rev. Int'l Stud. 41 (2015), 139-159 (140, 149); Sami Moisio et al., 'Changing Geographies of the State: Themes, Challenges and Futures' in: Sami Moisio et al. (eds), *Handbook on the Changing Geographies of the State: New Spaces of Geopolitics* (Edward Elgar 2020), 2-4. See, also, Suleyman Orhun Altiparmak, 'China and Lithium Geopolitics in a Changing Global Market', Chinese Political Science Review 8 (2023), 487-506 (491). For a comprehensive account of this historical transformation, with a focus on the imperialist and authoritarian underpinnings of classical geopolitics, including the ideologisation of the term to justify imperial expansion, see Carsten Nickel, 'What Do We Talk About When We Talk About the "Return" of Geopolitics?', Int' l Aff. 1 (2024), 221-239 (224-227).

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subjects of geopolitics,[38] the impact of transnational phenomena like the flow of capital,[39] or the relevance of private technology companies in the pursuit of digital sovereignty[40] become essential for understanding contemporary geopolitical developments.

In any case, European integration cannot be satisfactorily explained by a deterministic view of history.[41] Neofunctionalism is often employed as a guiding theoretical account. It conceptualises integration as a result of incremental spillover and learning, with supranational civil servants in the Commission playing a leading role as a result of engaging with experts and interest groups.[42] Liberal intergovernmentalism, on the other hand, emphasises the main gatekeeping role played by the Member States in the process of European integration.[43] This involves both the articulation of their national preferences towards European integration and engaging in bargaining process with other Member States.[44] Outcomes ultimately depend on each government's relative power. Supranational institutions, including the European Commission, play a reduced role in this government-led process.[45]

None of the theories mentioned earlier contains any core premise of determinism in their structure. At the same time, such theories still fail to account for the role of geopolitical developments in European integration, even when the use of geopolitical lenses does not imply determinism. For instance, neofunctionalism has been criticised for failing to account for the realist layer of intergovernmentalism, the latter emphasising the role of the geopolitical interests as drivers of integration that shape Member State-driven

38 Jaroslav Kurfürst et al., 'Critical Geopolitics in the Era of Identitarian Populism', GeoJournal 89 (2024), 1-15 (7).

39 Alejandro Colás and Gonzalo Pozo, 'The Value of Territory: Towards a Marxist Geopolitics', Geopolitics 16 (2011), 211-220 (212-216); Mengzhu Zhang and Tianzuo Wen, 'The Rise of Chengdu Between Geopolitics and Geo-Economics: City-Regional Development Under the Belt and Road Initiative and Beyond', Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 47 (2022), 971-989 (972).

40 Dennis Broeders, Fabio Cristiano and Monica Kaminska, 'In Search of Digital Sovereignty and Strategic Autonomy: Normative Power Europe to the Test of Its Geopolitical Ambitions', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 61 (2023), 1261-1280 (1264).

41 See, generally, Mark A. Pollack, 'International Relations Theory and European Integration', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 39 (2002), 221-244; Ben Rosamond, 'The Uniting of Europe and the Foundation of EU Studies: Revisiting the Neofunctionalism of Ernst B. Haas', Journal of European Public Policy 12 (2005), 237-254; Saurugger (n. 6); Francesco Nicoli, 'Neofunctionalism Revisited: Integration Theory and Varieties of Outcomes in the Eurocrisis', Journal of European Integration 42 (2020), 897-916; Schmidt (n. 6).

42 Schmidt (n. 6), 3350.

43 Pollack (n. 41), 222-225.

44 Pollack (n. 41), 225.

45 Pollack (n. 41), 225.

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bargaining processes in the Council.[46] Even liberal intergovernmentalism minimised the role of geopolitics in deepening integration, as it emphasised how Member State bargaining in the Council was primarily a result of differing socio-economic interests and not of differing geopolitical imperatives and worldviews.[47] At best, geopolitical considerations played a secondary role.[48] Failure to account for the Union's 'geopolitical awakening', however, makes it exceedingly difficult to explain certain recent developments in EU External Relations (especially trade and investment policy), chief among them the use of geoeconomic tools for strategic and geopolitical purposes.

This is not to say that awareness of geopolitical developments and their impact on integration turns the Union into a polity that displays decision-making patterns primarily guided by geopolitical considerations. While the reaction to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, for instance, may display such patterns, external action, even in the security and defence policy towards the immediate neighbouring region, is still 'rooted in the longstanding EU's foreign policy ethos based on universalist, de-spatialised norms, values, standards and functionalist principles'.[49] This explains why the operationalisation of the OSA doctrine, discussed in more detail below, entails the pursuit of a synthesis between openness and strategic autonomy.

Turning to 'geoeconomics', the concept has a strong connection to a geopolitical understanding of the world but does not identify with the latter. Geoeconomics refers to the use of market tools (e. g., economic sanctions,

46 Schmidt (n. 6), 3351-3352. For a more recent account, focused on the war in Ukraine, see Ulrich Krotz, Danilo Di Mauro and Jonas J. Driedger, 'War as External Cause: Russia's Invasion of Ukraine, the Theorising of European Integration and EU Politics, and the EU's Arduous Formation in Foreign and Security Policy', Journal of European Public Policy 2025, 1-29.

47 For instance, see Andrew Moravcsik, 'Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 31 (1993), 473-524. For a critique, see Schmidt (n. 6), 3354-3355.

48 Andrew Moravcsik, '"Is Something Rotten in the State of Denmark?" Constructivism and European Integration', Journal of European Public Policy 6 (1999), 669-681 (674).

49 Elisabeth Johansson-Nogués and Francesca Leso, 'Geopolitical EU? The EU's Wartime Assistance to Ukraine', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 63 (2024), 127-142 (138 f.); But see Carsten Nickel, 'A Certain Idea of Space: France, Germany, and the Question of Geopolitics in Europe', Journal of European Integration 46 (2024), 1039-1059 (1049-1054) (discussing Franco and German geopolitical traditions and how there have been signs of a possible synthesis at EU level between the two, especially as a reaction to Sino-American competition and Russia's invasion of Ukraine); Calle Håkansson, 'The Ukraine War and the Emergence of the European Commission as a Geopolitical Actor', Journal of European Integration 46 (2024), 25-45 (especially 38 f.) (although not making explicit the underlying definition of 'geopolitics' and neither theorising the role of territory in the transition to a more geopolitically informed policymaking and concluding that, despite the Commission's increased geopolitical awareness, integration in the security and defence areas still depends heavily on the Member States' political will).

