

## **Introduction: The Ukraine War: A Paradigm Shift in EU-Russian Relations?<sup>1</sup>**

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Russia's war against Ukraine, initiated in February 2022, has brought a sea change in Europe's security landscape and has also contributed to a fundamental reorientation of European Union (EU) policies in several areas, most notably security and energy. Russia's efforts to expand its influence in Ukraine and other neighbouring post-Soviet countries have been a persistent feature of Russian foreign policy under Vladimir Putin's leadership. Russia's intervention in Georgia in 2008 was a signal of its willingness to use military force to pursue this objective; Russia's seizing and subsequent annexation of the Ukrainian region of Crimea in 2014 was a precursor of Russia's 2022 actions. While the Crimean annexation elicited a set of ongoing EU sanctions against Russia, the 2022 war also initiated a more fundamental rethinking of the precepts underlying traditional EU approaches to foreign policy. The articles in this special issue address the dynamics that have driven Russian actions in Ukraine as well as the nature of EU policy changes that have resulted.

As I suggested in 2018, events leading up to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 opened the door to a possible paradigm shift in EU-Russian relations (DeBardeleben 2018). Drawing on Peter Hall's work on policy paradigms (Hall 1993), I proposed the notion of "strategic paradigms" as being helpful when referring to how national leaders understand "the configuration of international power and the position of the nation within it" (DeBardeleben 2018, 117). With Russia's attack on Ukraine in 2022, leaders of the EU and of most of its member states felt compelled to reassess their previous assumptions about the European security landscape and the place of the EU and Russia in it, signalling the possibility of a paradigm change. The new situation undermined the once-touted vision of an integrated economic space 'from Lisbon to Vladivostok' that could eventually grow out of a strategic partnership with Russia that had, optimistically, unfolded between the EU and Russia in 1999 (Solana 1999). As late as 2013, European Commission President José Manuel Durão Barroso had articulated the vision underlying the old paradigm this way: "The long-term vision is a common economic and human space from Lisbon to Vladivostok with free travel of people, free exchange of goods and services, very close overall cooperation. This is our long-term vision" (Barroso 2013). Statements from President Putin before 2014 also reflected a similar aspiration for an integrated European economic space (Putin 2010).

In contrast, the emerging strategic paradigm involves radically reduced economic and human interconnections between Russia and the EU, dissonance on fundamental values, and a securitizing of the relationship. Indicative of this change was the acknowledgement in September 2014 by Federica Mogherini (soon to take on the post as the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs

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and Security Policy) that the EU's strategic partnership with Russia no longer applied (Euractiv 2014). Since February 2022, the relationship has become securitized and militarized to a degree unimaginable just a few years ago; this might have seemed like a worst-case scenario at that time. The changes affect all countries in the region. Those that are dependent on Russia for security, energy, remittances, or other key resources find themselves in a nearly irreconcilable dilemma, trying to balance their security concerns against the costs of alienating either the West or Russia. In this adversarial landscape, previous norms regarding diplomatic resolution of conflicts have fallen aside, while misinformation and propaganda are rife. Now there is worry about even worse outcomes, including the possible use of nuclear weapons on European territory, a major catastrophe at Europe's largest nuclear power plant (located in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine), or an open confrontation between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Russia.

The potential for a paradigm shift that occurred in 2014 was primarily driven by actions on the Russian side, which resulted, in large part, from Russia's attempt to rectify key policy failures that threatened to undermine underlying assumptions about identity and national destiny that took on prominence in Russia under Vladimir Putin's leadership (DeBardeleben 2018). First was the Russian leadership's perception that it had not succeeded in gaining recognition as an equal partner of the EU, NATO, and the United States (US). Second were difficulties that Russia faced in establishing itself as the regional hegemon in its own proclaimed sphere of influence, which included most of the post-Soviet space (with the possible exception of the three Baltic states, whose admission to the EU had largely been accepted by Russia). The latter problem was exemplified by Russia's failure to successfully draw its most important regional neighbour, Ukraine, into its sphere of influence, despite repeated efforts to persuade and compel.

