

# **Joint Master in EU Trade and Climate Diplomacy**

***Transatlantic Influence in the Trump Era:  
Tracing the Causal Impact of US  
Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on  
EU Climate Policy Development  
(2017-2026)***

**Supervised by Dr. Ebru Turhan**

**Shasta Hecht**

**2026**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

**Statutory Declaration**

I hereby declare that I have composed the present thesis autonomously and without use of any other than the cited sources or means. I have indicated parts that were taken out of published or unpublished work correctly and in a verifiable manner through a quotation. I further assure that I have not presented this thesis to any other institute or university for evaluation and that it has not been published before.

*21 June 2026    Hecht, Shasta*

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to my family, friends, and professors who have supported me throughout this journey from an ocean away. To my parents, whose unwavering support and encouragement made this project possible. To my professors, who lent expertise, mentorship, and diverse perspectives. To the work of dedicated researchers, both in the US and the EU, continuing to compile databases of climate policy developments.

And, finally, to those whose presence, patience, and belief carried me through many long days and nights of research. Your support, understanding, and constant belief in me have meant more than words can express, and I am deeply grateful.

Another warm thank you to Dr. Ebru Turhan, my thesis supervisor, who generously aided in the development and editing of this paper, and to whom I owe my sincere gratitude for her insightful feedback and expertise.

To everyone who contributed directly or indirectly to this achievement, thank you.

Let's work for the betterment and protection of our planet, today, tomorrow, and every day.

## Table of Contents

|                                                                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction.....                                                                   | 4  |
| Literature Review .....                                                             | 7  |
| Methodology .....                                                                   | 15 |
| Chapter 1: US Climate Policy Shift Under Trump 1.0 .....                            | 19 |
| 1.1 2017 Paris Agreement Withdrawal .....                                           | 20 |
| 1.2 UNFCCC Response .....                                                           | 21 |
| 1.3 2019 U.S. Formal Withdrawal Statement .....                                     | 22 |
| 1.4 Domestic Deregulation Trajectory .....                                          | 22 |
| 1.5 Summary of U.S. Climate Policy Trajectory .....                                 | 25 |
| Chapter 2: EU Climate Policy Evolution (2017-2026).....                             | 26 |
| Overview .....                                                                      | 27 |
| 2.1 EU Strategic Priorities: Von der Leyen Commission I and II .....                | 27 |
| 2.2 EU Response to US Withdrawal .....                                              | 28 |
| 2.3 European Green Deal (Commission Communication COM (2019) 640 Final).....        | 30 |
| 2.4 EU Legislation Under the EGD .....                                              | 33 |
| 2.5 Summary of EU Climate Policy Evolution .....                                    | 35 |
| Chapter 3: Process Tracing Analysis of Transatlantic Influence.....                 | 36 |
| 3.1 Analytical Framework.....                                                       | 37 |
| 3.2 Mechanism 1: Political Signaling .....                                          | 37 |
| Table 3.2.1: Process-Tracing Evidence Matrix – Mechanism 1 (Political Signaling) .. | 37 |
| 3.3 Mechanism 2: Leadership Vacuum.....                                             | 41 |
| Table 3.3.1: Process-Tracing Evidence Matrix – Mechanism 2 (Leadership Vacuum)      | 41 |
| 3.4 Mechanism 3: Policy Acceleration .....                                          | 44 |
| Table 3.4.1: Process-Tracing Evidence Matrix – Mechanism 3 (Policy Acceleration)    | 44 |
| Table 3.4.2: Baseline Comparison of ETS Revision Proposals .....                    | 45 |
| 3.5 Mechanism 4: Externalization.....                                               | 46 |
| Table 3.5.1: Process-Tracing Evidence Matrix – Mechanism 4 (Policy Externalization) | 47 |
| 3.6 Rival Explanations .....                                                        | 49 |

|                                                            |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 3.6.1 Rival Case A: Internal EU Drivers .....              | 50 |
| 3.6.2 Rival Case B: Russian Invasion of Ukraine 2022 ..... | 51 |
| 3.7 Outcome: Regulatory Divergence .....                   | 52 |
| 3.8 Chart: Causal Chain Synthesis .....                    | 53 |
| Conclusion .....                                           | 54 |
| List of Abbreviations & Acronyms .....                     | 57 |
| Annex of Charts, Tables, & Documents .....                 | 58 |
| Bibliography .....                                         | 62 |

## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates the impact of the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, first announced in June 2017 and formally effective November 4, 2020, on EU climate policy development between 2017 and January 2026. The central research question examines how the US' environmental deregulation trajectory under President Trump has contributed to regulatory divergence between the two powers, and what this divergence implies for the continued pursuit of climate policies within the EU. Employing a case study methodology driven by Process Tracing, and relying primarily on primary sources, the study traces the development of four key EU climate frameworks, when analyzed together, represent a total of over twenty individual climate policies: the European Green Deal, the Fit for 55 Package, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive. Findings indicate that the US withdrawal acted as a catalyst for the EU to assert itself as a global climate leader, accelerating regulatory ambition while simultaneously interacting with internal, EU-driven priorities, and an energy transition shaped in parallel by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This produced measurable regulatory divergence, most visibly in the EU's development of external-facing instruments designed to address carbon leakage and maintain alignment with Paris Agreement targets. The paper ultimately concludes that while the US withdrawal strengthened EU climate leadership, it also exposed structural vulnerabilities, finding that future policy ambition risks being constrained by internal concerns over industrial competitiveness and security and defense factors in an increasingly fragmented global order.

## **Introduction**

Within a shifting global order, the pursuit of climate objectives is becoming increasingly more complicated (UN 2026). With the coming into power of the first Trump Administration in 2016 and its use of aggressive trade policies and security rhetoric, the Transatlantic relationship has become increasingly weakened (Jones 2025). The comparison between the United States' (US) approach to climate mitigation under President Trump, and the European Union's (EU) policies provides an interesting lens into the transatlantic relationship and the causal pathways that exist and operate between the two powers. This thesis explores the causal relationship between the US and the EU, focusing on the development, implementation, and political discourse of EU climate policies and frameworks, effectively tracing the evolution of EU climate policy from 2017 to 2026.