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investment screening mechanisms, trade defence instruments such as redressive measures against market-distorting foreign subsidies) for ulterior geopolitical, or strategic, purposes.[50] Geoeconomic tools can be leveraged because of the relationships of interdependence that have come to characterise the global economy.[51] The risks of such interdependence include supply chain disruptions or trade coercion.[52] At the same time, the weaponisation of interdependence, coupled with the features of a global economy increasingly ordered through unilateral,[53] bilateral, and plurilateral arrangements,[54] and not through multilateral initiatives,[55] have created a paradox. States still engage in transnational economic frameworks, but the climate of distrust created by the weaponisation of interdependence has led to both offensive and defensive forms of geoeconomic engagement with other states and transnational actors.[56] Such developments ultimately give rise to a feedback loop. The increasing weaponisation of interdependence leads to a process of securitisation in international economic affairs, which determines the widespread

50 Clara Weinhardt, Karsten Mau and Jens Hillebrand Pohl, 'The EU as a Geoeconomic Actor? A Review of Recent European Trade and Investment Policies' in: Milas Babić, Adam D. Dixon and Imogen T. Liu (eds), *The Political Economy of Geoeconomics: Europe in a Changing World* (Springer 2022), 107-136 (107 f.); Bauerle Danzman and Meunier (n. 1), 1097. But see Pierre Haroche, 'Geoeconomic Power Europe: When Global Power Competition Drives EU Integration', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 62 (2024), 938-954 (939) (for a more nuanced approach to geoeconomics that emphasises 'the involvement of "relative gains" considerations').

51 Axel Anlauf and Stefan Schmalz, 'The Grand Delusions of Globalization', Critical Sociology 51 (2025), 679-693 (682 f.); Guilherme Schneider Rasador and André Moreira Cunha, 'The New Security Grey Zone: Export Controls, Emerging Technologies and US-China Technological Rivalry', The Pacific Review 38 (2025), 1020-1048 (1022-1025).

52 Czapnik and Mercurio (n. 22).

53 Ferdi de Ville, Simon Happersberger and Harri Kalimo, 'The Unilateral Turn in EU Trade Policy? The Origins and Characteristics of the EU's New Trade Instruments', European Foreign Affairs Review 28 (2023), 15-34; Geraldo Vidigal, 'The Unilateralization of Trade Governance: Constructive, Reconstructive, and Deconstructive Unilateralism', Legal Issues of Economic Integration 50 (2023), 1-12; Sophie Bohnert, 'The Shift to Unilateralism in the European Union's Trade Policy: An Exercise in Taxonomy', CML Rev. 62 (2025), 1057-1088.

54 Georgios Dimitropoulos and Richard C. Chen, Julien Chaisse, 'Plurilateralism', Journal of World Investment & Trade 26 (2025), 1-30; Weihan Zhou and Victor Crochet, 'Confronting Fragmentation: A Quest for a Plurilateral Appellate Mechanism under the WTO', Journal of World Investment & Trade 26 (2025), 275-300 (278).

55 Weinhardt, Mau and Pohl (n. 50), 108; David Collins, 'Plurilateralism and the New Geoeconomics of International Law', Journal of World Investment & Trade 26 (2025), 54-81 (55 f.); Bernard M. Hoekman and Petros C. Mavroidis, 'Plurilateral Agreements, Multilateralism and Economic Development', Journal of World Investment & Trade 26 (2025), 31-53 (36); Leonard August Schuette, 'IO Survival Politics: International Organisations Amid the Crisis of Multilateralism', Journal of European Public Policy 31 (2024), 3812-3838 (3812 f.).

56 For instance, see Haroche (n. 50), 948 (suggesting a typology that differentiates between defensive and offensive geoeconomic measures. The former entails goals such as deterrence and protection, while the latter involves coercion and backlash reduction).

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adoption of unilateral solutions designed to respond to such risks.[57] The global economy, thus, increasingly reflects patterns of a zero-sum game viewed through realist lenses.[58] Great power politics are increasingly shaping the global economy.[59]

In turn, this has led to the adoption and refinement of the concept of *economic security*, following securitisation processes that identify the exploitation of economic interdependence arising from the networked global economy as a security threat.[60]

Finally, the OSA is a doctrine that empowers the Union to act autonomously within such an interdependent global economy and to address the security risks which arise from this interdependence.[61] It explains how the Union seeks to harmonise those goals with its principles, rules, and values.[62] Ultimately, the doctrine represents an attempt at reconciling the EU's openness with more defensive measures, something also conceived as necessary to maintain a liberal, rules-based, global order in the increasingly securitised global economy.[63] Nonetheless, the vagueness of OSA also permits its leveraging in different contexts, to appease different stakeholders.[64] That can sometimes make it difficult to translate it into operational policies – or legislative instruments. Given the various, sometimes conflicting,[65] goals that can be sought through the leveraging of the doctrine, it has been suggested that OSA ultimately represents an attempt to rally political capital and legitimacy for what can be described as 'qualified openness'.[66] For present purposes, the

57 Bohnert (n. 53), 1059; Michael Mastanduno, 'Hegemony and Fear: The National Security Determinants of Weaponized Interdependence' in: Daniel W. Drezner, Henry Farrell and Abraham L. Newman (eds), *Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion* (Brookings Institution Press 2021), 67-83 (68).

58 David A. Baldwin, *Power and International Relations* (Princeton University Press 2016), 66-68; Pierre E. Caquet, *The Invention of Realpolitik, 1848-1871* (Palgrave Macmillan 2024), 8, 214.

59 Geoffrey Gertz and Miles M. Evers, 'Geoeconomic Competition: Will State Capitalism Win?', The Washington Quarterly 43 (2020) 117-136 (119).

60 See, for instance, Andreas Dür, Gemma Mateo and Lorane Visart, 'Geopolitics Meets Business Interests: The EU and European Economic Security', Journal of European Public Policy 32 (2025), 1-28.

61 For instance, see Jing Huang, 'China's Role in the EU's Search for Strategic Autonomy: Nonhegemonic Power Relations During World Order Transition', China International Strategy Review 6 (2024), 254-284 (264).

62 Armin Steinbach, 'The EU's Turn to "Strategic Autonomy": Leeway for Policy Action and Points of Conflict', EJIL 34 (2023), 973-1006 (978 f.).

63 Joan Miró, 'Responding to the Global Disorder: the EU's Quest for Open Strategic Autonomy', Global Society 37 (2023), 315-335 (330).

64 Steinbach (n. 62), 977-979.

65 Steinbach (n. 62), 1000-1004.

66 Schmitz and Seidl (n. 21), 837-839.

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article focuses mostly on the use of OSA as a doctrine to justify (economic) security-oriented measures and policies.[67] This ranges from the EU's ability to protect its own critical infrastructure to access to critical resources and minerals needed, among others, to guarantee security of energy supply or as essential inputs in the green energy transition.[68] At the same time, this also marks a departure from an understanding of security as entailing solely a defence and military nexus, which has a structural impact on decision-making processes in the Union, an aspect to which this article now turns.

III. The (New) Security Continuum. From CFSP/CSDP to the CCP

This section shows how the (institutional) evolution of security in the Union has developed. Starting from the orthodox position of a military-focused security intimately linked to – and strictly controlled by – the Member States under the CFSP/CSDP realm, a gradual transition is observed towards an amalgam of trade and security considerations operating under the CCP and influenced by a new geoeconomic logic.

