

Ognjen Petronijević*

Independent researcher, Pavia

Jelena Todorović Lazić**

Institute for Political Studies, Belgrade

EUROPEAN UNION'S GREEN SOFT POWER IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICS: INSTRUMENTS, CONDITIONALITY AND GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Abstract

The article examines the concept of green soft power with a focus on the unique example of the European Union (EU). As one of the global leaders in combating climate change, the EU mobilizes its green soft power to shape the environmental changes internationally through non-coercive means. The article recognized environmental diplomacy, global climate leadership, sustainable culture, and green normative framework as key resources in projecting EU green soft power. Using regulatory authority, the EU complements its soft power with conditional mechanisms, making the Union adopt a hybrid form of soft power. The paper argues that the EU combines domestic ecological transformation, exemplified by the European Green Deal, with external instruments such as Chapter 27 of the enlargement process and the Global Gateway initiative, to project environmental norms globally. It further analyzes the EU strategy in recent international climate

* E-mail address: ogisapetronijevic@gmail.com; ORCID: 0009-0004-0984-0775.

** E-mail address: j82@gmail.com; ORCID: 0000-0001-5924-7516.

negotiations (COP26-COP28). Finally, the paper examines two important factors in international relations that limit the EU's capacity to perform and achieve environmental objectives in the international arena – the problematic withdrawal from the Paris Agreement by the United States, and complex evolving relations with China.

Keywords: green soft power, European Union, environmental diplomacy, climate leadership, European Green Deal

INTRODUCTION

Today, environmental concerns represent one of the crucial factors that shape the political, economic, and social structures around the world. As a pioneer in ecological transition, the European Union (EU) has, in recent years, played an important role in advocating for a sustainable future. In order to achieve its ecological objectives, the EU has developed a diverse toolbox that enables it to bolster transitions and impose its influence globally. In doing so, the EU mobilizes its green soft power, a key instrument for projecting environmental norms, values, and policies domestically and internationally.

Despite the fact that over the past decades, environmental concerns have begun to change the international global governance, the current literature regarding soft power has rarely explored and defined its green dimension. The existing academic work on green soft power is mainly dedicated to the rising green soft power of China and its activities in global economic and diplomatic initiatives, especially presented in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Duarte et al. 2021; Nitza-Makowska et al. 2024). The EU, as one of the leaders in ecological transition and environmental responsibility, has remained largely unexplored.

This article aims to fill this gap by examining the EU's green soft power, identifying its sources, instruments, and strategies, while also assessing its effectiveness both domestically and internationally. It argues that the EU combines domestic ecological transformation, sustainable leadership, environmental enlargement policy, and global green investment strategies to project its influence in the environmental domain. By analyzing key instruments such as the European Green Deal (EGD), Chapter 27 of the accession process, and the Global Gateway (GG) initiative, the

paper highlights how the EU navigates international dynamics, including competition with China and unstable United States (US) climate policies.

DEFINING GREEN SOFT POWER

In order to define green soft power, it is important to first analyze the classic theory of soft power introduced by Joseph Nye at the end of the 20th century. Using a similar structure, the article will specify what could be defined as green soft power.

Joseph Nye coined the definition of soft power and established the theoretical foundation for the development of the theory of soft power in the field of international relations. In his book *Soft Power*, Nye defined soft power simply as the power of attraction (Nye 2004, 6). Unlike hard power, which is based on the use of force or payment, “soft power rests on the ability to shape preferences of others” (5) through shared values that others consider desirable and attractive. According to Nye, soft power arises in world politics from three different sources - culture, political values, and legitimate foreign policies (11). Following Nye’s theory, we come to the conclusion that instruments used for the enhancement and promotion of soft power are especially present in the form of multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, promotion of certain values at home and internationally, and finally, the level of internal social cultivation of these values.

One should understand Nye’s conceptualization of soft power in the most general sense. Soft power can be narrowed to a specific thematic form, emphasizing a particular domain of attraction. For example, the Global Soft Power Index report recognizes eight pillars of soft power and thirty-five nation brand attributes through which states exercise their soft power in world politics (Brand Finance 2024, 28). The pillars serve as proof of “linkage” between soft power and its specific domains, like, for example, education, business, culture, etc. Through such a framework, different elements are linked together as integral parts of soft power.

Similarly, the linkage between soft power and the green or environmental domain could be established. Such linkage had already been explored by Nitza, Longhurst, and Skiert-Andrejzjuk in the context of the green soft power of China. Following Nye’s theory, the authors recognized foreign environmental policy as one of the key aspects of green soft power, with the focus on green foreign multilateral and bilateral diplomacy (Nitza et al. 2020, 19-20). The role of a state in global environmental diplomatic

arrangements significantly contributes to the reputation and image of a state as a leader and credible actor in tackling global environmental challenges. Thus, environmental diplomacy, understood as “efforts aimed at sustaining cooperation and reaching agreement on the governance of the natural environment” (Masters 2018, 4), was placed as the most important aspect of green soft power. Additionally, the state’s extent of being “outwardly pro-environment or motivated by green concerns gives rise to positive perceptions and reputational benefits” (Nitza et al. 2020, 19-20). The role of China in international climate negotiations, alongside careful environmental adaptation of the Chinese foreign investment strategy, illustrates this perspective. In particular, the Chinese environmental diplomacy practiced over the last thirty years during the Conferences of the Parties (COPs), and announcement of the Green BRI, correspond to the Chinese leadership image and demonstrate the intention to achieve environmental goals.

While Nitza, Longhurst, and Skiert-Andrejczuk mainly explored foreign policy as the most crucial source of green soft power, the authors have failed to recognize cultural aspects and promotion of certain values as equally important sources. Besides active stances towards environmental issues in world politics, the level of incorporation of sustainable culture in the state’s educational programs, national identity, and social practices immensely contributes to the reputation of the state, raising its attractiveness. Furthermore, these practices cherish and actively promote certain values, such as sustainability, biodiversity, circularity, environmental justice, and responsibility – all of which are deeply embedded into the collective identity and individual lives of citizens. A state with an environmentally responsible society alongside sustainable governance projects a far better image than just a state that has developed environmentally diplomatic activities, contributing solely to global efforts regarding climate change and environmental challenges. Hence, we should regard the level of implementation of green culture, the presence of environmental governance, and promotion of environmental values (domestically and internationally) as equally important sources from which the state can generate its green soft power.