The first US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, announced in 2017 and finalized in 2020, was chosen as the initial causal mechanism because it marked a dramatic shift in the international climate governance order, toppling the trilateral relationship that had been forming between the United States, China, and the EU in the years prior (Yan 2020). This sudden retraction of participation in the Paris Agreement, not only acted as a global shock, but initiated a sharp divergence in climate policy between the United States and the European Union that had not existed under previous administrations. Historically, it ushered in a new era of climate skepticism and deregulatory action in the US, with consequences both for the achievement of the Paris Agreement's goals and for the pursuit of climate action within the EU, straining a transatlantic relationship that has defined the modern era since the end of the Second World War (Jones 2025). The transatlantic relationship has not only been important for its diplomatic and military alliance (NATO), but also for the meaningful ways in which US cooperation has contributed to climate science, policy development, and influence on the world stage (Biniaz 2024).

At the same time, the evolution of the EU's climate policy framework has occurred alongside an increasing emphasis on the concept of strategic autonomy, which has become a prominent feature of recent EU policymaking (Beaucillon 2023). Broadly, strategic autonomy refers to the EU's capacity to act independently in pursuit of its political, economic, and security objectives while maintaining resilience against external shocks and dependencies (Beaucillon 2023). This concept is particularly relevant to the present study because it provides an important political and ideological context for the development of external climate policy instruments. Examining climate legislation through the lens of strategic autonomy therefore helps illuminate how environmental objectives

may intersect with broader goals related to competitiveness, resilience, and the EU's role as a global actor.

Analyzing the impact of the US withdrawal, specifically through causal pathways, identifies key aspects of US influence on EU policies and governance, while simultaneously identifying key vulnerabilities. This aids in future improvements to EU strategic autonomy, and stronger, more ambitious climate action. It also equips policy makers with a clearer understanding of the current EU climate policy trajectory—including simplification of regulations—and the drivers impacting it. The central problem addressed is that of regulatory divergence between two international “partners,” the implications this has for climate action, and the dependencies the EU finds itself in a position to mitigate.

Research is structured around one central question, and three sub questions. The primary question is: “How has the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement contributed to regulatory divergence between US and EU climate policy, and what are the implications of this divergence for the continued development of EU climate policy” The three sub questions each address key interconnecting aspects. The first one analyzes how U.S. environmental and energy deregulation between 2017 and 2020 interacted with the development of EU climate instruments, and how this interaction shaped regulatory divergence across the transatlantic relationship. The second sub question explores how EU climate policy frameworks evolved during the same period (2017–2020), as well as in the subsequent phase (2020–2026), with particular attention to their primary political and economic drivers. And the final sub question investigates the political, economic, and ideological motivations underlying the U.S. decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement and compares these to the dominant ideological drivers shaping EU climate policy.

This thesis is structured in three chapters, two of which are descriptive and one of which is analytical, and one concluding chapter. Chapter 1 establishes the foundational shift in US climate policy, starting with a document analysis of President Trump’s press speech in 2017, identifying key ideological drivers describing motivation for withdrawal, followed by a comparison to the language utilized in the 2019 press statement authored by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and an examination of four important deregulatory policies aimed at weakening the US climate framework. Each policy is identified by its impact on either domestic or international climate mitigation, and each has been chosen for the way in which it targets climate objectives.

Chapter 2 then chronologically tracks and sequences the development of EU climate policies from 2019 to 2026, charting over 20 policies. It then conducts document analysis again through word and thematic sequencing to track the political motivations identified, core objectives of each policy, and aspects of consideration that played an important role. The four main frameworks analyzed are central to the thesis: The European Green Deal (EGD), the Fit for 55 Package, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD).

Chapter 3 is dedicated to process tracing and introduces the four causal mechanisms used to test each causal claim. The four mechanisms in order of sequence are as follows: Political signaling, leadership vacuum, policy acceleration, and increased externalization. There are also two rival explanations tested, other than the US withdrawal, identified for both their plausibility and chronological overlap. The first is internal EU Green Deal logic, while the second is the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the subsequent war that has followed. Both are examined for their relevance and role in shaping EU climate policies.

Chapter 4 synthesizes the data into key findings, identifying theoretical contributions to the field, future areas for research, and future policy implications. The conclusion refers to the central research question, while also addressing tangible opportunities for concerted EU-level climate action. It points towards the future with a pragmatic lens, cognizant of the dynamic global order, and offering insight based on document-specific findings analyzed within the preceding chapters.

## **Literature Review**

### **Introduction to the Literature**

The United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in 2020 has had a profound impact on the global pathway to achieving key climate targets. It signaled a shift in the rules-based international order and has represented the administration's perspective on the diminishing role climate and environmental regulations should have in domestic policies. This withdrawal, accompanied by a slew of environmental deregulations, has put strain on the EU-US Transatlantic relationship, particularly as the EU has continued implementation of the European Green Deal, in line with Paris Agreement targets.

This review covers three main areas that are critical for understanding the context in which the EU-US Transatlantic relationship exists and operates as it relates to climate policy and the international order:

1. The Transatlantic Relationship, Transatlantic Drift, and the Paris Agreement
2. Climate Governance, Earth System Governance, and Climate Leadership
3. How Climate Policy Is Made: EU Regulation, US Comparison, and Key Drivers

Through this review, the intent is to give a historical, analytical, and empirical background of the importance of the EU-US relationship, how the EU's status as a regulatory state shapes its interactions on the global stage, and how different institutional actors—lobbyists, private companies, industries, and political leaders—impact policymaking processes, particularly as they relate to climate mitigation and environmental protections.