Russia's policy failures were accompanied by its leaders' concerns about NATO's eastward expansion, their rejection of perceived EU assertions of normative superiority, and what Russia's leaders saw as an emerging unipolar geopolitical structure dominated by the US. Russia's efforts to undermine or halt these developments using traditional diplomatic approaches, usual tools of economic pressure, and various methods of covert influence had had limited success. Russia saw NATO as poised to attempt continued expansion further eastward. The Russian leadership also observed the EU as becoming more successful in its efforts to export its values and norms to key neighbours, as Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova had all signed Association Agreements and free trade agreements with the EU. The US was viewed as continuing its efforts to assert global dominance, hypocritically using methods that the Russian leaders considered to be in violation of the very international norms and laws that the US proclaimed to support (Lavrov 2022).

As Hall (1993) suggested in his discussion of change in policy paradigms, policy failure is often the trigger for paradigm change. Policy failure can lead to policy experimentation in an effort to correct the failure, but if this is unsuccessful, a policy paradigm shift may occur. Such a shift involves a redefinition of problems facing the polity, a reconsideration or reframing of goals, and significant adjustments in the methods marshalled to achieve these goals. For Russia, experimentation involved more assertive measures to secure Russia's regional dominance, already evidenced in its 2008 actions in Georgia and ongoing efforts to gain leverage over other neighbours affected by 'frozen conflicts' by establishing itself as a mediator and peacekeeper. Russia's efforts to establish regional dominance were further operationalized with the creation of the Eurasian Customs Union in 2010 and then with the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2015. In 2010, the Eurasian Customs Union tightened economic ties between its three founding

members: Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. In 2015, with the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union, the mandate was expanded to include a broader spectrum of economic integration measures, with Armenia and Kyrgyzstan joining the same year. Russian leaders exerted continuous but unsuccessful pressure on Ukraine's Russia-leaning leader, Viktor Yanukovich, to join the EAEU. These efforts failed, and the EU refused to recognize the EAEU as a worthy interlocutor (Russell 2017). Voices in the West dismissed this project as an effort to reconstitute the Soviet Union (Clover 2012). This all suggested that the experiment had failed to achieve Russia's desired goals of gaining an equal status with the EU and US, and of establishing regional dominance. Accompanying the creation of the EAEU, Russia sought to reassert its influence more forcefully in the Middle East and Africa and to build a closer strategic relationship with China.

The EU responded to protestations and actions on the Russian side with ambivalence and hesitancy. While the EU's reaction to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 was, at the time, considered strong and unambiguous, it pales in comparison to the measures taken since February 2022. The response involved a set of progressively intensifying economic sanctions against Russian individuals and entities. However, until February 2022, the European Union did not engage in a serious reconsideration of its larger strategy toward Russia. These actions reflect what Hall identifies as "second order change," i.e., more than incremental measures, but less than a paradigmatic shift: the "[alteration] of ... policy without radically altering the hierarchy of goals behind the policy" (Hall 1993, 281-82). The EU's actions, in coordination with the United States, Canada, and other allies, used new measures (e.g., progressive sanctions) designed to motivate Russia to engage in constructive negotiations to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine and to deter further aggression. A hope remained that cooperation could be re-established, and that Russia could be steered back into compliance with some version of a liberal global consensus.

To be sure, between 2014 and 2022, EU sanctions on Russia were sustained and augmented; to the surprise of some analysts, they were renewed every six months based on member state unanimity (Portela et al. 2021; Sjursen and Rosen 2021). In addition, a general freeze in relations with Russia was put in place, however, with some notable exceptions. Those exceptions included the continuation of cross-border cooperation programs, the involvement of Russians in research cooperation, and the eligibility of Russians for participation in programs like the Erasmus + Jean Monnet grant competitions. In addition, some informal working groups continued to operate. Periodic visits of EU and member state officials to Russia occurred, and consultations between Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and the EU's High Representation Mogherini took place on the sidelines of international meetings. Alongside criticism of Russia's annexation of Crimea and Russia's support for separatist forces in eastern Ukraine, the EU maintained civil diplomatic ties with the Russian Federation.