Additionally, going back to the Global Soft Power Index report, one of the pillars highlights a sustainable future, in which four key national attributes are included – investment in green energy, sustainable cities and transport, environmental protection, and global effort combating climate change (Brand Finance 2024, 28). Here we

can see that domestic efforts for green transition and environmental responsibility are recognized as equally important aspects of green soft power, alongside support for global diplomatic efforts. Japan has been rated the highest in the sustainable future pillar, scoring two gold medals in green energy investment and sustainable cities, with Germany and Norway following closely behind in the same categories (42).

In conclusion, green soft power could be defined as the ability of a state to shape the environmental preferences of others through non-coercive means using the instruments of foreign environmental diplomacy, cherishment of sustainable culture, and promotion of green values at home and internationally.

In relation to Nye's conceptualization of soft power, green soft power relies on three traditional sources of soft power – foreign policy, culture, and values. Where it differs is in the fact that green soft power encompasses a specific thematic form of soft power – environmental domain – and further deepens its understanding.

EUROPEAN UNION'S GREEN SOFT POWER

Expanding upon the theoretical foundation of soft power and its linkage to the environmental domain, the case of the EU offers a unique example of how green soft power operates in practice. The conventional instruments used by the EU often rely on the conceptualization of green soft power examined above. However, due to the unique nature of the EU as a soft power giant and the use of unconventional instruments, it sparks the need for further examination, adding layers to the theory of green soft power and soft power in general. The article will further explore the nature of the EU green soft power, emphasizing its critical sources.

European Union's Green Soft Power and Classical Understanding of Soft Power

Starting from the aforementioned theoretical foundation of traditional sources of soft power, in one part, the EU green soft power has demonstrated an approach that appropriately follows this theoretical framework, mirroring its critical sources.

One of the primary sources of green soft power – sustainable culture – has often been overlooked in the case of the EU. Generally,

this happens because the EU traditionally lacks cultural identity of its own, while its soft power is often recognized as not originally cultural. However, when it comes to sustainability, the green culture is almost universally shared among different cultural identities, acting in symbiotic relationships with them. For example, environmentalism in the EU has become a substantial part of everyday life for citizens regardless of their national or cultural identity, having effects on individual consumer choices, school curricula, innovation, science, waste management, and even dietary habits. Hence, this development of somewhat universal green culture among nations strengthened the EU's international image as an environmentally responsible society and facilitated its attractiveness, contributing massively to its green soft power. This source is complemented by environmentally responsible governance, as we could see in the case of Horizon Europe Program and the EGD, having positive effects on the development of the sustainable culture across multiple areas, including education, science, agriculture, etc.

Moreover, another critical source of green soft power is the promotion of green values. For the EU, these values constitute an integral part of the domestic normative framework. The environmental *acquis* — into which the EU has incorporated several major international conventions, such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement — plays a central role in shaping the Union's environmental credibility and attractiveness.

Manners theoretically deepened and conceptualized this perspective through his understanding of the EU as a *normative power*. He argued that the EU is grounded on a normative basis which comprises the *acquis communautaire*, and includes a number of norms and values, among which one is sustainable development (Manners 2002, 242-244). According to Manners, the EU holds the ability to also diffuse these norms in international politics. In other words, what Manners refers to here is conceptualized as internal and external promotion of values in the classical theory of soft power. Thus, one should not look at Manners' theory of normative power Europe as something opposite to soft power, but in fact as a complementary element that analyzes one aspect of soft power in detail – that being external and internal promotion of values. Besides the central role values play in these theories, similarities are present in the shared approach they have towards hard power. Manners specifically rejects “the assumption that normative power requires a willingness to use force in an instrumental way”, placing normative

power in line with the basic principle of the theory of soft power – no coercion involved. If one focuses specifically on the norm of sustainable development, the concept of green soft power and *normative power*; *Europe* also ends up being complementary, analyzing the single element – green values – from different theoretical perspectives. A clear example of this dynamic is the way the EU promotes climate neutrality as a value in its external and internal relations.

Lastly, the EU's leadership role in global climate governance further contributes to the development of its green soft power, as it represents the final elementary source. The Union's proactive stance in multilateral and bilateral diplomatic arrangements has reinforced its reputation as a credible actor in addressing global environmental challenges. As Landaburu notes, the EU has strengthened its international influence by assuming leadership in critical policy areas, particularly climate change and sustainable development (Landaburu 2006, 30-33, cited in Nielsen 2013, 730). These achievements significantly enhance its attractiveness as a partner and a model for green transformation, boosting its potential to achieve reputational benefits. The example of EU engagement in the recent COP illustrates a multilateral dimension of this approach.

While Nye's concept of soft power could be used to appropriately describe the EU leadership through environmentally diplomatic efforts or the normative basis that incorporates environmental values and sustainable culture, this framework does not fully capture the rest of the environmental resources that the EU uses to influence the outcomes it wants without necessarily using force. To analyze the entirety of the EU green soft power toolbox, it is necessary to add new layers to our theoretical foundation, examining further the idea of the EU possessing certain mechanisms that contain a form of conditionality, through which it assures compliance and accountability.

Conditionality – an Element Deviating from the Classical Understanding of Soft Power

The status of the EU as primarily an economic and political supranational entity significantly shaped its hard power dynamics, limiting its ability to perform military power, while at the same time orienting it towards humanitarian interventions (Nielsen 2013, 729). Due to the absence of consensus among Member States and the lack

of institutionalized military structures, the EU developed a number of mechanisms through which it seeks to ensure compliance with its political and environmental standards, while also creating a form of accountability. Taking this into consideration, the EU (green) soft power is not entirely non-conditional, but rather contains a so-called *hard edge*, which places it somewhere between soft and hard power. The article will proceed to analyze the hybrid character of EU green soft power, for the purpose of having a clear definition that will encompass the entirety of the EU green soft power toolbox.

Conditionality is an integral part of two EU green soft power instruments: enlargement policy (through harmonization with EU environmental standards) and global green investments that demand alignment with basic EU principles.