### **Discussion of the Literature**

#### **The Transatlantic Relationship, Transatlantic Drift, and the Paris Agreement**

The transatlantic relationship, the study of which has spanned primarily from the end of the Second World War to present day, 2026, is one of deep, evolving partnerships, shared values, security cooperation, and rising tensions (Brogi 2023). Scholarship exists extensively on the subject, with perspectives such as Brogi (2023) who state that since the mid-20th century, the United States has been largely recognized as the leader of the Western World and the global liberal order. Since World War II, the US has served as a key actor promoting liberalized trade, democracy, and a rule-based governance order. Key to the subject of this paper, Brogi (2023) also analyzes the first

presidential election of Donald Trump in 2016, as a catalyst in shifting the liberal international order, and exacerbating European-US relations through the pursuit of a largely isolationist political agenda. Jones (2025) builds upon this analysis of the impact of the first Trump administration on the transatlantic partnership, by focusing primarily on the response of the European Union to remarks made and actions taken by the second Trump Administration. He acknowledges that political comments made by Vice President JD Vance at the Munich Security Conference in February 2025, for example, “go against eight decades of American policy” and represent a shift away from Americans' commitment to democratic institutions towards discourse that favors extremist ideologies.

Furthermore, a recent paper published by the European Union Institute for Security Studies (2025), identifies three main features now present in the Trump 2.0 Presidency that are driving the transatlantic drift, and consequently, driving the United States towards an increasingly antagonizing role. The aspects are as follows: a shift in common values to outward hostility, Trump's volatility and unpredictability, and a policy process determined by loyalty over competence. This final characteristic, a shift in the policymaking process, is crucial because it is highlighted as a restructuring of the policymaking process, as evidenced by messier inter-agency coordination process, consequently hampering public policy development. Significant cuts in the National Security Council, for example, create an erosion of expertise that signifies a loyalty over competence political strategy. On a macro level, the increased skepticism toward international institutions, alliances, and involvement abroad by American political leaders, institutions, and voting constituents, contributes to an increasingly negative view of Americans by Europeans. This same article cited a Pew Research Center survey in which a 12.9% decline was observed in European favorable attitudes towards the US between 2024 and 2025, with many Europeans viewing the US as a “necessary partner” rather than a trusted ally. Together, this provides an important basis for understanding the current geopolitical landscape in relation to European-US relations.

The Paris Agreement, signed in 2015, was the first internationally binding agreement dedicated to setting measurable targets for decarbonization and climate-change mitigation. Arguably its most important element, was setting the goal of ensuring global temperatures did not rise by—preferably—more than 1.5°C, and—crucially—not by 2.0°C (UNFCCC 2015). The first of its kind, it was designed under 1992 parent treaty the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change (UNFCCC) and after the widely-deemed unsuccessful implementation of non-binding rules set out in the preceding Kyoto Protocol in 1997. The Paris Agreement has represented a new and flexible approach to establishing climate goals that are measurable, tangible, and enforceable, depending crucially on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), submitted by national authorities. The United States originally signed on under President Barack Obama, but done through an Executive Order, bypassing the Senate, the ratification was fragile in terms of longevity, left vulnerable to reversal. Scholar Bo Yan (2020) contributes scholarship highlighting the trilateral climate order between the US, EU, and China focusing on the Paris Agreement's importance which lies in the fact that it marks “a new phase in global climate governance” (Yan 2020). Therefore, withdrawal from it represents a shift back towards traditional, fossil-fuel based economies and climate-ignorant policies (Yan 2020).

### **Climate Governance, Earth System Governance, and Climate Leadership**

Climate governance theory underpins the global climate regime, identifying a structural way in which international governments operate to address climate change. Research on the international climate order, existing frameworks, and leadership opportunities, work in tandem to create a rich, theoretical, and practical background upon which climate governance can be understood. Keohane (2011) establishes a conceptual framework that identifies climate regime complexes—narrow, grouped sets of climate regulations and political tools to help address the action needed to mitigate climate change—and how they interact with key interest groups and stakeholders in the political arena. In lieu of a single, unified climate regime, climate regime complexes arise due to the intense variety of stakeholders and interests across the globe. Many people may question, in a world that has become increasingly international, why are we still lacking an enforceable global climate regulatory framework? Keohane's regime complexes answer this by pointing out that the sheer number of varying interests makes this highly unfeasible. Within this context, Keohane identifies two fundamental characteristics of successful climate governance complexes: adaptability and flexibility. To address the core issue of carbon emissions, there must be a governance system in place that can rapidly create, integrate, and enforce, for example, carbon emission standards quickly enough to prevent catastrophic global temperature increases.

Whereas climate governance focuses on the regulatory institutions and structures that political entities operate within, earth system governance highlights the overarching governing characteristics that are key to ensuring a healthy and resilient planet capable of supporting human

life. This is a growing, multidisciplinary field embraced by climate organizations and think tanks alike. It centers around governing the human impacts that are negatively impacting the Earth (Concito 2026). At a technical level, earth system governance examines the full range of institutions, governance mechanisms, norms, actors and their power relations, networks, legal frameworks, decision-making processes, and policies involved in governing the Earth system during the human era known as the Anthropocene (Concito 2026). To strengthen these individual components and build a sustainable governance structure, attention must be drawn to the existing inequities and injustices underpinning global instruments such as international trade and investment (Concito 2026). Gupta (2019) builds on this, providing unique insight into the concept of how earth system governance relates to the development of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Her research investigates the socio-economic reasons that underlay the need for equitable climate action and strengthen this paper's understanding of key institutional inequities that complicate and even create barriers against climate action regarding major political powers such as the EU and the United States. Mass concentrations of wealth put in the hands of a few, in comparison to deep poverty, are linked directly to international trade and investment, with inadequate enforcement mechanisms. Socio-ecological justice remains deeply difficult, with action at the government level being sparing due to the disproportionate amount of attention socio-ecological justice brings to fundamental problems such as wealth disparity.

