

DIPLOMACY'S FUNCTION IN GUARANTEEING NATIONAL ENERGY SECURITY

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Abstract. This article examines the strategic role of energy diplomacy as a fundamental instrument through which states ensure their energy security, economic resilience, and long-term stability. In the contemporary global landscape – characterised by the transition to renewable energy sources, increasing geopolitical tensions, and rising economic interdependence – traditional mechanisms of energy management are no longer sufficient. The subject of this research is the multidimensional function of diplomacy in strengthening national energy systems, shaping international energy relations, and supporting the implementation of sustainable strategies, with a focus on the case of the Republic of Moldova. Methodologically, the study adopts a theoretical-analytical approach, which involves the examination of academic literature, policy documents, and recent developments in international energy governance. A comparative analysis is also employed to contrast Moldova's diplomatic initiatives with broader European and regional models of energy cooperation. Additionally, the research uses qualitative policy analysis to explore how diplomatic tools – such as bilateral negotiations, multilateral agreements, and participation in regional energy platforms – contribute to enhancing energy security and diversifying supply sources. This combination of methods enables a holistic understanding of the mechanisms through which diplomacy shapes the national energy agenda. The purpose of the study is to identify the ways in which diplomacy can reduce Moldova's historical vulnerabilities, especially its dependence on a limited number of external suppliers, and to demonstrate how integrating into European energy structures strengthens both security and economic competitiveness. By analysing diplomatic efforts related to energy diversification, cross-border interconnections, infrastructure development, and cooperation with European institutions, the study highlights the importance of proactive and coherent external engagement. The conclusions indicate that energy diplomacy has become a central pillar of national security policy, particularly for small and geopolitically exposed states such as the Republic of Moldova. Diplomatic actions – including participation in European energy markets, negotiating alternative supply routes, and securing financial and technical support from international partners – significantly increase national resilience. The findings also show that Moldova's alignment with EU norms and integration into regional networks provide long-term benefits in terms of sustainability, affordability, and infrastructure modernisation. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that diplomacy is not only a tool of political communication but a strategic instrument capable of shaping energy policy, reducing external risks, and ensuring the country's economic and security interests in an increasingly volatile global environment.

Keywords: energy diplomacy, European Union, economic interdependencies.

JEL Classification: F02, F55, F67

1. Introduction

The term "energy diplomacy" describes diplomatic initiatives aimed at improving access to markets and energy resources (Giuli, 2015). It is a system of using diplomatic communication, negotiation, lobbying, advocacy, and other nonviolent tactics to influence foreign governments' policies, resolutions, and behaviour as well as other international variables.

From a conceptual standpoint, foreign policy and energy diplomacy generally have a principal-agent connection (Giuli, 2015). Energy diplomacy serves as a means of accomplishing the objectives, whereas foreign policy establishes the overarching political strategy and determines the goals (Popescu, 2023). One tool of foreign politics is energy diplomacy. Protecting economic and energy security

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is the goal of energy diplomacy (International Energy Agency [IEA], 2022).

A state's commercial and trade connections with other governments and organisations are facilitated by energy diplomacy, which protects energy security by ensuring its availability, dependability, and cost. This chapter's objective is to examine, categorise, and emphasise the value of diplomacy and its strategies for accomplishing goals pertaining to Moldova's security's energy component (European Commission, 2021). The author's goal is to examine the opportunities brought about by the new regional political environment. In addition to the numerous risks and issues that our nation is currently dealing with, it is crucial to capitalise on the greatest number of benefits that come with choosing the European route, such as alignment with the community's energy policy through the harmonisation of the legal framework, the interconnection of infrastructure, and the availability of funding and technical assistance from European partners.

2. The Strategic Relationship Between Foreign Policy, National Security, and Energy Diplomacy

Simultaneously, we plan to find more alliances and partnerships with nations outside of the EU that could benefit us in terms of energy efficiency and guaranteeing the safety of this crucial sector for the national economy. A complicated area of international relations, energy diplomacy is intimately related to its main, foreign policy, and general national security. As a relatively new area of foreign politics, we see this relationship, particularly the incorporation of energy diplomacy into state foreign strategies. Energy has only entered our civilisation in the last 150 years, whereas foreign politics has existed for thousands of years. But over that time, there have been more and more overlapping and related aspects of energy and foreign policy. The idea of national security is strongly related to and dependent upon foreign policy in its own right. The concept of national security refers to the measures that regulate a state's ties with other states based on factors such as geography, external threats, and other national security issues, such as energy. Since it is the instrument used to carry out total national security, foreign policy and national security are related. Additionally, energy diplomacy is directly related to national security.

