



**SNSPA International Week Strategica
Pre-conference Masterclass**

October 18, 2022

5.00PM - 6.00PM

Abstract:

Europe is facing many challenges on multiple, simultaneous fronts. One such challenge is the energy crisis, the consequence of many geopolitical factors, chief among which is the ongoing war in Ukraine. In this conference, 5 speakers gave their views on the making of this crisis and the strategies they foresee leading to a long-term solution. The latter, they expect, will be key in creating a green and sustainable future for Europe beyond the war.



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The National University of Political Studies and Public Administration SNSPA presents "The Future of Renewable Energy in the Current Geopolitical Context". This special masterclass was given as part of the 10th edition of the SNSPA's International Conference STRATEGICA, and hosted by Florina Pînzaru, the Dean of the Faculty of Management.

Current events around the globe have only made it more obvious that renewable energies are the key to the future. Even though momentum had been growing for years, the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine has pushed their development to the top of the agenda. In this regard, the following discussion will address:

- What factors are shaping the geopolitical playing field?
- What led to the current crisis and were its causes foreseeable?
- Where should Europe be looking for feasible and sustainable solutions?
- How is the future of renewable energies shaping up given the most recent trends?

Among the speakers that contributed to the discussions should be mentioned:

Alessio Menegazzo

Head of Sustainability and Public Affairs, Enel Romania. Alessio Menegazzo joined Enel in 2009 and is now the Head of Sustainability and Institutional Affairs for the Enel companies in Romania. From this position, he coordinates a team in charge of promoting a sustainable development system based on the creation of shared value, both for the company and the community, embedding sustainability in the core of Enel's corporate culture.

Florina Pînzaru

Dean, Faculty of Management, SNSPA. Florina Pînzaru is a Full Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Management at the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA), Bucharest, Romania. Florina Pînzaru is a member of two well-reputed international associations activating in the fields of knowledge management and information systems: the International Association for Knowledge Management (IAKM) and the Association for Information Systems (AIS).

Georgian Albu

Expert in Energy Sustainability at EON Romania. He is a specialist in energy policies and strategy, with an experience of 8 years in the public and private sector. He has a degree in Communication and Public Relations, a graduate of MBA master's courses at ASE Bucharest, specializing in Entrepreneurship and Energy Business Administration, completed studies at the School of Regulation in Florence, on energy.

Ioana Petrescu

President of Pur și Simplu Verde & Director of the Center in Leadership and Innovation, SNSPA. Ioana Petrescu is a Senior Research Fellow at Taubman Center for State and Local Government at Harvard Kennedy School. Dr. Petrescu is a former Romanian finance minister.

Clara Volintiru

Professor, Bucharest University of Economic Studies ASE. Clara Volintiru is a Professor in the Department of International Business and Economics (REI), at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE). She graduated with a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and has been involved in various international research projects in the field of behavioral studies, good governance, informal exchanges, and political economy.

Energy is crucial to environmental protection, diplomacy and global affairs. The EU, with 27 sovereign members and a war at its doorstep, faces quite the challenge. Each of the five speakers presented their perspective on the subject in the following order:

Clara Volintiru - A Panorama of the Playing Field

The paradigm set up by the 2016 Paris Agreement, which encouraged individual nations to set up their own strategies and initiatives, has been smashed by the realities of war and Covid. The recovery of the whole of Europe is dependent now cooperation and coordination among the member-states, as well as international partnerships with the likes of the USA. This newfound willingness for the pooling of funds and expertise should be celebrated, for it has made future progress much more actionable than the individualism of old. Still, the one-two punch of the invasion and pandemic has brought on other challenges to the table. Namely, it has revealed just how exposed the old continent is to energy blackmail from its short list of suppliers. Thus, on top of the climate crisis, Europe is now stuck worrying about energy deliveries from belligerent neighbors.

Another challenge has to do with the popular willingness for change. While EU funds can drastically help European countries cope with the systemic adjustments the Green Transition involves, the latter won't stick unless it also benefits from local action. As such, member-states should be proactive in encouraging sustainable initiative-taking in every region, every city, every institution and at all levels of their respective societies. Hence, the European Green Deal should be approached as a launch pad for further efforts. Besides individual action, partnerships between different stakeholders – be they in business, government or academia – should be supported, both nationally and transnationally.

Florina Pînzaru – Challenges to the Green Transition

An unfortunate trend has been growing wherein populists take advantage of the precariousness of current geopolitics to advocate for nationalistic energy policies. In addition, big players in the continent's energy market face an uphill battle to adapt to the emerging world order, rocked by war on European soil and the continuing fallout of Covid.

Alessio Menegazzo – Economic Liberalism and How to invest in Renewable Energies

Bluntly, Europe should put economic liberalism aside for the time being and take a look back at Keynes. When it comes to energy, the continent is now paying the price of having relied far too long on boardrooms to heat up its homes. Instead of always looking for the cheapest immediate option, innovation should be pursued at all cost. Investors are a bad match. Instead, public funding is key.

Europe's path forward is not simply to free itself from Russian gas, as has been floated again and again since the start of the war. Rather, all gas needs to be kicked out of the mix. European consumers should be paying for energy at the price of production, which is easier done with locally sourced renewables rather than with imported fossil fuels. However, to develop a capacity of production that meets the needs of the European market, both state and EU funds will be needed.

Georgian Albu – EU 2050 Sustainability Goals and the need to include Hydrogen

Hydrogen hasn't yet won over many critics. For one thing, even if its production were to benefit from substantial funding, green hydrogen would remain less competitive than other, greener alternatives. It would remain best suited for a few specialized industries, rather than for general application.

Still, there is a case to be made for its inclusion in the EU's 2050 aims for the Green Transition. As it stands, the pace of electrification is not enough to guarantee success. The need for new infrastructure is simply too great to be delivered on time. Instead, the readaptation of the existing grid would be more expedient, and no other green energy can best make use of that grid than hydrogen. In addition to speed, it would also come cheap to a continent already facing a strained economy. Infrastructure readaptation could save European governments up to €600 billion, while hydrogen would cut CO2 emissions by 80% compared to natural gas, given the equivalent share of the market.

Ioana Petrescu – The Importance of Nuclear Energy

Besides hydrogen, nuclear energy should not be written off from Europe's Green transition. Not only was this the position of the NGO Pur și Simplu Verde, but in fact the EU had recently ruled that nuclear energy should be considered green, opening the way to its Green Deal funds. More to the point, like hydrogen, nuclear energy could benefit of existing infrastructure. While many countries on the continent had sought to minimize their nuclear production before fighting began in Ukraine, the invasion had changed their calculus. With other energy sources getting tight, nuclear was getting some renewed appreciation.

In summary, the post-War, post-Pandemic geopolitical landscape has given renewed urgency to the transition, while simultaneously making it harder to achieve in all new ways. It would then be extremely important to have all stakeholders in the process be seated at the same table. Prices matching production costs is a commendable aim, but Europe cannot afford to turn down any alternative source of green energy.

Key Takeaways:

- A reminder of the importance of geopolitics in the calculus of national and transnational energy policies;
- The impact of emerging and available technologies in facilitating the green transition in Europe and the World;
- The difficulties in implementing necessary policies in a wavering global economy and a strained diplomatic climate;
- The importance of clear and unbiased communication with the public on the topic of renewables and the green transition.

Pur și simplu verde

Benjamin Lamy



Faculty of Management

Mădălina-Elena Stratone