Within this context, climate leadership functions as both a symbolic and tangible means of driving climate change action. Multi-level governance, referred to by the OECD as policymaking and governing processes across national, regional, and local governments, is the current global framework in which such action can be taken (Co-operation and Development 2026). Prior to Trump's Second Presidency, and after the US' first withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, announced in 2017, many questions were raised about whether the EU had an opportunity to exert its influence as a climate leader within the vacuum left by the United States (Palacková 2017).

### **How Climate Policy Is Made: EU Regulation, US Comparison, and Key Drivers**

In response to global trends of privatization and deregulation, the EU has emerged as a regulatory state. Majone (1994) investigates this and provides basis for the EU's governance structure, establishing that the EU has developed strong regulatory functions, particularly in its largely supranational competences such as competition policy and market integration. In doing so, regulation in the EU has emerged as a distinctive mode of governance, replacing more traditional

modes such as nationalization or direct market management. Majone (1994) also touches on the history of independent agencies within the EU, who have expanded rapidly since the 1970s and 1980s. Key points to his argument are as follows: regulation can improve policy rationality and economic efficiency through the correction of market failures, and that in doing so issues such as political accountability arise. This is due to the fact that many regulators are not directly elected. Beaucillon (2023) supplements this with information regarding the history and concept of strategic autonomy in EU external policy. She highlights the EU's goal of asserting itself as an influential global actor, and how it strives to achieve this through legal, institutional, and political processes. Strategic autonomy first entered EU discourse regarding defense policy as the EU recognized the need to reduce its reliance on external actors such as the United States. Through the 2016 Global Strategy, it has now infiltrated other domains, effectively becoming an ambition, objective, and method in external action, but also mirrored in internal policy, with strong ties to the idea of European sovereignty.

Understanding how climate policies diverge and converge is central to this thesis, particularly in highlighting the components that inform policy making. Boasson, E. L. (2018) describes the EU's approach to policy making historically, including the general objectives and perspectives considered in regulatory spaces. He focuses on the role of industry and the influence of the external environment—aspects such as global politics, markets, and international negotiations. Comparative case studies are used to illustrate the EU Climate Policy frameworks. They include the Emissions Trading System (ETS), renewable energy policy, Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), and energy policy for buildings. Finally, he provides a key insight: EU climate policy arises from the dynamic interplay of institutional interests, industrial actors, policy linkages, and external pressures, resulting in a complex and path-dependent policy process that is shaped by both political opportunity and governance structures (Boasson 2018).

On climate politics and policy development in the US, Henrik Selin & Stacy D. VanDeveer (2011) provide a breakdown of the complexities of the inner workings of climate policy as it interacts on the federal, state, and municipal levels, constituting a multi-layered system of governance. Together, they describe the trend of weak climate action at the federal level, and how high-profile efforts such as cap-and-trade bills have largely stalled and/or failed because of changing political administrations and the consequent use of executive powers (e.g. executive orders) to overturn previous regulations. Consequently, state and municipal actors emerge as the key enactors of

climate mitigation policy and environmental regulations, with some states, such as Washington and California, adopting ambitious climate goals that slightly offset the repercussions of federal inaction. Henrik Selin & Stacy D. VanDeveer (2011) also identified a diverse set of actors who are central to US climate policy. These largely include the private sector—business, industrial associations, environmental NGOs, advocacy groups— and the scientific community.

Climate policy is influenced by a nexus of stakeholders and institutional frameworks. Dominant actors, key political leaders, and agendas drive its development, influencing every level, particularly the most rudimentary one: deciding to pursue and develop it in the first place. Overt political pressure, exerted by political leaders in the name of national interests and in pursuit of political agendas, is one such factor. The Trump Administration has been central in this regard, utilizing populism as a means of stirring climate-skepticism and distrust in scientific institutions. By shaping narratives, the US administration cultivates a pseudo reality of what is, making climate change a highly charged political debate rather than a fact (Nordensvärd & Ketola 2021). The result is a lack of momentum in the political discourse pushing for change at an institutional and policy level. Institutionally, US interference under President Trump in European climate policies, particularly the European Green Deal, has been well documented. The United States' National Security Strategy, released in November 2025, openly stated interest in maintaining geopolitical power with explicit mention of interfering in Europe's current trajectory, identified by the US as heading towards 'civilizational erasure' (Moro, Martini, & D'Amico 2026). This serves as the strategic framework through which the US views its role in the world. It also directly informs its approach to European affairs. Political pressure espoused by US Ambassador to the EU, Andrew Pulzner, called the CSDDD (Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive) 'economic suicide' putting public pressure on the EU to water down its climate reporting regulations (Moro, Martini, & D'Amico 2026).

Two other sectors that intersect directly with climate policy are trade and energy, with all three referred to as a newly emerging trade-climate-energy nexus. Scholarly work from Christopher Dent (2021) investigates this new shift in depth, providing an important framework through which climate, trade, and energy policy can be evaluated. Arguably, the backbone of most national policies, trade policy and energy policy define a country's approach to climate mitigation. Lobbying conducted by both private business and industry players has a substantial impact on the development and implementation of EU policies and has been openly discussed as the key to the future of climate action, particularly through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Trade and energy are

increasingly becoming seen as the means to achieve climate objectives, while maintaining economic competitiveness and long-term growth.

### **Synthesis of the Literature**

The literature depicts global climate governance as a fragmented and multilayered system in which authority is dispersed across overlapping institutions rather than concentrated into a single global climate regime. The Paris Agreement is particularly important because it has signaled a shift towards a coherent approach with flexible, nationally determined commitments that apply to a global community of nations.