In the enlargement policy, the accession process is based on several conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to progress and eventually become a member state of the EU. The accession process is often described through the “sticks and carrots” approach in international relations, which, according to Nye, translates into threats and inducements, both signifying hard power (Nye 2004, 5). When put in the context of the EU, carrots are presented in the form of financial assistance during the negotiation process and final membership benefits, while sticks are defined as suspension of such financial assistance and ultimately suspension of accession talks (Bonelli 2017, 175-176). Hence, one could not describe the enlargement policy as a process that does not hold any accountability or risk of sanctions. On the other hand, Petrovski highlighted the voluntary nature of the accession process, arguing that the enlargement policy projects soft power through non-coercive means, where the only sanction is suspension of the membership (Petrovski 2015, 2-3). Furthermore, analyzing the EU’s involvement in the directing of civil society activities in member states through project funding and financial aid, Petrovski underscored that “legitimate mutual benefit” places these tools in line with soft power, and distinguishes it from the concept of bribe which is affiliated with hard power according to Nye (8). Additionally, the generating force of enlargement policy is essentially based on initial attraction established between the candidate state and the EU, underscoring the important role soft power plays in the process before the negotiations begin. When put in the context of green soft power, candidate states are obliged to undergo a complex ecological transformation, since climate norms and sustainable values form an

integral part of the *acquis*. This transformation is primarily directed through Chapter 27 on environmental protection, where the EU requires legal, political, social, and economic reforms to harmonize with its standards before being admitted to the Union (Todorović Lazić, 2022).

Almost identical logic is following the EU's investment in sustainable development globally – setting conditions to align more closely with the European normative framework, before providing the financial means necessary for environmental reforms, placing this resource in line with the conditional element of the EU's soft power. As Heldt noticed, “the EU links spending on global infrastructure programs with conditionality rules, including democratic values, good governance, transparency, equal partnerships, and sustainability” (Heldt 2023, 223). The Global Gateway Fund presents a good example, since it pairs EU sustainable investment with conditionality, making it more than just a mere financial support, but rather one of the key EU foreign policy tools (Borrell 2022, 253).

To fully understand the additional two elements (the sustainable development aspect of enlargement policy and global green investments) necessary for understanding the entirety of the EU green soft power resource toolbox, it is important to reshape the classic understanding of Nye's soft power. What initially comes to mind is the theory of *soft power with the hard edge*. The concept was first mentioned by the former EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, Catherine Ashton, in her speech in front of the University of Budapest in 2011. She addressed the EU's approach to foreign policy, highlighting the specific nature of the EU soft power, describing the concept as “more than the power to set a good example and promote our values, but less than the power to impose its will” (European Commission, 2011).

Goldthau and Sitter further analyzed the nature of *soft power with a hard edge* in the context of energy security and economic power. They gave the concept a solid theoretical structure, while also connecting it empirically. The concept of *soft power with a hard edge* was depicted as a “situation where attractiveness (e.g., of the EU's large market) is coupled with a targeted and conditional policy that controls and restricts access (e.g., the Commission's regulatory governance)” (Goldthau and Sitter 2015, 10). It was presented as an attempt of the European Commission to “explore and perfect the various types of soft power instruments,

including the type of soft power that comes with conditions and requires third parties to comply with EU rules and regulations”.

This framework serves as a solid theoretical basis for further development of the concept of EU green soft power. While this model is created to describe economic power and energy security, it also appropriately complements the theoretical structure of EU green soft power, helping it clarify specific conditional instruments and capturing the entirety of the EU green soft power toolbox. This understanding recognizes the existence of an environmental dimension within the theory of *soft power with a hard edge*. In this sense, the EU green soft power concept should be considered wider in scope compared to *soft power with a hard edge*, as it encompasses not only conditional instruments, but also standard sources – environmental diplomacy, sustainable culture, and green norms.

Taken together, the mentioned observations contribute to defining EU green soft power as a distinct analytical concept. The EU green soft power draws from classical soft power theory through the idea of attractiveness of the EU’s critical resources – sustainable culture, promotion of green values internally and externally, and global climate leadership through environmental diplomacy. The concept is additionally supported by the theory of *normative power Europe*, since green values – incorporated in the EU environmental *acquis* and diffused internationally – represent the central sources of credibility of the EU. Finally, the conditional dimension expressed through enlargement policy and global green investments contains mechanisms that hold a *hard edge* to them, which means the EU possesses the ability to assure compliance of others through the use of different variations of sanctions and economic leverage, while also maintaining a non-coercive character and mutual benefit. In this sense, the EU green soft power theory also draws from *soft power with a hard edge* concept.

INSTRUMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION’S GREEN SOFT POWER

The European Green Deal Internal Dimension

The introduction of the EGD in 2019 signified the beginning of a new era in European environmental politics. As a response to a great number of global environmental challenges, the European institutions

decided to start the process of transformation into “a fair and prosperous society”, while contributing to a more efficient and modernized competitive economy in which one of the main goals will be lowering the emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) (European Commission 2019). This means the introduction of a number of ambitious, environmentally responsible, and sustainable objectives that are capable of becoming political reality and completely changing the existing social, political, and economic structures within the EU. The ambitions were set high with Von Der Leyen announcing the immaculate zero net GHG emissions by 2050 – creating a first carbon neutral continent.

As it touches on several fields, including industry, food and agriculture, taxation, social benefits, and many more, the EGD has the potential of getting deeply embedded in the social processes and vastly contributing to the expansion and diffusion of sustainable-oriented practices among the citizens, raising the Union's green attractiveness. Positioned between economy and society, the EGD (in close relation with other EU programs) brings several positive contributions to two important aspects of green soft power – development of sustainable culture and domestic promotion of environmental values and norms.

First, the EGD brings important contributions to the positive changes in the social domain, affecting the development of sustainable habits and positive behavioral changes. Hadjichambis emphasized the positive effects the EGD and Horizon Europe programs have on the promotion of environmental citizenship, arguing that the transformation of education, research, science, and innovation will enable people to achieve the necessary skills and behavior to actively engage in practicing environmental duties (Hadjichambis 2022, 1-3). As highlighted in the Europe Horizon document, the Commission recognized the active role citizens play in addressing climate change, specifically emphasizing the importance of “strengthening environmental awareness of the young generation through education and other forms of youth engagement” (European Commission 2021a, 1). Nevertheless, recent research has noted that the EGD documents tend to approach behavioral, social, and cultural aspects in a limited way, often through the lens of economics (Urios et al. 2022, 28-29). Deeper concerns such as citizen empowerment, participation, and ownership have been raised more sporadically, mainly in Horizon Europe mission documents. However, one cannot say that Horizon Europe should be regarded as something irrelevant to the EGD, since five of its mission areas directly support this framework, among

which one is adaptation to climate change and societal transformation (Hadjichambis 2022, 1-3). Second, the EGD serves as a solid normative framework, aligned with the conceptualization of normative power. (Bireselioğlu et al. 2024, 101) This shapes the EU identity as a promoter of sustainable norms, by making them the heart of the EU policies. In this sense, the EGD strengthens the facilitation of environmental values through its normative basis. More importantly, as part of the normative basis, the European Green Deal has the potential to be further expanded internationally (94). Finally, if successful, the European Green Deal makes the Unions a leader in ecological transitions (101).