1. The CFSP/CSDP: Highest Autonomy Level in the Most Geopolitically Charged Area

The Common Security and Defence Policy (former European Security and Defence Policy) is less than a quarter of a century old.[69] The Heads of State and Governments at the Cologne European Council, reacting to the Kosovo crisis, decided to add a security and defence component to the Common Foreign and Security Policy, which had been introduced only some years earlier with the Treaty of Maastricht. The CSDP was enshrined into primary law with the Treaty of Nice, the first CSDP military operations being already underway in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Subsequently, the Lisbon Treaty characterised the CFSP as an EU competence.[70] The CFSP/CSDP is characterised by considerable flexibility that should be viewed through the lens of

67 Steinbach, (n. 62), 992-1000.

68 Olimpia Fontana, Simone Vannuccini, 'How to Institutionalise European Industrial Policy (for Strategic Autonomy and the Green Transition)', Journal of Industry, Competition and Trade 24 (2024), 1-30, 20 (26 f.).

69 Cologne European Council, Conclusions of the Presidency (2-4 June 1999), Annex III: Presidency Report on Strengthening of the common European policy on security and defence.

70 Art. 24(1) TEU and Art. 2(4) TFEU.

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deference to the Member States, which have extremely broad latitude in this area. Flexibility differentiates CFSP/CSDP from other adjacent areas in the Union's constitutional structure.[71] A primary example of this flexibility can be seen with security opt-outs. A testament to the respect for Member States' choices in an area that lies at the heart of their sovereignty is Art. 42(2) Treaty on European Union (TEU).[72] The latter, accompanied by Declaration 13,[73] and Declaration 14,[74] annexed to the Lisbon Treaty confirm that national security considerations and fundamental choices are respected and are not second-guessed by the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU. The opt-out for Denmark serves as an excellent example.[75] When the Maastricht

71 Panos Koutrakos, 'Foreign Policy Between Opt-Outs and Closer Cooperation' in: Bruno De Witte, Andrea Ott and Ellen Vos (eds), *Between Flexibility and Disintegration: The Trajectory of Differentiation in EU Law* (Edward Elgar 2017), 405-424 (405 f.).

72 'The common security and defence policy shall include the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy. This will lead to a common defence, when the European Council, acting unanimously, so decides. It shall in that case recommend to the Member States the adoption of such a decision in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements. The policy of the Union in accordance with this Section shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States and shall respect the obligations of certain Member States, which see their common defence realised in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), under the North Atlantic Treaty and be compatible with the common security and defence policy established within that framework.'

73 'The Conference underlines that the provisions in the Treaty on European Union covering the Common Foreign and Security Policy, including the creation of the office of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the establishment of an External Action Service, do not affect the responsibilities of the Member States, as they currently exist, for the formulation and conduct of their foreign policy nor of their national representation in third countries and international organisations. The Conference also recalls that the provisions governing the Common Security and Defence Policy do not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of the Member States.'

74 'In addition to the specific rules and procedures referred to in paragraph 1 of Article 24 of the Treaty on European Union, the Conference underlines that the provisions covering the Common Foreign and Security Policy including in relation to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the External Action Service will not affect the existing legal basis, responsibilities, and powers of each Member State in relation to the formulation and conduct of its foreign policy, its national diplomatic service, relations with third countries and participation in international organisations, including a Member State's membership of the Security Council of the United Nations. The Conference also notes that the provisions covering the Common Foreign and Security Policy do not give new powers to the Commission to initiate decisions nor do they increase the role of the European Parliament. The Conference also recalls that the provisions governing the Common Security and Defence Policy do not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of the Member States.'

75 Opt-outs can serve different purposes, including responses to Euroscepticism. See, for instance, Martin Moland, 'Opting Out of an EU Identity? The Effects of Differentiated Integration on European Identity', Journal of European Public Policy 31 (2024), 2515-2538 (2521 f.). This article only focuses on opt-outs that support the construction of a flexible CFSP/CSDP.

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Treaty established the EU and the CFSP was introduced as a formal part of its constitutional structure, Denmark rejected the Maastricht Treaty by referendum and was granted an express opt-out through a Decision of the Heads of Government and State adopted in Edinburgh in December 1992. The Protocol which formalised the Danish opt-out has been retained in every amendment of the Union's primary rules, although in 2022 Danish citizens voted in a referendum to abolish the opt-out.[76]

Indeed, Denmark had not taken part in the incremental institutionalisation of security and defence at the EU level, had stayed clear of military operations conducted under the CSDP umbrella, and had abstained from taking part in intergovernmental decision-making and implementation in the CSDP area.[77] In addition to the general opt-out of Denmark, EU law contains an *ad hoc* opt-out mechanism for Member States to facilitate the decision-making process.[78]

Flexibility supplements the bastion of Member State autonomy in the area of security and defence, which is the unanimity rule pursuant to Article 31(1) first subparagraph TEU:

> 'Decisions under this Chapter shall be taken by the European Council and the Council acting unanimously, except where this Chapter provides otherwise. The adoption of legislative acts shall be excluded.

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76 The Danish opt-out read as follows: 'With regard to measures adopted by the Council pursuant to Article 26(1), Article 42 and Articles 43 to 46 of the Treaty on European Union, Denmark does not participate in the elaboration and the implementation of decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications. Therefore Denmark shall not participate in their adoption. Denmark will not prevent the other Member States from further developing their cooperation in this area. Denmark shall not be obliged to contribute to the financing of operational expenditure arising from such measures, nor to make military capabilities available to the Union. The unanimity of the members of the Council, with the exception of the representative of the government of Denmark, shall be necessary for the acts of the Council which must be adopted unanimously. For the purposes of this Article, a qualified majority shall be defined in accordance with Article 238(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.' (Art. 5, Protocol 22 on the Position of Denmark OJ C 326/1.). On the referendum to abolish the opt-out, see The Danish Parliament, 'The Danish Opt-Outs from EU Cooperation', <https://www.thedanishparliament.dk/en/eu-information-centre/the-danish-opt-outs-from-eu-cooperation>, last access 25 February 2026. See, also, Christos Karetsos and Alexandros Bakos, 'When Strategic Autonomy Meets the Common Foreign and Security Policy – Irreconcilable (Institutional) Paradigms or Untapped Synergies?' in: Narin Idriz, Eva Kassoti and Joris Larik (eds), *The Legal Implications of the EU's Geopolitical Awakening* (Centre for the Law of EU External Relations Papers 2025/1), 132-133.

77 Carolyn Moser, 'The War in Ukraine and Its Repercussions on Europe's "Security and Defence Constitution"', <https://constitutionnet.org/news/war-in-ukraine-repercussions-europe>, last access 25 February 2026.