A central assertion is that scholarship highlights a distinct decline in transatlantic climate leadership, as US policy volatility under Trump and withdrawal from multilateral climate frameworks (i.e. the Paris Agreement) have weakened global coordination and contributed to transatlantic drift. The EU, on the other hand, has sought to assert itself as a regulatory and normative climate leader, although it remains constrained by internal political dynamics and dependence on external actors.

Across both systems, climate policymaking is multi-level and actor-driven, shaped by interactions between state institutions, national governments, private sector actors, and lobbying networks. Outcomes are further structured by the growing interdependence between climate, trade, and energy policy domains.

Extensive literature exists on U.S. climate deregulation in isolation, EU climate leadership and governance, and the impact of the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on global emissions outcomes, global governance, and general transatlantic policy. Existing work also examines impacts on EU diplomatic posture and leadership roles. However, it does not reconstruct the causal pathways through which U.S. withdrawal has shaped regulatory divergence at the policy level in the EU. What is missing, and what I propose to investigate, is a transatlantic, system-oriented approach that explores U.S. environmental deregulatory action as a catalyst or reference point for the larger pattern of EU policy regulation, and how this interaction contributed to regulatory divergence between the two international powers. Not only this, but it goes a step further, addressing the key causes of such divergence, analyzing political actors and lobbying groups that have leveraged their political weight to influence policy in both the US and the EU. On a more fundamental level, this thesis also addresses the key regulatory shifts that have occurred post 2020,

as most existing literature exploring the impact of the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement explores up until 2020 and is lacking the breadth that the last five years affords.

## **Methodology**

This thesis's research design employs a qualitative case study methodology driven by process tracing. According to Yin (2018), a case study is an empirical method used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-world context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined. It allows an in-depth analysis, accounting for several interlinking factors, supporting a narrative causal pathway approach. Following Beach and Pedersen (2019), process tracing is a theory-driven evaluation approach that seeks to uncover and evaluate the causal mechanism linking causes and outcomes within a specific case. As such, it is particularly well suited for analyzing the conditions and processes through which the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement contributed to policy divergence between the EU and the US. Additionally, process tracing is used as the primary method because it facilitates systematic causal tracking, supports hypothesis testing, and facilitates multi-factor analysis. Given that the effects of the withdrawal span multiple political and policy dimensions, such an approach is necessary for a comprehensive investigation. The causal catalyst is the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in 2017. This case is selected because of its relevance and impact on both domestic and international environmental policies in the United States and the EU.

Data collection methods for this thesis include primary sources, secondary sources, and causal modeling. Primary sources consist of policy documents (Commission Communications, Parliamentary Fiches, US Government communications), institutional reports, political speeches, and political statements released from the US and EU respectively. Secondary sources provide broader context, outside perspectives, and general trends, and include peer-reviewed academic literature, Think Tank evaluations, and relevant databases. Claude AI systems (Anthropic 2026) assisted in organizing information into charts, as well as the final causal synthesis graph. This facilitated time efficiency, while also providing a way in which the research could be chronologically tracked accurately with cross-analysis of thematic elements. Claude AI systems also aided in grammatical editing and ensuring coherence and clarity across complex themes. Finally, Word Frequency analysis conducted using the online software Word Frequency Analyser, to track words and then group them together based on thematic sequencing.

Four mechanisms are central to this analysis: (1) political signaling, (2) leadership vacuum, (3) EU policy acceleration, and (4) increased externalization. Political signaling refers to the EU's discursive and strategic positioning in response to U.S. withdrawal. The leadership vacuum mechanism is examined through evidence of the EU positioning itself as filling a governance gap in

international climate leadership. Policy acceleration is assessed by identifying the strengthening and expansion of EU climate policies. Finally, increased externalization is analyzed through the EU's use of trade and regulatory tools to project climate norms beyond its borders. Together, these mechanisms enable a structured assessment of how EU actors interpret and respond to US withdrawal, and how these responses contribute to broader changes in the transatlantic relationship.

The expected outcomes of this analysis include a divergence in regulatory trajectories, characterized by U.S. environmental deregulation in contrast to the tightening of EU environmental and climate policies. In addition, the study anticipates identifiable shifts in the EU's climate-trade approach, particularly using policy instruments leveraging extraterritorial characteristics to diffuse climate norms internationally. Finally, the analysis expects to capture more recent developments (2024-2025), including emerging shifts in EU strategic priorities and approaches to climate governance in response to evolving transatlantic dynamics.

### **Research Question Framing**

This thesis is guided by the following research question: “How has the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement contributed to regulatory divergence between US and EU climate policy, and what are the implications of this divergence for the continued development of EU climate policy?” To address this, the study examines several interrelated sub-questions. First, it analyzes how U.S. environmental and energy deregulation between 2017 and 2020 interacted with the development of EU climate instruments, and how this interaction shaped regulatory divergence across the transatlantic relationship. Second, it explores how EU climate policy frameworks evolved during the same period (2017–2020), as well as in the subsequent phase (2020–2026), with particular attention to their primary political and economic drivers. Third, it investigates the political, economic, and ideological motivations underlying the U.S. decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement and compares these to the dominant ideological drivers shaping EU climate policy.

The central hypothesis of this thesis is that the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in 2017 marked a critical juncture in transatlantic climate governance, initiating a divergence in regulatory trajectories between the United States and the European Union. In the short term, this divergence is expected to be characterized by a contrast between U.S. deregulation and the tightening of EU environmental and climate policies. However, in the longer term, the persistent disengagement of the United States from international climate diplomacy is expected to generate strategic and political pressures within the EU, contributing to a partial recalibration of its approach. This may be

reflected in the adaptation or dilution of previously ambitious regulatory frameworks—such as the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)—as EU policymakers seek to balance climate leadership with economic competitiveness. More broadly, the findings are expected to demonstrate how shifting international dynamics, including the rise of politically salient anti-climate narratives and repeated rollbacks of environmental protections, contribute to a more fragmented and contested landscape of global climate governance.