The results of domestic implementation of the EGD have been steady so far. According to the European Commission Joint Research Center report, in 2024, out of 154 estimated targets, 32 are on track while 64 need further progress to fit in the determined timeframe (Marelli et al. 2025, 13). The rest of the targets were either labeled as not progressive or still have no data available. While these results suggest that the transition is still incomplete, it is important to view the EGD as a long-term transformative project, with its final implementation scheduled for 2050. Despite its unfinished nature, the EGD already functions as an important part of the EU's environmental and normative identity.

The European Green Deal External Dimension

Beyond shaping domestic structures, the EGD is also designed as a tool of external action. Since the global environmental challenges demand a global response, the EGD places strong emphasis on environmental diplomacy and global leadership in combating climate change, both signifying important resources of green soft power.

The ecological transformation of the EU will have effects on third parties, bringing consequences to the trading partners connected to the European market (especially in the domain of energy). Additionally, the neighbouring countries who do not conduct an ecological transition will have negative effects on the EU in the form of carbon leakage, referring to transfer of the companies from the EU to other states with less strict climate policies or EU products being replaced by more carbon-intensive imports (European Commission 2021b, 1) It is in the interest of the EU to not only successfully implement the transformation domestically, but also to support transitions in other partnering countries, maximizing its own ecological and economic efficiency and pushing for global sustainable

development. The Commission stated that “the EU can use its influence, expertise and financial resources to mobilize its neighbors and partners to join it on a sustainable path” (European Commission 2019). One of the main instruments in achieving the sustainable goals globally is the European Green Deal diplomacy. The Green Deal diplomacy focuses on sponsoring efforts of others in the promotion of sustainable development, “by setting a credible example and following up with diplomacy, trade policy, development support and other external policies”. In this regard, the Commission has recognized Western Balkans, G20, China, and Africa as key areas in which the EU can mobilize its efforts.

There are many positive outcomes of the European Green Deal diplomacy. One of the examples is the case of Turkey, a candidate state for the membership in the EU, which adopted the “Green Deal Action Plan”, ratified the Paris Agreement in 2021 and announced its aim at reaching net-zero emission by 2053, all of which was closely monitored and addressed in the EU reports, (Karakir and Kaya 2025) signifying an ongoing influential approach of the EU Green Deal diplomacy.

In an attempt to reduce the risk of carbon leakage, in 2021, the Commission introduced the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) – an instrument that supplements the Emission Trading System (ETS) (European Commission 2021b, 2) while also representing the extension of the EGD. As carbon leakage occurs in relation to third parties, the CBAM will serve as a tool directed at bolstering industrial decarbonization in partnering states, while also ensuring that carbon leakage will not “seriously undermine EU and global climate efforts”. Currently, a transitional phase is in effect, and carbon pricing is imposed on a limited number of sectors, while the definitive regime will commence on the 1st of January 2026, and it will capture more than 50% of emissions in ETS-covered sectors (European Commission n.d.).

Contemporary European Climate Diplomacy

One should understand European Green Deal diplomacy as part of the broader, long-standing EU diplomatic strategy that dates back to the 1990s, with its peak in the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 2007 and the Paris Agreement in 2014 (Todorović Lazić, 2019). The ability of the EU to shape the agendas for the upcoming negotiations through advocacy actions for certain environmental objectives reinforced the image of the EU as a critical actor in global environmental diplomacy.

The main objectives of the EU ahead of Paris consisted of demanding even and quantifiable mitigation commitments by all parties, advocating transparency, and pushing for the inclusion of a review mechanism (Oberthür and Groen 2017). In addition, the EU emphasized greater ecological finance by “advocating for widening the circle of contributing countries as well as shifting focus to broader private investment streams”. The EU’s contemporary diplomatic position reflects these goals, as they remained a central part of negotiations during the 2021 COP26 in Glasgow, 2022 COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, and 2023 COP28 in Dubai.

Ahead of COP26, the EU called upon parties to enhance global ambition in mitigating GHG emissions, advocated for transparency through completion of the Paris Rulebook, and reconfirmed its commitment to contribute to the delivery of the 100 billion USD climate finance goal (Council of the European Union 2021). At COP27, these priorities were carried forward with specific emphasis on the enhancement of adaptive capacity and resilience, which was reflected in the form of the Loss and Damage Fund (Council of the European Union 2022). At COP28 in Dubai, the EU promoted the first Global Stocktake – a collective review of ecological progress, while also making phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies one of its priorities (Council of the European Union 2023). Most of the aforementioned points were adopted, including the finalization of the Paris Rulebook, Loss and Damage fund, and Global Stocktake (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2021; UNFCCC 2022; UNFCCC 2023). This illustrates the ability of the EU to influence international conventions using its agenda-setting abilities and environmental credibility.

The EU diplomatic strategy during these negotiations also included certain activities pointed towards mediation between great powers and developing countries, while also advocating for coalition building and leadership, initiating green transformations, and pushing for specific timelines. The concept of the EU as a “mediator” (Parker and Karlsson 2013) (combining leader and mediator) emerged as a product of such diplomatic behavior. Karakir and Kaya noted that the EU employed its (green) soft power through these coalition-building processes, while above all served as an attractive model (Karakir and Kaya 2025). This image was further reinforced by the fact that the EU represented the biggest international donor in combating climate change (Council of the European Union 2024).

As a result, the Commission welcomed the “encouraging signs” of EU partners: the USA under the Biden administration planned to mobilize over 360 billion USD by 2032; Japan planned to raise 20 trillion JPY for the purpose of green transition, and India showed efforts in enhancing competitiveness in clean technologies (European Commission 2023).