78 Koutrakos (n. 71).

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This provision is a testament to the Member State autonomy in this area, which lies at the heart of the countries' sovereignty. The second subparagraph introduces the concept of constructive abstention[79] as an effort to ensure decision-making is not rendered ineffective by one or a small minority of countries.[80] However, its significance is extremely limited, since it has only been used rarely.[81] The same rule, of course, applies to the CSDP,[82] as the common security and defence policy is an integral part of the common foreign and security policy.[83]'

2. Integration in Security and Defence: Falling Short of Supranationalism

The Treaty of Lisbon approaches foreign, security and defence policy on the basis of a bifurcated approach.[84] On the one hand, the CFSP remains integrated within the EU External Action realm as a set of principles and objectives set out in Art. 21 TEU and applying both to the CFSP and to all other areas of EU external action (for instance, trade). On the other hand, numerous provisions highlight the distinct nature of the policy. Art. 40 TEU highlights the distinct position of the CFSP vis-à-vis other primary law rules, with the CFSP rules not being situated in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) together with other external action provisions, but in the TEU together with CSDP. In the same vein, Article 24(1) TEU states that the CFSP is subject to 'specific rules and procedures'.[85]

This reflects a quasi-intergovernmental paradigm in security and defence. On the one hand, Member States 'support the Union's external and security policy actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity'.[86] Further-

79 'When abstaining in a vote, any member of the Council may qualify its abstention by making a formal declaration under the present subparagraph. In that case, it shall not be obliged to apply the decision but shall accept that the decision commits the Union. In a spirit of mutual solidarity, the Member State concerned shall refrain from any action likely to conflict with or impede Union action based on that decision and the other Member States shall respect its position. If the members of the Council qualifying their abstention in this way represent at least one third of the Member States comprising at least one third of the population of the Union, the decision shall not be adopted.' (Art. 31(1) second subpara. TEU).

80 Ana E. Juncos, Marianna Lovato and Karolina Pomorska, 'Coordinative Europeanization and Russia's War of Aggression: How Crises Shape Europeanization Dynamics in EU Foreign Policy', Comparative European Politics 23 (2024), 118-138 (127).

81 Koutrakos (n. 71), 408.

82 Art. 42(4) TEU.

83 Art. 42(1) TEU.

84 Koutrakos (n. 71), 410.

85 Panos Koutrakos, *The EU Common and Security Policy* (Oxford University Press 2013), 25-35.

86 Art. 24(3) TEU.

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more, pursuant to the mutual assistance clause,[87] there is even a duty of mutual aid and assistance in case of an armed attack. Yet, this should not diminish the fact that the duty of loyalty does not constitute a high threshold, capable of changing the status of the *quasi*-intergovernmental paradigm in security and defence. Ultimately, because of those considerations, and especially because of the decision-making process which renders the Member States the ultimate decision-makers, security and defence in the EU could be best framed within a quasi-intergovernmental paradigm rather than a supranational one.

3. Security Creep Through the 'Backdoor': Geoeconomic Thinking in a Supranational Context

Unlike the CFSP (and the CSDP), the CCP decision-making process follows different patterns. Qualified majority voting is the rule in this area.[88] Furthermore, the Union's exclusive competence over the CCP[89] (with limited exceptions, such as investor-state dispute settlement[90]) turns this policy area into a perfect breeding ground for technocratic policymaking driven by the Commission.[91] This comes across as an example of supranational integration that can contrast with the more politicised, slower, and often incomplete intergovernmental decision-making process characterising the CFSP/CSDP.[92]

Apart from their common status as essential to the EU's External Action, the CFSP/CDSP and the CCP apparently do not share many common elements. One deals with 'hardcore' state sovereign interests, often referred to as 'high politics'.[93] Geostrategic considerations that often amount to a realist vision of international relations drive such developments.[94] The other

87 Art. 42(7) TEU.

88 Melo Araujo (n. 16), 59; Ovádek and Raina (n. 16), 493; Freudlsperger (n. 16), 1655.

89 Art. 3(1)(e) TFEU.

90 ECJ, *Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Singapore*, opinion of 16 May 2017, case no. 2/15, ECLI:EU:C:2017:376, para. 293.

91 Pierre Haroche, 'A "Geopolitical" Commission: Supranationalism Meets Global Power Competition', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 61 (2022), 970-987; Verellen (n. 11), 1135-1137; Juncos and Vanhoonacker (n. 28), 960, 962 f.

92 Julian Bergmann and Patrick Müller, 'Failing Forward in the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy: The Integration of EU Crisis Management', Journal of European Public Policy 28 (2021), 1669-1687 (1670).

93 Panos Koutrakos, The European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy After the Treaty of Lisbon (May 2017). Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies Report No. 3, available at: <https://sieps.se/media/cycixsce/the-european-union-s-common-foreign-and-security-policy-after-the-treaty-of-lisbon-2017_3.pdf>, 6, 52.

94 Ulrich Krotz and Richard Maher, 'International Relations Theory and the Rise of European Foreign and Security Policy', Wld. Pol. 63 (2011), 548-579 (548, 550, 557-561). Nonetheless, the author also discusses the impact of institutionalist and social constructivist accounts to explain developments in European Foreign and Security Policy.

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one deals with commercial relations, and engages aspects such as the pursuit of free trade, investment, supply chain diversification etc.[95] The apparently limited interaction between these two external relations areas makes it difficult, if not apparently impossible, to leverage one's instruments to achieve goals characteristic of the other. Yet, this is exactly the consequence of the OSA's malleability. The focus behind the concept has been on the bloc's ability to choose its own path, in accordance with its own values, and projecting those values externally through leadership while at the same time shielding itself from coercion and geopolitical threats.[96] This newfound strategic direction has led to common EU responses to external threats that have created the context for further integration. Such developments involved the leveraging of supranational decision-making processes to dynamically pursue goals traditionally reserved for Member State-level action. This was arguably the case with the Anti-Coercion instrument, a feature of the CCP but designed to respond to the dynamics of 'power-based trade relations'.[97]

EU policymakers such as the Commission increasingly act pursuant to a premise that the liberal international paradigm underlying global trade and investment flows does not reflect reality anymore.[98] In particular, neoliberal principles based on efficiencies resulting from free trade, comparative advantage, minimal regulation, and a rules-based multilateral order that have structured global markets are being replaced by a securitised awareness of the interdependencies created by such a networked global economy.[99] It is precisely this interdependence and openness to it that allow other geopolitical rivals to take measures that do not simply affect the EU's economic interests,

95 Thomas Cottier, 'Towards a Common External Economic Policy in the European Union' in: Marc Bungenberg and Christoph Hermann (eds), *Common Commercial Policy After Lisbon* (Springer 2013), 3-15 (14).

96 Frank Hoffmeister, 'Strategic Autonomy in the European Union's External Relations Law', CML Rev. 60 (2023), 667-700 (670).