In March 2016, EU member states lent their support to five guiding principles for the relationship with Russia that were proposed by Mogherini (Foreign Affairs Council 2016). These principles included cooperation with Russia in areas where it is in the EU's interests, support for the implementation of the Minsk II agreement, stronger relations with Central Asian states and eastern partner countries, enhanced attention to assuring resilience in the face of new security threats and promoting people-to-people contacts. The principles, while introducing a significant revision in the EU's approach to Russia, reflected a resistance to a more fundamental paradigm shift. Change in the EU's Eastern Partnership policy was even more clearly driven by underlying continuity, with only incremental adjustments following a 2015 review which did not, however, challenge the

program's basic assumptions, goals, and mechanisms (DeBardeleben 2021; Ikani 2019). Overall, one can characterize the EU's reaction to the 2014 Crimean annexation as involving "sustained crisis response" in relation to Russia, combined with incremental change in its Eastern Partnership policy (DeBardeleben 2021).

Reflecting an element of continuity in the EU's approach, the EU's energy dependence on Russia was maintained until the war began in 2022; in fact, but for the outbreak of the war, that dependence would likely have remained stable or even increased incrementally over the medium term until the EU could achieve its shift to a less fossil fuel-based economic structure. Germany supported the development of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which was to provide additional gas imports to Europe from Russia. Although this was a controversial measure, strongly opposed by some EU member states (Russell 2021), construction proceeded and was completed, awaiting final certification by Germany in 2022. At the same time, some change was indicated by the adoption of an EU Energy Security Strategy in 2014, reflecting an increased concern with Europe's energy vulnerability. The creation of the Energy Union in 2015 included measures to reduce the risk of member state divergence from shared EU norms and regulations in their external energy relations. While an overall objective of reducing energy dependence on Russia was widely discussed, the main measures to realize this had as much or more to do with climate change policy than with the EU's Russia policy.

In the security sphere, while there was much discussion of 'EU strategic autonomy,' i.e., an increased degree of EU self-reliance in the security sphere, only halting steps were achieved. Since foreign policy decisions have continued to lie largely within the competence of individual EU member states, the EU has struggled to become a unified and effective security actor. Rather, most member states have relied on the United States and NATO to ensure their security needs. While a few EU members were not NATO members prior to 2022 (Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Malta, and Sweden), most were. In a marked shift, Finland and Sweden applied for admission in 2022 after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, with Finland admitted on April 4, 2022, and Sweden's membership pending as of this writing.

From 2016, discussions about the importance of a greater EU 'strategic autonomy' were fuelled just as much by unease over the wavering in US President Donald Trump's commitment to NATO as by a perceived security threat from Russia. The EU took some significant steps to increase its security profile, including the activation of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in 2017 and related measures to enhance security cooperation between EU member states (Havel 2022). But these still relied primarily on member state commitments and contributions. In the meanwhile, Brexit weakened the EU's overall defensive capability.

So while the EU's reaction to the events of 2014 was certainly stronger than it had been to Russia's military intervention in Georgia in 2008, it still reflected an aspiration to re-normalize relations with Russia within the EU's existing policy paradigm, namely bringing Russia back into the mainstream of the liberal world order, premised on economic interdependence, with energy being at the heart of these efforts.

In the period from 2014 to 2021, this mixed approach, reflecting both elements of continuity and change, was mirrored by other Western actors, as diplomatic efforts continued with the goal of resolving outstanding conflicts. In the late 1990s, Russia had been admitted as a member of the G7 (renamed the G8), a group of leading industrialized democracies (United States, Canada,

France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom). This reinforced Russia's international stature and also reflected a hope and belief that Russia was on the path to joining the liberal democratic economic order. In 2014, Russia's participation in the G8 was suspended in response to the Crimean annexation, and the organization reverted to calling itself the G7. However, Russia still sat in several other international bodies, such as the Council of Europe and Arctic Council, even taking on the chair of the latter body in 2021. Other diplomatic efforts involving the West and Russia included the high-level meetings in Minsk that led to the 2015 Minsk II agreement, which had the goal of charting a peaceful way out of the low-grade war that was ongoing in eastern Ukraine; it was never effectively implemented. Meetings of the NATO-Russian Council were resumed in July 2016 (NATO 2022).