Enlargement Policy – Chapter 27: Environmental and Climate Change

The environmental dimension of enlargement gained significance in the 1990s, following the growing relevance of global environmental trends and accession of the Nordic countries, which raised the Union's overall ecological standards. In the early 2000s, the environmental policy formally entered the accession negotiations process, with Chapter 27 – Environment and Climate Change – becoming its permanent component.

Containing some of the most demanding conditions, Chapter 27 perfectly aligns with the concept of (green) *soft power with the hard edge*, as it encompasses conditions in the form of structural political, economic, and social reforms. With over 200 major legal acts, Chapter 27 covers a wide range of environmental and climate areas, including: water and air quality, waste management, nature protection, industrial pollution control and risk management, chemicals and genetically modified organisms, noise, forestry, and climate change (Todorović Lazić 2022).

The Commission has a crucial role in monitoring the country's commitments, as it tracks the implementation of chapters through regular reports, emphasizing both the country's progress and regress, while also including recommendations. In the area of environmental protection and climate change, the report typically refers to the institutional weaknesses, suggestions for administrative and institutional reforms, and upgrading of the capacity of environmental inspectors and sub-national governments (Baker 2015, 386). Petrovski highlighted the role reports play in the projection of soft power, emphasizing the lack of sanctions for states if they choose not to fulfill the demands, and the informative character of the document (Petrovski 2015, 5): “The state builds its policy according to the directions given by the European Union; shaping its behavior in a way desired by the EU and all of that on a voluntary basis”. However, Petrovski failed to mention the Commission's ability to informally

rank the countries based on their commitments, labeling them as either “leaders” or “laggards” among themselves (Baker 2015, 386; Todorović Lazić, 2023). Grabbe described this strategy as an attempt to “embarrass applicant governments into making dramatic changes” (Grabbe 2001, 1021). In this way, reputational competition replaces formal sanctions, while the Commission imposes a form of indirect conditionality. The end goal is a balanced, non-coercive strategy that relies on guidance, competition, and persuasion.

Chapter 27 is considered one of the most complex and expensive chapters to implement. For example, in the case of Serbia, the estimated cost for implementation is around 27 billion euros (Bednar 2025). Additionally, Chapter 27 not only demands financial means but also requires a large capacity of administration, expertise, and institutions (Duraku and Agolli Nasufi 2023, 57). The case of Albania illustrates this complex network with more than 28 institutions and 75 representatives included in the process. What further complicates the implementation is the fact that environmental *acquis* is constantly evolving, adding new layers to climate legislation and environmental targets, while the new-coming green technology further raises costs. The example of EGD proves this point, as it represented a massive wave of new EU environmental legislation and standards that were adopted in the EU environmental framework in 2021.

The adoption of a new methodology for accession negotiations in 2019 had created further challenges in the implementation of Chapter 27. The EU introduced clusters for negotiations, grouping several chapters into one cluster, while also introducing benchmarks, and adding roadmaps and action plans for chapters. Chapter 27 became a part of the Cluster 4 – Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity, connecting it together with Chapter 14 – Transport Policy, Chapter 15 – Energy, and Chapter 21 – Trans-European Networks. This raised the intensity of the conditional approach, adding new layers and demands to the environmental dimension.

The results of this approach are steady and slow transformations of environmental governance in the candidate states, or at least in those that had commenced the process of alignment with the EU environmental *acquis* under the new methodology. The states that started the process experienced a gradual transformation with the appearance of environmental institutions and the adoption of national climate strategies. Chapter 27 has traditionally been one of the last chapters to be opened

and one of the last to be closed, which one could conclude will extend to Cluster 4 under the new methodology.

Currently, candidate states that have managed to open Chapter 27 are Serbia and Montenegro (if we exclude Turkey), while Albania recently started the opening of Cluster 4 under the new methodology. This means that a majority of candidate states have yet to commence the opening of Cluster 4 and within it Chapter 27, which will signify an acceleration of the harmonization process in the environmental domain. Montenegro, a proclaimed front-runner in EU integration, opened Chapter 27 back in 2018, before the introduction of a new methodology. At the moment, Chapter 27 still remains open. In the most recent 2025 Commission report, Montenegro showed “some level of preparation”, joining the EU’s LIFE program – a major funding environmental instrument – and adopting EU waste-management legislation (European Commission 2025). On the other hand, Montenegro still needs to fully align with the EU *acquis* on monitoring, reporting, verification, and accreditation (MRVA) of GHG emissions and expand the coverage of ETS and carbon pricing mechanisms.

Global Gateway

Throughout the years, the EU managed to develop a number of environmental international funds, in which it proceeded to financially support green infrastructure projects abroad and in coordination with other international and regional initiatives (like European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus, and the Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument). In recent times, the one that really stands out as the most ambitious and politically strategic is the Global Gateway (GG), introduced in 2021. The goal of the GG strategy is to mobilize over 300 billion euros in favor of global sustainable development in the period between 2021 and 2027 (European Commission 2021c). Key areas of investment present: climate and energy, digital technology, transport, health, research, and education. The GG partnerships are based on six principles, among which three are: support of democratic values, promotion of good governance and transparency, and green and clean development. Through this approach, the EU placed an emphasis on the importance of demanding high EU standards before deciding whether to invest. This is because, “without proper transparency, good governance and high standards, projects

can be badly chosen or designed, left incomplete, or be used to fuel corruption”. With these conditions in mind, the EU mobilizes financial instruments to achieve a gradual, sustainable, democratic, and transparent transformation, while mobilizing its soft power.

What differentiates the GG from other EU global funding activities is its strategic geopolitical character. At the beginning, the EU primarily focused its investments on the African continent, but also stated a clear intention to extend its reach in Asia and Latin America. With the already existing Chinese presence in the African continent through the BRI, Heldt argued that the rise of China as a global infrastructural investor, “led the EU to play a stronger geopolitical leadership role to counter Chinese influence in the African continent and beyond” (Heldt 2023, 225). Hence, the GG is presented as an attempt of the EU to geopoliticize foreign economic policy, in which it can mobilize “its economic and soft power into strategic leverage”.