National security refers to a country's ability to balance all of its tools of state policy through governance in order to defeat its multifaceted dangers, both domestic and external. In order to address the numerous threats to national security, it seeks to preserve geographical, political, and economic integrity as well as national independence. In particular,

external energy relations are the focus of energy diplomacy. Notwithstanding the three notions' ontological hierarchy, it is a common occurrence for them to constantly cross paths in real-world geopolitical situations and diplomatic practice. A developing area of diplomacy that aims to provide energy security is called "energy diplomacy." Due to its growing influence on the economy and national security, energy has become a topic of discussion in the fields of diplomacy and foreign policy.

The economy is driven by energy, which can be used for any kind of work. It must always have its unbroken flow, both inward for importing nations and outward for exporting nations. The issue of energy was not regarded as urgent or geopolitical until the final decades of the 20th century. The supply, availability, and cost did not pose a security risk. The capacity for industrial output and consumption was lower, and energy transportation was generally reliable and safe. Energy demand increased at an astounding rate during the industrial revolution and reached a peak in the 20th century. According to Giuli (2015), diplomatic initiatives aimed at improving access to energy resources and markets are referred to as energy diplomacy. Through diplomatic discourse, negotiation, lobbying, advocacy, and other nonviolent ways, it is a system of influencing other governments' policies, resolutions, and conduct as well as other international variables. In general, there is a theoretically principal-agent relationship between foreign policy and energy diplomacy. While foreign policy establishes the overarching political approach and outlines the goals, energy diplomacy serves as a means of accomplishing those aims. Energy diplomacy is a foreign policy tool. Energy and economic security are the goals of energy diplomacy. A state's economic and trade interactions with other states and organisations are facilitated by energy diplomacy, which protects Availability, dependability, and affordability to ensure energy security. Some nations and areas are dealing with the energy security dilemma in the complicated dynamics of foreign policy, energy diplomacy, and security. It is an empirical fact that nations with abundant energy resources are less vulnerable to energy-related risks. In certain situations, energy security is at risk, but in others, the country's energy resources are posing a greater risk to economic security.

3. Moldova's Energy Vulnerabilities and the Strategic Role of Energy Diplomacy in the European Integration Process

Their energy diplomacy is influenced by these risk levels. In nations with abundant natural resources, energy diplomacy is typically focused on attaining economic stability, consistent output, high pricing, and high levels of demand. The goal of the expanding

diplomatic field of energy diplomacy is to ensure energy security. National security, foreign policy, and energy diplomacy have a complicated and ever-changing nexus. Energy's growing influence on the economy and national security has brought it into the realm of foreign policy and diplomacy. Throughout their empirical application in everyday geopolitics and international relations in the energy sector, the three ideas interact, yet their ontological hierarchy places them on separate levels, with national security being the most general and energy diplomacy the least. The process of incorporating energy diplomacy into foreign policy is the specific subject of observation. It is demonstrated that energy diplomacy has incorporated into foreign policy in two main ways. Energy has historically and conceptually been incorporated into national foreign policy through the domains of economics and security. Energy entered some states through the sphere of security policy, whereas in others it entered through the field of economic policy.

The energy security dilemma is the result of a particular intersection of economic security, foreign policy, national security, and economic diplomacy. It serves as an example of the contradictions in the overall situation where a nation's resource wealth leads to steady exporter status and, in turn, stable exporting energy diplomacy. The shift to low-carbon energy has had the most influence on energy diplomacy. The dynamic relationship between geopolitics, national security strategies, foreign policies, and energy diplomacy will once again shift as more renewable energy changes the geography of resources. This will involve applying various energy diplomacy strategies and reconfiguring energy risks in novel ways. In the energy sector, the European Union has two challenges: addressing the threat posed by climate change and guaranteeing supply security for all European consumers. The core of the energy union is energy security, which, as of 2014, is the primary motivator behind new infrastructure development initiatives in the EU's energy sector.

The Member States most actively promoting quicker energy market integration and the energy union's successful establishment are the Central and Eastern European countries that have been hardest hit by the implications of the consecutive gas crises in. In particular, Lithuania has been pressing for the development of a regional gas market for the Baltic States and Finland: in this respect, it has achieved complete independence from Russia's gas and electricity monopoly, and Lithuania has contributed substantially to the energy independence of the other countries, as well as to the diversification energy routes and sources. Additionally, by acting as a regional champion, the nation has accelerated investment and the growth of the gas market in neighbouring countries. It plans to construct a regional gas exchange that will be fully operational by 2020,

at which point the entire region will be physically connected and interconnected.