### **Significance**

With the climate crisis posing an imminent threat to communities around the globe—including the European Union—and American leadership actively campaigning against action-oriented policy, the importance of finding a diplomatic solution forward is imperative. In fact, for nine out of ten EU citizens, climate change is a central concern, posing a major security threat as Europe warms at twice the global rate and approaches imminent tipping points (Wike, Poushter, & Fetterolf 2025). My research aims to provide valuable insight into the trend of regulatory divergence between the United States and the European Union to meet the challenges that climate change poses to our communities. The results of which could highlight areas in which regulatory alignment is still possible. By identifying the mechanisms and components of climate regulatory divergence, this creates space for key areas of policy convergence. Secondly, design more resilient and effective climate policy within the EU. By understanding the system-based relationship between the United States and the EU, while also exploring the political trajectory of American politics and their impact on European interests. And thirdly, improve policy coherence between economic competitiveness and climate action.

### **Limitations**

While this paper aims to take a holistic approach to climate policy-influencing factors, it will inevitably be unable to account for all possible realities. The multitude of factors that impact climate policy development makes it difficult to recreate causal chains with complete certainty. Timeline constraints as well during the Second Trump presidency pose difficulties in making complete assertions and claims as to the future of the transatlantic relationship. There are also key trends that are still emerging in the coming years and developing global conflicts—the US-led war in Iran, the War in the Middle East, and the Venezuelan oil crisis—that could continue to have impacts on climate ambitions and trajectories. This paper understands these limitations and

therefore limits its scope to track policy development within the EU. Research time constraints are also prevalent, with a limitation of seven months total to develop, research, and write the final findings. Additionally, while interviews would greatly strengthen the paper's evidence, the politically sensitive nature of the research question rendered official interviewees difficult to obtain. Research accessibility was also a point of limitation as several key statements and climate policies were redacted from official U.S. Government websites. This resulted in a necessity to go deeper and consult other non-governmental sources for the desired research. Typically, this impacted the historical tracking of policy developments prior to Trump Administration deregulations. Further research in a wider time frame could account for most of these limitations, and the next U.S. political administration, with tensions mitigated within the EU may render better results regarding transparency of policy motivations.

## **Chapter 1: US Climate Policy Shift Under Trump 1.0**

This chapter employs qualitative document analysis to examine the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and its subsequent pattern of domestic deregulatory behavior. The analysis draws on a range of primary sources, including executive statements, formal withdrawal documents, congressional reports, and regulatory texts, to trace how policy justifications are articulated and operationalized across different institutional contexts. These patterns are organized chronologically to reflect the process-tracing causal sequence, which facilitates clearer observation of the underlying causal mechanisms.

### **1.1 2017 Paris Agreement Withdrawal**

President Donald Trump first signaled the United States' intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement in a press conference on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. The official request was filed on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and legally solidified on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, exactly one year after initiation. Analysis of Trump's initial speech in 2017, combined with statements from Mike Pompeo, the Press Secretary, and congressional reports, reveals a set of recurring motivational triggers. Together, these reflect the dominant political ideologies, the energy–climate policy nexus, and the federal–state dynamics shaping the foundation of the Paris Agreement withdrawal.

In 2017, President Trump announced that the United States would be withdrawing from the Paris Agreement under his leadership. That same day, the UNFCCC released their response, expressing disappointment in the decision, and a reaffirmation of the PA's necessity.

President Trump's speech can be divided into key thematic sections used to rationalize withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. These include, economic security, national security, international competition—primarily with China and India—, fossil fuel growth capacity, American sovereignty and nationalism, and environmental commitments with a distinct climate-skeptic coloring and omission of historical American GHG emissions. The speech includes the following statement in its introduction:

“One by one, we are keeping the promises I made to the American people during my campaign for President — whether it's cutting job-killing regulations; appointing and confirming a tremendous Supreme Court justice; putting in place tough new ethics rules; achieving a record reduction in illegal immigration on our southern border; or bringing jobs, plants, and factories back into the United States at numbers which no one until this point thought even possible” (U.S. Department of State, 2017).

Word frequency analysis reveals that the dominant thematic element in the speech is American nationalism, with the terms “United States,” “America,” “American,” “country,” “us,” and “America’s” appearing a total of 123 times in the approximately 3,300-word text. Economic language—such as “jobs,” “workers,” “economy,” “economic,” “businesses,” “factories,” “growth,” and “GDP”—appears 58 times, representing the second most prominent focus. Terms related to international competition constitute the third largest category, appearing 46 times, including “countries,” “nations,” “world,” “foreign,” “China,” and “India.” Equally significant is the relative absence of climate-related terminology. Words such as “climate,” “emissions,” “temperature,” and “carbon” appear only 13 times in total. Taken together, this suggests that national framing, in terms of word frequency, is nearly ten times more prominent than climate-related language.

Core thematic elements that operate within these contexts are national security and fossil fuel growth rationales. Energy capacity, specifically through expansion of fossil fuel extraction, is framed as a central tool for ensuring national security, both in terms of economics and defense. Repeated references are made to “unlocking the restrictions on America’s abundant energy reserves,” positioning fossil fuel extraction as suppressed potential. Political signaling to the coal industry is particularly prevalent with statements focusing on the adverse impacts compliance with the Paris Agreement would have on the American coal industry (86% production cut), then contrasting this with China being permitted to build “hundreds of additional coal plants.” Framing of national sovereignty versus international actors creates links between energy production of foreign countries and national threat perception. Therefore, exiting the agreement allows a perceived return to sovereignty over national energy production—framed as a core pillar of defense—and protects the US from “future intrusions” as well as “massive future legal liability.”