Still, the GG is still financially incomparable to the Chinese BRI. It is estimated that the BRI is a trillion-dollar project, capable of reaching over 1.3 billion USD by 2027 – less than a quarter per cent of what the EU is able to raise in the same period. On the other hand, what Chinese projects are currently lacking is respect for ecological standards. According to Politico, there were several reported cases where local groups were mobilized against Chinese projects since they did not bring the same level of ecological standards (Lau and Tamma 2021). This was further facilitated by the fact that China has been a major financier of overseas fossil-fuel infrastructures. Between 1999 and 2020, coal power plants accounted for 58% of the installed capacity funded by Chinese development institutions (Wang et al. 2024). However, recent studies suggest an environmental shift in Chinese foreign investments. In 2021, Xi pledged to stop building new coal power plants abroad, while also increasing renewable energy engagement, marking a new era in Chinese foreign environmental policy. And while the GG at the moment seems like a more appropriate instrument for green soft power, giving the EU the advantage in the environmental domain, this will potentially change in the upcoming years, with the GG becoming not only financially, but also environmentally, inferior to the BRI.

CHALLENGES TO THE EUROPEAN UNION'S GREEN SOFT POWER

Implications of the US Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement

From a standpoint of international relations, there are two most important factors one must take into account when analyzing EU green soft power in contemporary politics: the dynamic transatlantic relations with the US, and the evolving partnership-rivalry with China.

In January 2025, after a successful election, Donald Trump signed an executive order named “Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements”, which obliged the US Ambassador to the United Nations to submit a formal written notification of the US’s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement (The White House 2025). The last attempt to withdraw from the agreement was made in 2017, although unsuccessfully, since it was denounced by the Biden administration only 77 days after being signed. With the US being the second-largest CO₂ emitter and the largest economy in the world, the decision to exit the agreement will have consequences on international environmental governance and global climate leadership. When analyzed from a perspective of EU green soft power, Trump’s decision represents a problem for the EU’s environmental objectives, as it undermines its advocacy actions in developing countries and creates a vacuum in international environmental leadership. “The USA withdrawal may encourage other nations to weaken or delay their climate commitments, citing the disengagement of one of the world’s largest economies” (Swain et al. 2025, 4). Similar to the existing EU efforts to support ecological transitions in third countries connected to the European market, the decision of the US to push in a completely opposite direction will undermine the EU efforts to support ecological transitions in developing countries. Furthermore, as being one of three powers to lead the global negotiations on climate change, alongside EU and China, the US’s exit from the Paris Agreement produces fragmentation in global climate leadership, which “weakens the collective effort needed to tackle climate change and creates a leadership vacuum that other nations, particularly China, may seek to fill” (Swain 2025, cited in Swain et al. 2025). This should be regarded both as an opportunity and a challenge for the EU, as it will expose the limits of the EU’s capability to act independently and explore the depth of potential cooperation.

European Union and China – Environmental Cooperation and Contestation

In this political landscape, the China-EU relations evolved into complex ties with elements of both positive and negative rivalry. The complex nature of this relation was best described by the European Commission in 2019, framing China across multiple policy areas as a simultaneous cooperating and negotiating partner, economic competitor, and systematic rival (European Commission and HR/VP 2019). The latest Chinese expansion into the European electric vehicle (EV) market illustrates this duality. Through projects and manufacturing operations of Chinese companies in the EU, the EVs accounted for 70% of Chinese foreign investments in Europe by 2023 (Kratz et al. 2024). This led to a reconfiguration of economic ties that, according to Borràs, “helped to establish more positive relationships between Chinese companies and authorities and the European governments” (Borràs 2025, 2). On the other hand, the situation shows weaknesses of the EU, harming its credibility as being partially dependent on foreign interference, making the EU look more like a follower than a leader, while also exposing the limits of its environmental capacity.

In the context of the upcoming COP30, Trasi emphasized the potential of China-EU cooperative green investments in third countries, highlighting that the opportunity lies in the joint efforts towards co-financing, sharing of expertise, and coordination in multilateral adaptation frameworks (Trasi 2025). With this in mind, Trasi frames the problem of “leadership vacuum” as an opportunity for positive cooperation, especially with the aforementioned shift in Chinese foreign environmental policy. The platforms like the Ministerial on Climate Action, founded in 2017, and the High-Level Environmental and Climate Dialogue, established in 2020, provide the necessary institutional infrastructure for dialogue between China and the EU. However, despite these mechanisms, there have been no major cooperative projects or joint financing frameworks between the two powers. Cooperation has so far remained within the borders of broad and vague declarative and procedural documents, which underscores the cautious and strategic nature of this relationship.

Ultimately, both the rise of China as a green industrial power and the US shift from environmental policies reveal the fragility of the EU’s environmental influence. One could conclude that the ability of the EU

to shape environmental outcomes depends on the responsiveness of other major actors. Changes in global climate leadership continue to challenge the EU's ability to achieve its environmental objectives.

CONCLUSION

The article examined the concept of EU green soft power by analyzing its domestic and international dimensions. Building on Nye's conceptualization of sources of soft power, it defines green soft power as the ability to shape environmental preferences through non-coercive means, primarily by using the instruments of foreign environmental diplomacy, cherishment of sustainable culture, and promotion of green values at home and internationally. The unique nature of the EU complements these sources with conditional mechanisms, producing a hybrid model that often relies on conditionality, giving a hard edge to the instruments such as enlargement policy and global green investments. The article then proceeded to explore the EU green soft power toolbox, highlighting the important role EGD plays in the internal and external dimensions of the EU green soft power, as it promotes green values and cherishes the sustainable culture back home, while also contributing to the diplomatic efforts and affecting other states to pursue ecological transition. This was also analyzed from the perspective of a long-standing EU diplomatic environmental strategy, which includes a combination of leadership, mediation, and agenda setting. Additionally, the article also explored the instruments that revolve around conditionality, such as the Global Gateway Fund and its geopolitical significance, and Chapter 27 on environmental protection of the EU enlargement policy. Finally, the article also explored two main factors in international relations that challenge EU green soft power – the consequences of the USA withdrawing from the Paris Agreement on global climate leadership and evolving partnership-rivalry with China.