These efforts were abruptly interrupted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The new situation that has emerged since February 2022 sets an uncertain trajectory for security in Europe. NATO has been strengthened as the guarantor of European security, with additional troops sent to the eastern flank to provide security guarantees. But the depth and sustainability of the US's role in safeguarding European security still remains uncertain, especially due to rising concerns about China in US foreign policy circles. Close ties between Russia and China that have emerged since the war started introduce further global uncertainty. This uncertainty is reinforced by changing geopolitical dynamics on a global scale, reflected in the recent expansion of the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) to include six additional countries (Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates), with others knocking on the door. Russia's war on Ukraine and the Western response may well serve as a trigger for an accelerated reframing of the whole global security structure.

While it is clear that a sea change has occurred in Russia's relationship with the West and with its neighbours, the nature of the new paradigm governing the EU-Russian relationship will take some time to assess. A clear change has occurred in the energy sphere, with Russian fossil fuels being replaced by a more diverse group of suppliers. The reduction in the EU's dependence on Russian energy resources promises to weaken the role of economic interdependence as a vehicle for stabilizing the EU's foreign policy toward authoritarian states. Concerns about the EU's economic linkages to China are also rising. At the same time, it is clear that the economic and environmental costs of the war in Ukraine are immense. The EU's support for Ukraine's eventual accession to the Union suggests that many of those costs will need to be borne by European nations and their citizens. These costs, as well as the risks associated with the continuing conflict with Russia, may be weakening support for Ukraine in some EU member states; right-wing extremist movements, which are on the rise in several countries, may try to capitalize on these fears. Democratic backsliding in countries on the EU's eastern perimeter, namely Hungary and Poland, may also feed nationalist sentiments. All of these factors produce a mix of variables that could affect the fundamental nature of the emerging paradigm shift in the EU's policy toward Russia.

### **The Special Issue**

This special issue includes articles that provide insight into Russia's actions in Ukraine and into EU reactions to the Russian attack on Ukraine. Three of the five articles contribute to a deeper understanding of the conceptual foundation for the strategic paradigm shift in Russian policy, both

leading up to and during the war. The other two articles explore two key elements of EU policy, specifically security policy and energy/climate policy, that were deeply impacted by the conflict.

### *Russia's War Against Ukraine*

Many analysts believe that internal developments in Russia itself will be critically important in deciding the outcome of the current war in Ukraine and thus also deeply influence how the EU's longer-term approach to Russia will evolve (Meister 2022). Three articles in the special issue help to explain potential sources of durability as Russia continues to pursue a war that thus far has imposed great costs without achieving its proclaimed objectives.

In his piece, Tom Casier explores the conceptual frame underlying Russia's decision to attack Ukraine in 2022, looking particularly at identity conceptions. After considering explanations rooted in realist theory, resource dependency theory, and critical theory, Casier argues that Russia's decision to attack Ukraine cannot be adequately explained solely on the basis of genuine security concerns; rather, it is rooted in "a blend of geopolitical and identity reasoning" that has prevailed in Russian leadership circles (Casier 2023, 17). The key notion underlying Russia's action is that "Russia is entitled to being a great power and that it can only be so by being greater Russia, a Russia that extends beyond the borders of the Russian Federation and minimally encompasses the Slavic core of the former Soviet Union" (18). In exploring reasons for the timing of the attack, Casier refers to a radicalization of viewpoint that occurred between 2014 and 2022. This radicalization was integrally connected with "failures in Russia's Ukraine policy," (21) an argument consonant with the paradigm shift analysis provided above. While Casier's analysis suggests strong elements of continuity in Russia's approach to the geopolitical-identity nexus, it also provides an explanation for why this approach became radicalized in such a way as to contribute to what could be considered a paradigm shift in EU-Russian relations.

In their contribution, Liia Vihmand-Veebel and Vijar Veebel use linguistic analysis around the Western concept of deterrence to help explain communication mismatches between the West and Russia in the period leading up to the war. Specifically, they focus on the ways in which the rendering of the concept of deterrence in the Russian language may have contributed to a breakdown of understanding. A key purpose of the sanctions put in place against Russia by the West after 2014 was to deter further aggression. The 2022 attack demonstrated that deterrence failed. Vihmand-Veebel and Veebel argue that, in a general sense, the Russian leadership understood that deterrence was a key element of the West's policy toward Russia both during the Cold War as well as more recently. However, they may have misapprehended the exact meaning of the concept, which, when rendered in Russian, is blurred by translation difficulties. The absence of a single word that can adequately translate the concept into Russian means that the various terms used to translate the concept are not fully adequate to capture the notion. In particular, "[a]ll Russian translations include the sentiment that the one who is being deterred is the one being dominated, controlled, and patronized" (citing Karaganov and Suslov, 2019) (Vihmand Veebel and Veebel, 2023, 36). This analysis of the linguistic subtleties of translations and the difficulties they create for clear communication makes an important supplement to more traditional analyses of the breakdown of relations between Russia and the West after 2014.