97 Ljiljana Bukovic, 'The Lithuania-China Row: The European Union's Search for a Strategy and Instruments to Deal with China', Legal Issues of Economic Integration 50 (2023), 391-414 (401, 403-412); Ming Du, 'International Economic Law in the Era of Great Power Rivalry', Vand. J. Transnat'l L. 57 (2024), 723-794 (775); Freudlsperger and Meunier (n. 16), 1075 f.; Lukas Schaupp, 'Decoding the Intersection of Trade and Security in the EU's Anti-Coercion Instrument', European Foreign Affairs Review 29 (2024), 133-158.

98 Sjorre Couvreur, 'Inside the European Union's Trade Machinery: Institutional Changes in an Age of Geoeconomics', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 63 (2025), 284-301 (289-292).

99 Henry Farrell and Abraham L. Newman, 'Weaponized Interdependence. How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion', International Security 44 (2019), 42-79; Anthea Roberts, Henrique Choer Moraes and Victor Ferguson, 'Toward a Geoeconomic Order in International Trade and Investment', JIEL 22 (2019), 655- (656 f.); Herranz-Surraellés, Damro and Eckert (n. 7), 921 f.; Collins (n. 55), 57.

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but also its security (for instance, lack of access to critical materials may affect energy security, or investors from hostile states may seek access to strategic infrastructure).[100] In turn, this determined the EU to develop the concept of OSA and to leverage its trade and investment policies to safeguard – among others – its economic interests by increasingly qualifying its openness in an interdependent world economy.[101]

To be clear, the argument made here does not assume a radical transformation in the EU's trade and investment policy.[102] In fact, as mentioned earlier, the EU's geoeconomic turn would ideally strike a balance between openness, multilateralism, and international cooperation, on the one hand, and autonomy, on the other.[103] As the Commission's 2023 Economic Security Strategy shows, no major U-turn in the Union's values has occurred.[104] This was further reiterated by the Commission in 2024, when it proposed five new initiatives to further improve the Union's economic security resilience (those include outbound Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) screening and export controls on dual-use technologies that affect the EU's security).[105] Institutionally (for instance, within the Commission's Directorate-General (DG) Trade), there remains a culture that embraces neoliberal thinking and open-

100 See, for instance, Fontana and Vannuccini (n. 68).

101 See Section II.

102 See also, Couvreur (n. 98), 284.

103 Gesa Kübek and Isabella Mancini, 'EU Trade Policy Between Constitutional Openness and Strategic Autonomy', Eu Const. L. Rev. 19 (2023), 518-547 (546) (concluding that the Treaties leave ample space to policymakers to balance openness and the pursuit of values such as security); Schmitz and Seidl (n. 21), 845; Steinbach (n. 62), 1001 f.

104 'The EU is one of the most attractive destinations for global companies and for investment. Our economies thrive on open and rules-based trade and investment, on secure cross-border connectivity and collaboration on research and innovation. These elements will remain critical drivers of European competitiveness and resilience as we speed up the twin green and digital transitions. We need to rely on trade and on the Single Market to spur competition and ensure that we have access to the raw materials, technologies, and other inputs which are crucial for boosting our competitiveness, resilience and for sustaining current and future employment and growth. Similarly, we want our partners around the world to continue to benefit from access to the European markets, capital and technologies for their transition to a clean and resilient economy. Getting this balance right is essential and can ensure that our economic and security interests reinforce each other. Achieving this will depend on the following three priorities: (1) promoting our own competitiveness; (2) protecting ourselves from economic security risks; and (3) partnering with the broadest possible range of countries who share our concerns or interests on economic security' (European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Joint Communication to the European Parliament, European Council and the Council on 'European Economic Security Strategy', JOIN(2023) 20 final).

105 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, 'Advancing European Economic Security: An Introduction to Five New Initiatives', COM (2024) 22 final, 1-2, 4.

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ness in trade policy.[106] Thus, even as the geoeconomic turn unearths a changed approach to external economic relations it requires a balancing act between sometimes competing sets of interests.[107] Guaranteeing the bloc's (economic) security interests through the implementation of geoeconomic instruments requires a departure from a total adherence to a rules-based multilateral order, based on free trade and open borders. Such instruments enable the EU, for instance, to react to supply chain disruptions,[108] the use of foreign investment to gain control or, at least, entry to strategic assets of EU Member States,[109] or to secure access to critical raw materials.[110]

Ultimately, what those developments mean, however, is that the EU's almost blind adherence to a liberal international order is over, with the rules of the game having changed. The EU now pursues a more assertive trade policy. It can make use of market tools both to further free trade goals and to protect itself from (economic) coercion. As an example of the former, it may negotiate market access commitments with countries such as Viet Nam.[111] At the same time, the Union might scrutinise foreign actors looking to acquire access to strategic assets in the internal market. It can do this, for example, via

106 Ferdi de Ville and Jan Orbie, 'The European Commission's Neoliberal Trade Discourse Since the Crisis: Legitimizing Continuity Through Subtle Discursive Change', The British Journal of Politics and International Relations 16 (2014), 149-167; Schmitz and Seidl (n. 21), 839-841; Couvreur (n. 98), 291. But see Martin Guzman and Joseph E. Stiglitz, 'Post-Neoliberal Globalization: International Trade Rules for Global Prosperity', Oxford Review of Economic Policy 40 (2024), 282-306 (294) (discussing industrial policymaking in the EU and, by reference to the Commission's published strategies, showing how since 2012 the Commission's approach to intervening in the economy has changed). On the role of industrial policy in the EU's geoeconomic turn, see Jan Ruck, 'A Geoeconomic Fix? European Industrial Policy on Semiconductors Amidst Global Competition', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 64 (2024), 742-761 (748-756) (focusing on the semiconductor supply chain); Daniel Fiott, 'From Liberalisation to Industrial Policy: Towards a Geoeconomic Turn in the European Defence Market?', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 62 (2024), 1012-1027 (1014-1016) (focusing on defence industrial policy); Sergio Mariotti, '"Open Strategic Autonomy" as an Industrial Policy Compass for the EU Competitiveness and Growth: The Good, the Bad, or the Ugly?', Journal of Industrial and Business Economics 52 (2025), 1-26. On the increasing inter-connection between trade and industrial policies, see Scott Lavery, 'Rebuilding the Fortress? Europe in a Changing World Economy', Review of International Political Economy 31 (2024), 330-353 (331, 346-349).

107 Schmitz and Seidl (n. 21), 845; Juncos and Vanhoonacker (n. 28), 962 f., 966; Laia Comerma, 'China as a Catalyst to the European Union's Trade Defence Instruments', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 64 (2025), 693-719 (694 f., 709).

108 Schmitz and Timo Seidl (n. 21), 846.

109 Rosen and Meunier (n. 8).

110 For instance, see John Seaman, 'Critical Raw Materials, Economic Statecraft and Europe's Dependence on China', The International Spectator 60 (2025), 20-37.