The article contributes to the emerging academic debate on the concept of green soft power and draws attention to its future potential despite the fact that the concept still lacks wider acknowledgement. While at the moment, the scholarly work has been heavily centered on China, this article argues that the case of the EU illustrates another interesting example and provides further diversification of the concept. Future research could help expand the existing theoretical and practical

frameworks and contribute to the needed clarification and discussion about the subject.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aşkar Karakir, İ., and Kaya, G. (2025). “Unpacking normative power Europe: European Union’s promotion of climate change norms in Türkiye.” *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 1-18. DOI: 10.1080/14683857.2025.2519993.
- Baker, Susan. 2015. “EU Conditionality and Environmental Policy in Southeastern Europe.” *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 63(3): 372-392. DOI: 10.1515/soeu-2015-630303.
- Bednar, Bojan. 2025. „Za usklađivanje sa ekološkim standardima EU potrebno 27 milijardi evra.” *Vreme*, 10 June. Accessed on 27 October. <https://vreme.com/drustvo/za-uskladjivanje-sa-ekoloskim-standardima-eu-potrebno-27-milijardi-evra>.
- Bireselioğlu, Mehmet Efe, Berfu Solak, and Zehra Funda Savaş. 2024. “Framing the Impacts of the European Green Deal: Reflections on the EU as a ‘Normative Power’ and Beyond.” *Ankara Avrupa Çalışmaları Dergisi* 23, 91-134 (special issue: Future of Europe). DOI: 10.32450/aacd.1439839.
- Bonelli, Marta. 2017. “Carrots, Sticks, and the Rule of Law: EU Political Conditionality Before and After Accession.” *IANUS* 15–16: 171–200. Accessed on 19 September. https://www.rivistaianus.it/numero_15-16_2017/08_Bonelli_171-200.pdf.
- Borrell, Josep Fonteles. 2022. “The year that war returned to Europe: EU foreign policy in 2022.” European Union External Action. Brussels.
- Borràs Arumí, Javier. 2025. “Green Soft Power: China’s New Strategy in Europe.” *CIDOB Opinion* No. 834.
- Brand Finance. 2024. *Global Soft Power Index 2024*. London. Accessed on 7 September. <https://brandirectory.com/softpower>.
- Council of the European Union. 2021. *EU Position for the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Glasgow, 31 October–12 November 2021)*. Brussels.
- Council of the European Union. 2022. *EU Position for the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Sharm El-Sheikh, 6–18 November 2022)*. Brussels.
- Council of the European Union. 2023. *EU Position for the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention*

- on Climate Change (Dubai, 30 November–12 December 2023)*. Brussels.
- Council of the European Union. 2024. "Council Publishes 2023 International Climate Finance Figures." Brussels. Accessed on 13 October. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/11/05/council-publishes-2023-international-climate-finance-figures>.
- Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union, European Commission. n.d. *Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism*, Brussels. Accessed on 10 December. https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/carbon-border-adjustment-mechanism_en.
- Duraku, Ardita, and Irida Agolli Nasufi. 2023. "EU Integration of Chapter 27 'Environment and Climate Change' in Albania." *Academic Journal of Business, Administration, Law and Social Sciences* 9 (3): 54–61. DOI: 10.2478/ajbals-2023-0010.
- Duarte, Bernardo P.A., and Lúcia C. Ferreira-Pereira. 2021. "The Soft Power of China and the European Union in the Context of the Belt and Road Initiative and Global Strategy." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 30(4): 593–607. DOI: 10.1080/14782804.2021.1916740.
- European Commission 2011. *Speech by Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, "A world built on co-operation, sovereignty, democracy and stability"*. Budapest.
- European Commission. 2019. *Communication from the Commission: The European Green Deal (COM (2019) 640 final)*. Brussels. Accessed on 28 September. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF.
- European Commission, HR/VP. 2019. *EU–China: A Strategic Outlook*. Brussels. Accessed on 17 October. <https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2019-03/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf>.
- European Commission. 2021a. *Enabling Citizens to Act on Climate Change and Environmental Protection through Education, Citizen Science, Observation Initiatives, and Civic Involvement*. Brussels. Accessed on 28 September. https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/H2020_LC-GD-10-3-2020.
- European Commission. 2021b. *Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: Questions and Answers*. Brussels. Accessed on 10 December. <https://>

- ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/qanda_21_3661/QANDA_21_3661_EN.pdf.
- European Commission. 2021c. *The Global Gateway (JOIN/2021/30 final)*. Brussels. Accessed on 27 October. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021JC0030>.
- European Commission. 2023. *A Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age (COM(2023) 62 final)*. Brussels. Accessed on 10 October. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023DC0062>.
- European Commission. 2025. *Montenegro 2025 Report (EU Enlargement Package)*. Brussels. https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/9ae69ea7-81d6-4d6a-a204-bd32a379d51d_en?filename=montenegro-report-2025.pdf (Accessed on 11 December).
- Goldthau, Andreas, and Nick Sitter. 2015. "Soft Power with a Hard Edge: EU Policy Tools and Energy Security." *Review of International Political Economy* 22(5): 941-965. DOI: 10.1080/09692290.2015.1008547.
- Grabbe, Heather. 2001. "How Does Europeanization Affect CEE Governance? Conditionality, Diffusion and Diversity." *Journal of European Public Policy* 8(6): 1013-1031. DOI: 10.1080/13501760110098323.
- Hadjichambis, Andreas C. 2022. "European Green Deal and Environmental Citizenship: Two Interrelated Concepts." *Environmental Sciences Proceedings* 14(1): 3. DOI: 10.3390/environsciproc2022014003.
- Heldt, Eugénia C. 2023. "Europe's Global Gateway: A New Instrument of Geopolitics." *Politics and Governance* 11(4): 223-234. DOI: 10.17645/pag.v11i4.7098
- Kratz, Agatha, Mikko J. Zenglein, Alan Brown, Georg Sebastian, and Andreas Meyer. 2024. *Dwindling Investments Become More Concentrated – Chinese FDI in Europe: 2023 Update*. MERICS & Rhodium Group. Accessed on 22 October. <https://merics.org/en/report/dwindling-investments-become-more-concentrated-chinese-fdi-europe-2023-update>.
- Landaburu, Eneko. 2006. "Hard Facts about Europe's Soft Power." *Europe's World* 3.
- Lau, Suzanne, Paola Tamma, and Jakob Posaner. 2021. "EU Makes Late Bid to Rival China on the Silk Road." *Politico*, November 30. Accessed on 22 October. <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-makes-late-bid-to-rival-china-on-the-silk-road/>.