Lithuania has shown that it can accomplish nearly anything by utilising the opportunities provided by EU membership, including energy security, solidarity with its neighbours, access to EU funds, and credibility and visibility within the EU, in contrast to nations that insist on their own energy policies as a prerogative of sovereignty. In light of the present energy crisis, Lithuania is cited as an example of European leadership and unity. Nonetheless, it is easy to identify the reasons why the Republic of Moldova is still unable to engage in energy diplomacy that would enable it to resume long-term talks with the Russian Federation or perhaps to participate in other alliances that may guarantee its energy security (Antoci, 2016).

First of all, we are a young state, having only been an independent state for a little more than 30 years. Our diplomacy is still in its infancy, and our customs and negotiation techniques are continuously developing. There are rare exceptions, but generally speaking, the most effective diplomats and negotiators are those who represent wealthy and established nations. However, from the perspective of its location on the global map, it is one of the factors that has always led to the conflict between the West and the East. This location has historically been a major cause of many dangers that have occurred on our country's territory, and diplomacy has not been adequately prepared to resolve many of these situations. The most recent and ongoing conflict that has not been resolved diplomatically is the Transnistrian conflict, which highlights the interest and inclusion of the world's major powers in our country's internal affairs, our reliance on the geopolitical entourage in the region, and the vulnerability of national diplomacy to settle such disputes. Naturally, it also makes sense that our country's dearth of natural energy resources makes us even more susceptible and reliant on importing resources from abroad (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe [UNECE], 2021).

The intricacy of the issue facing Moldovan diplomacy is significant given our geographic and historical disadvantage with regard to energy security (IEA, 2022). It should not be overlooked that the Moldovan Gas Company is the largest distributor of gas resources because of the Republic of Moldova's accession to the former Soviet Union. However, Gazprom, a Russian company, owns 50% of the company's shares (more than 6.6 million shares), the Public Property Agency, which is part of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Moldova, owns 35.3 percent of the company's shares (4.7 million shares), and the Transnistrian Property Management Committee owns 13.44% of the company's shares (1.79 million shares). The remaining shareholders own less than 5% of the company, which is again detrimental to the Republic of Moldova's

energy independence and security as we prioritise meeting its traditional energy needs.

Moldova is now dealing with a number of problems, some of which are structural in nature and others of which are acute. Security should be the primary priority of Moldova's foreign policy in the near future. In order to do this, Moldova must begin laying the foundation for other systemic changes that may be fruitful in the coming years. Reforming the justice system is just the beginning of the larger changes Moldova requires. Even while Moldova is not as corrupt as many other post-Soviet nations in the Balkans, the Middle East, or Africa, their economies are not very vibrant. Beyond reforming the justice system, Moldova requires a clear vision and thoughtful policies in a number of areas, including infrastructure development, green growth, and the country's transition to the digital era. As part of the single European energy market, the EU must also help integrate markets and regulations inside the Energy Community because bordering non-EU nations like Moldova, Ukraine, and the Balkans are crucial for energy routes and sources. In this regard, Romania can potentially play a key role in assisting Moldova in connecting to the gas and energy markets in Europe. This is crucial on a number of levels. First of all, it would give Romanian energy producers a market (natural gas from the Black Sea, electricity from renewable sources in Dobrogea). Second, it would significantly improve national security and energy security in Moldova,

which is entirely dependent due to Russia's monopoly and abuse of power in the energy sector, as well as being ensnared by corrupt networks. In conclusion, by granting the EU candidate country status in June 2022, we can highlight the necessity of reshaping the concept of everything that has meant for the Republic of Moldova up to this point in negotiations and energy diplomacy until 2022, especially considering that our country's European path has no way back (Popescu, 2023).

4. Conclusion

In order to join this union, the Republic of Moldova must fulfil a number of requirements, including terms, risks, and hours or even years of negotiations. However, there are also a number of opportunities that, when guided by a clear and effective diplomatic strategy, can benefit and advance the country, including in the area of energy security. Historical, geopolitical, and structural limitations are the root cause of Moldova's energy vulnerabilities. However, these weaknesses can be turned into long-term strategic advantages with the help of internal reforms, regional collaboration, stronger European integration, and a well-coordinated diplomatic approach. Thus, one of the most crucial tools for bolstering national security and guaranteeing Moldova's continuous growth is energy diplomacy.

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