111 For instance, Arts 8.4 and 8.10 of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (signed 30 June 2019; entered into force 1 August 2020).

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the screening of inbound FDI. It can also act by investigating foreign subsidies (and eventually imposing remedies) given to an EU company controlled by a third-state party.[112]

While commendable in terms of awareness of the changing nature of the global order, the EU's geopolitical awakening raises legitimacy issues. These stem from the fact that the Union's institutional structure finds its legitimacy in two sources: the European Parliament (as a representative of the citizens), and the Member States.[113] As such, Union action must always follow the limits set by the Member States. This results primarily from the principle of conferral and the division of competences as set out in the treaties.[114] However, the dividing line between Union and Member State competence is not always clear. That means that legitimacy issues can arise from exploiting the unclear separation of competences in those situations in which the existing balance between EU and Member State action is upended. The leveraging of tools once conceived as purely market-oriented for geopolitical and strategic purposes represent an instance of unclear separation between the sphere of Union action and the reserved (policy) space of Member States.[115] For example, the legal bases for the adoption of the Foreign Subsidies Regulation are Arts 114 (internal market) and 207 (CCP) TFEU. Yet few would doubt the geoeconomic and strategic relevance of the FSR.[116] It arose in the context of an increasingly contested World Trade Organization,[117] especially as the Subsidies and Countervailing Measures Agreement only applies to subsidies

112 Foreign Subsidies Regulation (n. 24).

113 Amichai Magen and Laurent Pech, 'The Rule of Law and the European Union' in: Christopher May and Adam Winchester (eds), *Handbook on the Rule of Law* (Edward Elgar 2018), 235-256 (252-253).

114 ECJ, *EU-Canada CET Agreement*, opinion of 30 April 2019, opinion no. 1/17, ECLI:EU:C:2019:341, para. 110; Luke Dimitrios Spieker, 'Was Grimm Wrong? Putting the Over-Constitutionalization of EU Law to the Test', GLJ 25 (2025), 416-448 (441 f.).

115 This is not to say that EU trade policy has never been influenced by politics or used as a tool to achieve political goals. However, with the rise of the EU's Open Strategic Autonomy paradigm, there has been a metamorphosis from a possible understanding of global trade that can be influenced by external events to an actual acknowledgement that trade can play a major geopolitical and geostrategic role (but see, for a more nuanced assessment, Milan Babic, 'State Capital in a Geoeconomic World: Mapping State-Led Foreign Investment in the Global Political Economy', Review of International Political Economy 30 (2023), 201-228 (206-209)). It is this change in narratives/paradigms that drive the reconceptualisation of trade and especially the – sometimes competing – values that underpin policymaking in this area. See, for instance, Christou and Damro (n. 19), 1091 f.

116 Thomas Verellen and Alexandra Hofer, 'The Unilateral Turn in EU Trade and Investment Policy', European Foreign Affairs Review 28 (2023), 1-14 (9); Hoffmeister (n. 96), 679 f.

117 But see, for a more nuanced assessment, Gabrielle Marceau, Jian Ling Teo and Sean Rappa, 'Navigating the New Frontiers in International Trade: The World Trade Organization as a Global Governance Forum', Journal of World Investment & Trade 26 (2025), 333-374.

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for goods and not services or investments.[118] The adoption of the FSR was also driven by the global competition for subsidisation,[119] where industrial powers such as China or the United States heavily subsidise their domestic champions, which eventually compete with European firms – either in global markets or in the Union's Single Market.[120] Other tools, such as the Anti-Coercion Instrument, also connect the trade sphere with the Union's security interests (the exploitation of economic interdependence can create security risks).[121]

Although, as it stands right now, the use of market tools and CCP instruments to attain security objectives may pose legitimacy problems, this is not necessarily wrong legally and institutionally.[122] For instance, Article 206 TFEU, which sets the main goals of the CCP, provides that 'the Union shall contribute, in the common interest, to the harmonious development of world trade, the progressive abolition of restrictions on international trade and on foreign direct investment, and the lowering of customs and other barriers'. Focusing exclusively on this treaty provision might lead one to believe that using trade and investment instruments for ulterior strategic purposes defeats the purposes and limits of the CCP. However, the CCP forms part of the EU's External Action and needs to be developed in a way that also accounts for its broader objectives.[123] Certain general objectives, found in Art. 21(2) TEU, allow the EU to pursue strategic goals (in response to geopolitical events and developments) as part of its external action. Whether this applies or not to the CCP, however, remains debatable. Commentators have argued that those parts of Art. 21(2) that focus on purely strategic, defence, and security issues can only be pursued via CFSP mechanisms.[124] Nonetheless, conflation between policy objectives may still occur.[125]

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118 Nerina Boschiero and Stefano Silingardi, 'The EU Trade Agenda – Rules on State Intervention in the Market', GLJ 24 (2024), 151-178 (160 f., 166); Malte Frank, 'The EU's New Foreign Subsidy Regulation on Collision Course with the WTO', CML Rev. 60 (2023), 925-958 (926, 939).

119 Herranz-Surraellés, Damro and Eckert (n. 7), 932.

120 Simon J. Evenett, 'Economic Statecraft: Is There a Sub-National Dimension? Evidence from the United State-China Rivalry', World Trade Review 20 (2021), 220-237 (220-222); Boschiero and Silingardi (n. 118), 152; Frank, (n. 118), 948, 956; Verellen and Hofer, (n. 116), 4 f.

121 Bukovic (n. 97), 401, 403-12; Du (n. 97), 775; Freudlsperger and Meunier (n. 16), 1075 f.; Schaupp (n. 97).

122 Jiří Přibáň, 'European Constitutional Imaginaries: A Socio-Legal Perspective', European Law Open 4 (2025), 387-401 (400).

123 Art. 207(1) TFEU; Hoffmeister, (n. 96), 673.

124 Lonardo (n. 26), 65 f.

125 Lonardo (n. 26), 66.

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It has also been argued that the goals found in Art. 21(2)(a) TEU (which also includes the pursuit of security in general) should be assigned to the CFSP.[126] The differentiation between economic and social objectives, on the one hand, and the foreign policy and security ones, on the other – with the latter coming under the ambit of the CFSP and entailing specific processes and decision-making patterns, has also been suggested.[127] Yet, with the relative novelty of the concept of economic security,[128] any clear settlement of such debates might not be forthcoming. As safeguarding the resilience of the European economy has become a major strategic goal that contributes to reinforcing European sovereignty,[129] the use of economic instruments to react to geopolitical developments has increased.[130] Tools such as the Anti-Coercion Instrument, for instance, enable reactions to economic coercion.[131] An example can be seen with the Chinese trade embargo on Lithuania, an EU Member State, for its willingness to develop relations with Taiwan by opening a representative office on the latter's territory.[132] Other tools, such as the Chips Act, seek to address structural independencies that can lead to exploitation in the semiconductor supply chain, as Europe accounts for only 9 % of the global semiconductor production.[133]

IV. The Commission's Balancing Act

Before the Commission can navigate the changing global economic order and leverage the OSA doctrine to address security risks, it needs to garner support from stakeholders who are impacted by such processes, particularly the Member States. This is especially the case when considering the *shadow* integration processes that accompany the geoeconomic turn. One way through which such support can be obtained is through narrative-building and issue framing.[134] If

126 Peter van Elsuwege, 'EU External Action aAfter the Collapse of the Pillar Structure: In Search of a New Balance Between Delimitation and Consistency', CML Rev. 47 (2010), 987-1019 (1006).