## **1.2 UNFCCC Response**

In contrast to President Trump’s withdrawal justifications centered on American sovereignty, economic security, and national security, the UNFCCC’s statement released on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 concisely defends international norms through reaffirmation of the Paris Agreement’s goals, stating it “remains a historic treaty” and “it cannot be renegotiated based on the request of a single Party” (UNFCCC 2017). The statement, in so doing, responds directly to Trump’s stated desire to continue negotiations under circumstances that do not “kill the American economy.” International norms justification can be observed through statements utilizing language such as “profound credibility” and reference to the UNFCCC’s commitment to “fast forward climate action at global and national

levels”. While the UNFCCC statement does also explicitly reference similar concerns to Trump such as “reducing risk to economies and lives everywhere,” the tone remains inclusive with sustainability used as a specific aim. The response, in short, can be summarized as a diplomatic refusal to engage in further treaty negotiations, however, remaining open to “engaging in dialogue” with the United States.

### **1.3 2019 U.S. Formal Withdrawal Statement**

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the United States formally initiated withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, with a press release statement published by Secretary of State Michael Pompeo. Word analysis along with thematic grouping reveals both policy motivations and concerns raised. It is important to note that the formats and intended audiences of this statement are different to that of the 2017 statement. The 2017 speech is a political performance intended for a broad, national audience, while the 2019 statement is a diplomatic, internationally facing communications document intended for reporting purposes.

Political messages contain anchor phrasing of an “unfair economic burden,” referencing “workers, businesses, and taxpayers.” These are identified as the actors being protected by the PA withdrawal decision. A dedication to “innovation” is also cited as a positive marker, with “emissions reductions” cited as evidence of U.S. good faith in environmental commitments. Another key marker present that is important in how it represents the outward political commitments, is the concept of “affordable energy” and energy access.

The 2019 statement utilizes words such as “incorporates,” “enhance,” “pragmatic,” referring to the outside world as “global partners” and “friends.” The tone is neutral, with a more institutional register employed, and a lack of overt nationalistic rhetoric such as “sovereignty” and “Constitution.” Additionally, the reference to “a realistic and pragmatic model – backed by a record of real-world results,” attempts to self-legitimize its climate stance in international policies. It then offers a view to the future, expressing that it will extend “a helping hand to our friends and partners around the globe.” This statement gestures toward cooperative engagement, though notably without committing to the substantive obligations the Paris framework would have required. This rhetoric, while projecting cooperative intent, conspicuously avoids any commitment to concrete emissions targets or binding obligations, suggesting that U.S. engagement with international climate frameworks remained performative rather than substantive.

#### 1.4 Domestic Deregulation Trajectory

Throughout the Trump Administration's first term, from 2016 to 2020, withdrawal from the Paris Agreement was accompanied by a broader strategy of environmental deregulation and anti-climate mitigation policies. The significance of tracking U.S. domestic deregulation lies in the fact that diplomatic withdrawal from the Paris Agreement carries weight precisely because of its national policy implications. Non-adherence to the goals set out in the Paris Agreement is reflected in policies that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting obligations, favor fossil fuel use, and diminish land protections for conservation and environmental purposes. Accordingly, four instances of deregulation with explicit environmental and climate implications are examined in this paper to trace the Trump Administration's policy trajectory. These fall under four impact categories: minor international, major international, minor domestic, and major domestic. Listed in order of draft proposal, they are as follows: *Pollutant-Specific Significant Contribution Finding for Greenhouse Gas Emissions From New, Modified, and Reconstructed Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units, and Process for Determining Significance of Other New Source Performance Standards Source Categories*; *Strengthening Transparency in Pivotal Science Underlying Significant Regulatory Actions and Influential Scientific Information*; *National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures*; and *the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision*. Each measure, whether primarily domestic or international, signals a policy trajectory away from emissions mitigation, and therefore, away from intent to fulfill objectives of the Paris Agreement. In turn, it signaled climate disinterest to the European Union, highlighting the need for more concerted action.

The first policy, proposed in 2018 by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Trump Administration, entered into force on January 13, 2021, under the name *Pollutant-Specific Significant Contribution Finding for Greenhouse Gas Emissions From New, Modified, and Reconstructed Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units, and Process for Determining Significance of Other New Source Performance Standards Source Categories*. It initially proposed to weaken requirements introduced by 2015 EPA regulations under the Obama Administration, which mandated carbon capture technology for coal-fired electric generating units (Sabin Center for Climate Change Law n.d.). The final regulation, however, takes a different approach. It imposes a new restriction on Section 111 of the Clean Air Act, stating that the EPA's obligation to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants may only be applied to stationary sources “if the

source category is responsible for at least 3% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions” (Sabin Center for Climate Change Law n.d.).

This has direct implications for domestic greenhouse gas regulation, establishing a legal foundation that limits the EPA's authority to regulate emissions from newly installed stationary power plants in the future. The rule does not merely weaken a specific standard. It constructs a durable legal barrier against the EPA's future ability to extend Section 111 GHG authority to any sector beyond power generation, regardless of absolute emissions volume or climate relevance. Future administrations seeking to regulate additional sectors would first need to undertake a new rulemaking to remove the threshold, which could prove to be a slow and legally vulnerable process. Keyly, this rule is a form of regulatory entrenchment: it embeds a legal threshold into EPA's interpretive framework that insulates a significant amount of U.S. stationary source emissions from future climate regulation, foreclosing the multi-sector mitigation required by the Paris Agreement.

Finalized on January 5, 2021, the EPA Science Transparency Rule: Strengthening Transparency in Pivotal Science Underlying Significant Regulatory Actions and Influential Scientific Information requires the EPA to limit its reliance on scientific studies for which underlying raw data and methods are not fully publicly available (US Environmental Protection Agency 2021). Many foundational epidemiological and environmental studies, including those underpinning decades of federal climate regulation, cannot make data public due to confidential participant information or proprietary monitoring datasets. The rule's application extends beyond formal rulemakings to all 'influential scientific information' at the agency, encompassing informal guidance, policy assessments, and agency reports (US Environmental Protection Agency 2021).