Measures taken by the Western alliance, both in the economic and security spheres, thus far, have failed to halt Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine. Some analysts believe that sanctions can be effective in the longer term, but the mechanism of that impact is debated. Would it be by

triggering discontent (either among the elite or the populace at large) that would lead to domestic political change? Or could the sanctions eventually impose such high costs that prosecuting the war would become truly problematic for Russia, producing a readiness for a negotiated settlement that could eventually be acceptable to Ukraine? We do not yet have the answer to these questions. Perhaps ironically, the weaker sanctions that the EU and other Western countries put in place after 2014 may have provided the Russian leadership with a window to adapt to a lesser reliance on Western imports and investment. In the economic sphere, this involved a turn to import substitution and the location of alternative economic markets and suppliers. In the political sphere, the official public narrative helped to shape public expectations in such a way as to make the sanctions palatable. Toms Rostoks' article provides additional insight into the manner in which Russia has sustained its commitment to the war effort, despite these material problems and despite the remarkable successes that the Ukrainian military has achieved in defending Ukrainian territory despite unfavourable odds. He suggests that the Russian leadership has adopted an approach of "outsuffering" the adversary, a strategy reverted to when military force failed to achieve its objectives in the earlier part of the war. Rostoks argues that outsuffering "reflects the determination of the state to pursue foreign policy objectives even when initial estimations about the likely costs of the chosen policy exceed initial calculations by far" (Rostoks, 2023, 55). In unpacking the logic of this approach, Rostoks clarifies under what conditions it may be adopted, as well as conditions in which it may fail, exposing some of the vulnerabilities of Russia's current strategy in Ukraine.

#### *The Ukraine War and Elements of a New EU Approach to Russia*

As noted above, the picture after February 2022 appears to suggest a radical change in the EU's approach to Russia but still without the definition of a longer-term strategic perspective. This is in part because the outcome of the war is not yet clear. Another factor is the difficulty of achieving member state unanimity on a long-term strategy. Many of the policies adopted since February 2022 are only indirectly part of the EU's Russia policy; rather, they are directed at bolstering Ukraine's defences against Russian aggression. Policies specifically directed at Russia include dramatically stronger sanctions, coordinated with partners; severe restrictions on oil imports (Eurostat 2023) and a trajectory to radically reduce Europe's imports of Russian natural gas (European Commission 2022); and a deep-freeze in relations with Russia, also across spheres previously left intact after 2014. Alongside these policies directed at Russia, the EU has granted Ukraine (and Moldova) EU candidate status, opened the EU's doors to a large inflow of Ukrainians seeking refuge from the war, and granted large amounts of humanitarian, economic, and, significantly, military assistance to Ukraine. Taken together, all of these measures might suggest that a strategic paradigm shift is underway in the EU's policies toward Russia; on the other hand, overall, a clear strategic direction has not been laid out. As before, the EU remains dependent on NATO and the United States for its security needs, even as some members, including Germany, are taking steps to increase their military capacities. Accordingly, a shift in the trajectory of US policy could deeply unsettle the efficacy of NATO's security guarantee. Discussions of EU strategic autonomy have waned but might be back on the agenda in such a scenario. It is also unclear how Europe foresees its longer-term relations with Russia—as a perpetual adversary, a force to be contained, or a possible partner if domestic changes there allow? Furthermore, member state unanimity, even in the medium term, could fade, introducing further ambiguity, as 'Ukraine fatigue' sets in.