127 Panos Koutrakos, *EU International Relations Law* (Hart 2013), 420.

128 The EU's geoeconomic turn and the turn to the pursuit of economic security and open strategic autonomy seems to have picked up mostly after 2017. See, for instance, Hoffmeister (n. 96).

129 Juncos and Vanhoonacker (n. 28), 968.

130 European Commission (n. 20), 7-11.

131 Anti-Coercion Instrument (n. 4).

132 Szép (n. 4), 132 f.

133 Dür, Mateo and Visart (n. 60), 16-20.

134 Christou and Damro (n. 19), 1082-1084; Anna Kyriazi, 'Framing the EU Polity: How Commission Presidents Address Crises and Shape the Union', Journal of European Integration 48 (2026), 23-43 (26). See, also, Andrea Capati, 'The Discursive Framing of European Integration in EU-Wide Media: Actors, Narratives and Policies Following the Russian Invasion of Ukraine', Comparative European Politics 23 (2025), 271-299.

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successful, a narrative-building exercise can translate to ideational power that ultimately persuades stakeholders of the salience of a risk and reinforces the central role of the actor benefitting from such leverage in addressing that risk.[135] Put differently, an effective framing exercise can even shape reality and its perception by the addressees of that framing act.[136] This is not too different to the securitisation processes characteristic of the transition from a defence-military conception of security to a more open one, which includes economic security.[137]

At the same time, the Commission needs to engage with various stakeholders, who sometimes have diverging interests. This explains why geopolitical threats and security risks will not always feature in the Commission's portrayal of Union integration and its causes. For instance, the Legal Service's Book focuses less on geopolitical developments, with only the occasional mentioning of how such events determine changes in EU policies, decision-making patterns, or institutional and constitutional developments. Outside of several references to aspects such as the war in Ukraine,[138] or to the need to secure 'strategic reserves' of energy supplies,[139] no comprehensive account of how geopolitics impact EU integration can be found. The Book mostly presents a neofunctionalist view of integration, focusing on the citizen as the central stakeholder in EU governance.[140] Such a view also assumes that law itself has been the driving tool of European integration,[141] minimising the relevance of political interests or other contingencies. This also likely explains why there are only two dedicated

135 Juncos and Vanhoonacker (n. 28), 957 f.

136 Kathleen R. McNamara, *The Politics of Everyday Europe: Constructing Authority in the European Union* (Oxford University Press 2015), 16, 150-154; Kyriazi (n. 134), 4-5, 16.

137 For more details on how securitisation processes involve a speech act that seeks to persuade an audience of the salience and urgency of a (perceived) threat, see Korkea-aho and Lonardo (n. 8), 7. Similarly, but focusing on the leveraging of crises to deepen integration, see Kyriazi (n. 134), 25-27.

138 For instance, see Daniel Calleja and Clemens Ladenburger, 'The Future of European Union Law', in: European Commission Legal Service (ed.), *70 Years of EU Law – A Union for Its Citizens* (2nd edn, Publications Office of the European Union 2023) ('[T]he comprehensive set of economic sanctions on Russia and the procurement of arms for Ukraine have pushed the common foreign and security policy into new territory').

139 Dimitrios Triantafyllou and Luigi Malferrari, 'The European Commission: The Clock Master of the European Union Internal Market' in: European Commission Legal Service (ed.), *70 Years of EU Law – A Union for Its Citizens* (2nd edn, Publications Office of the European Union 2023), 311-334 (320).

140 Daniel Calleja and Tim Maxian Rusche, 'Introduction' in: European Commission Legal Service (ed.), *70 Years of EU Law – A Union for Its Citizens* (2nd edn, Publications Office of the European Union 2023), 15-32 (17).

141 Calleja and Rusche (n. 140), 17.

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chapters to the Union's External Relations,[142] otherwise there being only limited references dispersed throughout chapters that have a different focus. There are only a few mentions of the CFSP and defence interests, and even those are structured in terms of strengthening cooperation in this area, without the analysis delving into patterns of change in the underlying paradigms.[143] References to the CCP are indeed more widespread,[144] but it still represents an exercise in cherry-picking those developments that support the narrative of a liberal and values-oriented Union acting on the external scene, especially to promote human rights and sustainability.[145] Mentions of geoeconomic determinants of Union action, however, are inexistent. Furthermore, there has only been a brief reference to 'Strategic Autonomy', in respect of the development of the Union's own satellite navigation system, Galileo – although this was discussed in the context of an overview of the historical development of EU law.[146]

It is true that the Legal Service's Book does admit at one point that geopolitical developments may have an impact on European integration. However, it does this by acknowledging geopolitics as a *challenge* to integration and not as an actual driver of integration:

> '[A]s European integration tries to progress in the face of major economic, geopolitical, public health and technological challenges, it is much more important that the Commission ensures that the clock in its own clock tower is functioning

142 A recurring pattern with both chapters is that they both show how the Union is leveraging its (market) power to ensure global respect for two of its fundamental values: human rights and environmental protection. While the focus of those chapters on aspects of fundamental importance for the Union's External Action is commendable, those do not entail major security and strategic considerations, and they do not focus on geopolitical dynamics. See Margherita Bruti Liberati, Thomas Ramopoulos and Daniele Bianchi, 'The European Union as a Worldwide Promoter of the Universality and Indivisibility of Human Rights' in: European Commission (ed.), *70 Years of EU Law: A Union for its Citizens* (2nd edn, Publications Office of the European Union 2023), 76-94. See, also, James Flett, 'The European Union Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and Its Consistency with World Trade Organization Law' in: European Commission Legal Service (ed.), *70 Years of EU Law – A Union for Its Citizens* (2nd edn, Publications Office of the European Union 2023) 272-294.

143 Calleja and Ladenburger (n. 138), 388-390.

144 There are only two mentions of the CCP in the book (besides a reference to it in respect of historical legal developments), both in the context of leveraging the Union's market power to promote universal respect for human rights. See Liberati, Ramopoulos and Bianchi (n. 142), 89. There are, however, multiple references to aspects involving trade policy.

145 As others have shown (for instance, see Henri de Waele, 'Beyond the Posture, Beyond the Pale – Assessing the EU's Real Record as An International Human Rights Actor', HJIL 86 (2026), 245-260, the Legal Service also engages in cherry-picking exercises when promoting an impeccable human rights record.