- Manners, Ian. 2002. "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?" Princeton University. Accessed on 2 September. <https://www.princeton.edu/~amoravcs/library/mannersnormativepower.pdf>.
- Marelli, Laura, Matteo Trane, Giulia Barbero Vignola, Claudia Gastaldi, and Maria Margarida Guerreiro et al. 2025. *Delivering the EU Green Deal – Progress Towards Targets*. Publications Office of the European Union. DOI: 10.2760/3105205.
- Masters, Leslie. 2018. "Environmental Diplomacy." In *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy*, edited by Costas Constantinou, Pauline Kerr, and Paul Sharp. Oxford: Oxford University Press / Wiley-Blackwell.
- Nielsen, Kristian L. 2013. "EU Soft Power and the Capability–Expectations Gap." *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 9(5): 724-739. DOI: 10.30950/jcer.v9i5.479.
- Nitza, Anna, Kristin Longhurst, and Agnieszka Skiort-Andrezjuk. 2020. "Green Soft Power: China's Environmental Diplomacy in the 21st Century." *Politics and Governance*. 13. DOI: 10.17645/pag.9106.
- Nye, Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Oberthür, Sebastian, and Lisanne Groen. 2017. "Explaining Goal Achievement in International Negotiations: The EU and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change." *Journal of European Public Policy* 24(10): 1399–1423. DOI: 10.1080/13501763.2017.1291708.
- Parker, Charles F., and Christer Karlsson. 2013. "Climate Change and the European Union's Leadership Moment in Climate Negotiations." *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 9(5): 723–739. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02080.x.
- Petrovski, Nikola. 2015. "The European Union's Soft Power: The Enlargement Process and the Republic of Macedonia." *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 1(1): 19-29. Accessed on 3 September. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-431007>.
- Swain, Ashok. 2025. *Climate Security*. Sage.
- Swain, Ashok, Carl Bruch, Tobias Ide, Päivi Lujala, Richard A. Matthew, Erika Weinthal, and Thomas Deligiannis. 2025. "The U.S. Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement—Implications for Global Climate Governance and Security." *Environment and Security* 3(1): 3-7. DOI: 10.1177/27538796251322680.
- Todorović Lazić, Jelena. 2019. *Javne politike u EU -osvrst na politiku zaštite životne sredine*. Beograd: Institut za političke studije.

- Todorović Lazić, Jelena. 2022. „Životna sredina i klimatske promene – gde je Srbija danas?” *Politička revija* 4 (74): 247-254. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22182/pr.7442022.11>.
- Todorović Lazić, Jelena. 2023. „Evropeizacija javnih politika u EU na primeru politike zaštite životne sredine.” *Српска ревија за европске студије* 2 (1): 3-33. DOI: 10.18485/sres.2023.2.1.1.
- Trasi, Cecilia. 2025. “Convergence, Not Alignment: EU–China Climate Relations Ahead of COP30.” *Bruegel Analysis*. Accessed on 26 October. https://www.bruegel.org/sites/default/files/2025-10/convergence%2C-not-alignment%3A-eu-china-climate-relations-ahead-of-cop30-11373_0.pdf.
- The White House. 2025. *Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements (Executive Order 14162)*, January 20.
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC]. (2021). *Decision 1/CP.26: Glasgow Climate Pact*. Adopted at the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26), Glasgow, 31 October–12 November 2021. Available at: Accessed 15 October 2025. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop26_auv_2f_cover_decision.pdf.
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC]. (2022). *Decision -/CP.27: Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan*. Adopted at the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27), Sharm el-Sheikh, 6–18 November 2022. Accessed 15 October 2025. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop27_auv_2_cover%20decision.pdf.
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC]. (2023). *Decision 1/CMA.5: Outcome of the First Global Stocktake (The UAE Consensus)*. Adopted at the 28th Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA.5), Dubai, 30 November–12 December 2023. Accessed 15 October 2025. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2023_L17E.pdf.
- Urios, Jorge, Christophe Casert, Tim Gore, Chris Foulds, and Neshat Afghani. 2022. *Behavioural, Cultural and Social Issues in EU Green Deal Policy Documents*. Cambridge: SHARED GREEN DEAL.
- Wang, Ying, Chuyu Liu and Yixian Sun. 2024. “No more coal abroad! Unpacking the drivers of China’s green shift in overseas energy finance.” *Environmental Science and Ecotechnology* 8, 100130. DOI: 10.1016/j.es.2021.100130.

Огњен Петронијевић*

Независни истраживач, Павија

Јелена Тодоровић Лазич**

Институт за политичке студије, Београд

ЗЕЛЕНА МЕКА МОЋ ЕВРОПСКЕ УНИЈЕ У САВРЕМЕНОЈ ПОЛИТИЦИ: ИНСТРУМЕНТИ, УСЛОВЉАВАЊЕ И ГЛОБАЛНО ЛИДЕРСТВО

Резиме

Рад изучава концепт зелене меке моћи са фокусом на јединствен пример Европске уније (ЕУ). Као светски лидер у борби против климатских промена, ЕУ мобилише своју зелену меку моћ како би обликовала еколошке промене на међународном нивоу користећи ненасилна средства. Као кључне ресурсе ЕУ за ширење зелене меке моћи рад препознаје еколошку дипломатију, међународно климатско вођство, одрживу културу и зечене норме. Додатно, кроз коришћење свог регулаторног ауторитета, ЕУ проширује концепт меке моћи кроз механизме условљавања, чиме придодаје хибридни облик класичном схватању меке моћи. Рад истиче да ЕУ комбинује унутрашњу еколошку трансформацију, оличену у примеру Европског зеленог договора, са спољним инструментима као што су Поглавље 27 процеса приширења ЕУ и иницијатива *Global Gateway*, ради пројекције својих еколошких норми на глобалном нивоу. Рад такође анализира стратегије ЕУ у склопу скорашњих међународних климатских преговора оличеним у учешћу на међународним конференцијама (COP26–COP28). На самом крају, рад се бави и дешавањима у међународним односима који ограничавају капацитет ЕУ у остваривању еколошких циљева у међународној арени

* Имејл адреса: ogisapetronijevic@gmail.com; ORCID: 0009-0004-0984-0775.

** Имејл адреса: j82@gmail.com; ORCID: 0000-0001-5924-7516.

– проблем повлачења Сједињених Америчких Држава из Париског споразума и динамика комплексних односа са Кином.

Кључне речи: зелена мека моћ, Еворпска унија, еколошка дипломатија, климатско лидерство, Европски зелени договор

*** Овај рад је примљен 1. новембра 2025. године, а прихваћен за штампу на састанку Редакције 8. децембра 2025. године.