Two of the articles in this special issue address in depth some of the deeper transformative trajectories in EU policy that have emerged as the war has unfolded. Luca Ratti looks specifically at developments in the sphere of security policy. He highlights three main areas of change. The first is a shift from a discourse of crisis management and cooperative security to one emphasizing deterrence and defence. Second, for the moment at least, there are lessened worries about US disengagement in Europe, and, thus, a decreased urgency regarding EU strategic autonomy. Third is an increased awareness of the need for a greater European contribution to transatlantic security. Ratti warns that “[r]ather than taking strong US support for granted...EU members should strengthen their contribution to the Alliance but also endeavour to rekindle and deepen integration” (Ratti, 2023, 85) Ratti’s analysis might raise questions about whether Russia’s war against Ukraine will, in fact, trigger a paradigmatic shift in how the EU conducts its security policy, precisely because the re-engagement of the US and the strong role of NATO may seem to make European strategic autonomy less urgent. A failure, however, to think longer-term could produce a new crisis point if US domestic political dynamics bring a shift in US commitment to the alliance. These could, for example, be connected to the 2024 election cycle, or to an increased priority placed on Asian policy and challenges posed by China.

In her article, Miranda Schreurs (2023) explores the impact of the Ukraine war on the EU’s energy and climate change policies. Measures taken by the European Union to reduce its dependence on Russian fossil fuel imports are among the most dramatic effects of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. What began with Germany’s decision to stop the certification process for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline has evolved into a commitment on the part of EU member states, over time, to wean themselves almost completely off Russian energy imports. These decisions pose significant economic and societal challenges for the European Union and its member states. In the short term, these problems are being managed by a reliance on energy reserves, energy conservation measures, the use of other transitional fuels, including coal, and energy sharing between member states. In the middle term, the approach is an acceleration of the transition to low fossil fuel energy sources, alongside a transitional reliance on LNG imports from other countries, including the United States. For some EU member states, nuclear power seems even more attractive than previously and intensified efforts to make new fuel sources usable, including hydrogen, have also been pushed, including through cooperation with Canada in its development. Schreurs suggests that the EU’s response to the Ukraine war may actually provide an opportunity for the EU to intensify its response to the developing climate crisis through spurring more assertive measures to reduce fossil fuel dependency. Should this prove to be the case, this, in itself, could represent the beginning of a paradigm shift in the economic model supporting EU economic prosperity and sustainability.

Apart from the specific policy elements that Schreurs discusses in her article, the EU’s decisions in the energy sphere represent an even more fundamental sea change in the EU’s overall foreign policy orientation, which is also being echoed in its approach to China. This is a recognition that economic interdependence does not necessarily breed political cooperation and peaceful relations. This change may be among the most significant outcomes of the war for the EU. However, what is missing at this point is a definition of the alternative approach. If economic interdependence does not provide an underpinning of support for peaceful relations, what does? Older concepts of ‘balance of power’ or ‘containment’ may take hold, but these depend on a strong alliance with the US. This leads us back to the questions that Ratti poses about the future direction of EU security policy.

The nature of a paradigm shift is rarely clear while it is occurring. At this point, we can see all the markings of such a change, but the ultimate direction it will take remains unclear. As regards EU policy, elements of continuity may stubbornly persist due to the difficulties of achieving member state consensus, as primary foreign policy responsibility still resides there. Nonetheless, the EU's previous resistance to a paradigm change in its relations with Russia has weakened. In terms of the EU's relations with other eastern neighbours, signs of change are clearer, as the door has been opened to possible Ukrainian and Moldovan accession, which was previously not under serious consideration. New openings are available for EU influence in countries like Azerbaijan and Armenia, where Russia's hold may have weakened as attention has been diverted to Ukraine. The geopolitical fault lines in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus are more fragile and malleable than previously, providing openings for the EU to operate more geopolitically there. More fundamentally, EU leaders are willing to acknowledge and pursue the EU's geopolitical interests alongside its normative commitments, expressed already in 2019 in EU Commission President von der Leyen's statement that "[M]y Commission will be a geopolitical Commission committed to sustainable policies" (European Commission 2019). Whether these opportunities will be grasped may depend in part on the degree to which the Ukrainian situation, including in the aftermath of the war, will preoccupy the EU, both in terms of resources and attention. This, in turn, may help set the nature and the depth of the strategic paradigm shift.

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