146 Calleja and Rusche (n. 140), 22.

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well and that the clocks of the other churches in the town are in sync with it, in order to effectively pursue the same public objectives.'[147]

Nonetheless, by reading between the lines one may conclude that the Legal Service is, even if in a brief and fragmentary fashion, acknowledging the impact that geopolitical developments may have on European integration. The reference to 'public objectives' and pursuing them in the context of geopolitical contingencies, ensuring a calibration between the functioning of the Commission's 'clock tower' and those of 'other churches' suggests that such contingencies are sometimes the actual catalyst to further integration.

At the same time, deeper engagement with the geopolitical context would have provided a more elaborate conceptualisation and theoretical understanding of European integration. It would have meant going beyond a neofunctionalist view and understanding that European integration can sometimes occur not because of a spillover from prior integration,[148] but because of external threats.[149]

A valid question that arises at this point, however, is whether the Legal Service should have engaged in any form of analysis or discussion of integration driven by geopolitical developments when the goal was apparently much narrower – simply to emphasise the role of law in European integration, which is undeniable. While valid, such a question would fail to properly contextualise the often-dichotomous nature of geopolitics and law. Each has often been presented as a counterweight to theoretical accounts that overly-emphasise the role of the other in European integration.[150] Thus, failure to at least acknowledge the role that geopolitics plays in EU integration risks distorting the importance of law. Furthermore, focusing on geopolitical developments can also explain why integration has sometimes not been achieved despite the existence of otherwise favourable conditions because of prior integration in adjacent areas. One example is energy security, the energy mix, and the choice of suppliers, where geopolitical imperatives guide na-

147 Triantafyllou and Malferrari (n. 139), 311.

148 Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe. Political, Social, and Economic Forces 1950-1957* (University of Notre Dame Press 2004), xiv-xvii; Sophie Meunier, 'Integration by Stealth: How the European Union Gained Competence Over Foreign Direct Investment', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 55 (2017), 593-610 (594); Schmidt (n. 6), 3350, 3352 f.

149 See, for instance: Niklas Helwig, The EU's Accidental Geopolitics: Europe's Geopolitical Adaptations and Limitations (May 2024). Finish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) Working Paper No. 138, available at: <https://www.fiia.fi/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/wp138_the-eus-accidental-geopolitics.pdf>.

150 Schmidt (n. 6), 33.

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tional interests and prevent a cohesive approach at Union level.[151] While Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to a diversification of energy suppliers and a decrease in dependence on Russian gas,[152] it is too early to tell if this will have long-term structural effects on European integration or it remains an isolated response to a crisis.[153]

At the same time, different contexts may entail different approaches to narrative building. As already mentioned, when President von der Leyen, prior to the start of her first mandate, presented the College of Commissioners before the EU Parliament, she explicitly acknowledged the fact that this Commission would act within a geopolitically volatile world.[154] Thus, the Commission balances between explicitly acknowledging geopolitical threats (and the way it pursues decision-making in response to them) and focusing on other causes of European integration and on other drivers of European values, such as an adherence to a liberal-based order, turning on transparency and openness. While understandable, this approach may risk keeping artificially separate areas which mutually influence each other (such as CFSP and CCP). Another instance of the Commission (or its representatives) acting in a geopolitically aware manner can be seen with former Commission President Juncker's State of the Union address in 2015 – explicitly linking deeper integration to respond to geopolitical developments such as Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.[155] Furthermore, the Commission may selectively address geopolitical threats, especially when they expose the

151 Oriol Costa and Esther Barbé, 'A Moving Target. EU Actorness and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine', Journal of European Integration 45 (2023), 431-446 (434); Leigh Hancher and Adrien De Hauteclocque, 'Strategic Autonomy. REPowerEU and the Internal Energy Market: Untying the Guardian Knot', CML Rev. 61 (2024), 55-92 (56 f., 72 f.); Aline Bartenstein, 'Beyond Crisis: The Temporal Dynamics of Solidarity in EU Energy Governance', Journal of European Integration 47 (2025), 1-21 (2 f.).

152 Tomasz Jerzyniak and Anna Herranz-Surrallés, 'EU Geoeconomic Power in the Clean Energy Transition', J. Common Mkt. Stud. 62 (2024), 1028-1045 (1035).

153 This is not to say that the context for deeper integration in the energy sector that would eventually extend to aspects such as the energy mix and choice of suppliers is lacking. For instance, the increasing calls for a Union industrial policy would also involve addressing considerations such as security of energy supply and the development of an industrial base that would facilitate the green energy transition. See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A New Industrial Strategy for Europe. COM (2020) 102 final, 3, 8. There also was an update to the Industrial Strategy in 2021. See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Updating the 2020 New Industrial Strategy: Building a Stronger Single Market for Europe's Recovery. COM(2021) 350 final, 4, 11.

154 European Commission (n. 17).

155 Juncker (n. 31).

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limits of Union action. This was the case, for example, with concealing both the Union's failure to contain Russia's aggression since the 2000s (for instance, the invasion of Georgia) or the high degree of dependence on the US to address Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.[156]

V. Conclusion

External threats have led to a geopolitical and geoeconomic awakening in the Union. Adapting to such challenges, the EU is becoming more pragmatic, and this pragmatism is reflected in its new *dogma*. The OSA doctrine facilitates the Union's geoeconomic pivot through the leveraging of market tools to attain security goals outside the traditional intergovernmental frameworks where they naturally belong to, opting for supranational structures. Bringing security considerations under more flexible frameworks (such as the qualified majority umbrella of the CCP in terms of decision-making), bypassing the CFSP constraints (including unanimity voting) can trigger legitimacy issues. Deploying constructively vague terminology (such as 'Open Strategic Autonomy') that can accommodate such policies, which are, nonetheless, informed by geopolitical and geoeconomic necessity, also entails similar risks. 'Traditionalism' is abandoned in the security paradigm as a whole. The bloc is moving from a traditional – and until recently prevailing – closed understanding of security, which is military and defence-oriented, to a more open one. This latter paradigm revolves around *economic security*, which encompasses a wider array of factors and considerations, becoming increasingly harder to distinguish itself from purely economic interests.

These developments cannot continue to be seen as separate and unconnected episodes. They demand a more rigorous theoretical conceptualisation. They must be seen as a continuum which influences the integration process, even inadvertently. Ultimately, geopolitics can drive integration. This is precisely the perspective that the Commission's book overlooks. Although the dust has not settled yet, it is already evident that the analysis of the EU's geoeconomic pivot cannot and should not be restricted by looking at it as just another EU policy. It must be seen as a paradigm shift with far-reaching consequences. Failure to consider the implications of such developments can potentially have incalculable consequences not only for integration *per se* but for the European project as a whole, even more so in a (geo)politically fragile continent.

156 Kyriazi (n. 134), 36.

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