Most importantly, this rule operates at the epistemic level of climate governance, attacking not a specific regulation but the scientific infrastructure on which all regulations depend. It is the least visible and potentially most legally durable of the four rollbacks analyzed here.

On December 4, 2020, the DOE revised its NEPA regulations to categorically exclude all approvals of natural gas export authorizations, including the associated marine transport of LNG, from the environmental assessment requirement, through the National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures. Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), federal actions with significant environmental impacts require either a full Environmental Impact Statement or an Environmental Assessment. Only the DOE has authority under the Natural Gas Act to approve natural gas exports; by eliminating NEPA review at this decision point, the revision removes the

only federal mechanism for evaluating the climate consequences of each export authorization (Sabin Center for Climate Change Law 2020).

Natural gas exports generate a dual emissions pathway: upstream extraction and processing emissions occur domestically, while combustion emissions occur in importing countries. Neither, as a consequence of this policy, is now required to be assessed (Sabin Center for Climate Change Law 2020). U.S. LNG exports supply markets in Europe, Asia, and Latin America; importing nations build gas-fired power plants and industrial infrastructure premised on continued supply, locking in fossil fuel dependency for potentially decades. By removing environmental oversight from natural gas export decisions, this rule exports fossil fuel lock-in to global energy markets and bypasses the climate governance mechanisms of both the United States and, indirectly, importing nations, making it the most internationally significant of the four rollbacks.

Finally, on August 17, 2020, the Bureau of Land Management issued the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision, opening 1.5 million acres of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas drilling. The action reversed decades of bipartisan conservation protection for the largest national wildlife refuge in the United States. The ANWR Coastal Plain is estimated to contain billions of barrels of technically recoverable oil; extracting and combusting those reserves would release significant GHG emissions across a multi-decade production lifecycle (Sabin Center for Climate Change Law 2020).

Beyond direct combustion emissions, Arctic ecosystems function as significant carbon sinks. Permafrost across the region stores organic carbon accumulated over millennia; industrial drilling activity risks disturbing permafrost integrity and accelerating methane release, adding a feedback dimension to the direct emissions from oil extraction (Landrigan et al., 2026). The ANWR decision is the most symbolically potent and potentially highest carbon of the four rollbacks. It transforms a protected natural carbon sink into a prospective source of multi-decade fossil fuel emissions, directly inverting the conservation logic required by a credible Paris Agreement pathway.

### **1.5 Summary of U.S. Climate Policy Trajectory**

Examined together, the four policies constitute a mutually reinforcing program of climate institutional dismantlement that is inconsistent with the Paris Agreement's core objectives of greenhouse gas mitigation. Individually, each rollback can be characterized as a sectoral or technical adjustment, while when analyzed together, and in chronological sequence, they constitute a strategic withdrawal from the substantive obligations of the Paris Agreement, compounding the

formal diplomatic withdrawal announced in June 2017. Policy 1 removes the legal authority to regulate GHG emissions from the majority of the U.S. stationary source economy, foreclosing multi-sector decarbonization under the Clean Air Act. Policy 2 reduces the evidentiary foundation on which U.S. climate regulation is built, effectively reducing the EPA's capacity to justify and defend GHG standards. Policy 3, eliminates oversight of GHG-intensive fossil fuel exports, embedding fossil fuel dependency into global energy markets without climate impact analysis. Policy 4, opens 1.5 million acres of protected Arctic land to long-term fossil fuel extraction, expanding the carbon supply pipeline for years to come, and reversing conservation protections necessary for net-zero projections. Individually, each rollback can be characterized as a sectoral or technical adjustment, while when analyzed together, and in chronological sequence, they constitute a strategic withdrawal from the substantive obligations of the Paris Agreement, compounding the formal diplomatic withdrawal announced in June 2017.

## **Chapter 2: EU Climate Policy Evolution (2017-2026)**

### **Overview**

This chapter presents a chronological analysis of the key EU policy frameworks central to EU climate governance and environmental action in line with Paris Agreement objectives, prefaced by an analysis of the Von der Leyen Commission's strategic agendas as well as the EU's initial response to US withdrawal in June 2017. It traces how the EU constructed a comprehensive regulatory architecture for obtaining the Paris Agreement's objectives by identifying six cross-cutting thematic elements: (1) global leadership and geopolitical positioning, (2) legal ambition and bindingness, (3) competitiveness, (4) carbon pricing mechanisms and carbon leakage, (5) supply chain reporting and corporate accountability, and (6) just transition and social equity. The analysis is structured to serve the EU response backbone of the following process-tracing chapter, in response to the US' deregulatory trajectory. Below is a graph in chronological order of each document, its European Institution, and the date it was published to aid with causal tracking.

### **2.1 EU Strategic Priorities: Von der Leyen Commission I and II**

President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen (then Commission President candidate) set out key priorities for her proposed Commission in the Political Guidelines for the Next European Commission 2019-2024. Six priorities were listed: “A European Green Deal, an economy that works for people, Europe fit for the digital age, protecting our European way of life, a stronger Europe in the world, a new push for European democracy” (European Commission 2019). The EGD is stated as the highest priority with political language centered on the public, such as “the message from Europe’s voters – and those too young to vote – is loud and clear: they want real action on climate change and they want Europe to lead the way” (European Commission 2019). The Political Guidelines then set out an ambitious goal of making Europe the first climate neutral continent. Equally important is the way in which trade is framed as a key tool for advancing climate objectives. Under Section 5, A Stronger Europe in the World, Von der Leyen states, “Trade is not an end in itself. It is a means to deliver prosperity at home and to export our values across the world. I will ensure that every new agreement concluded will have a dedicated sustainable-development chapter and the highest standards of climate, environmental and labour protection, with a zero-tolerance policy on child labour” (European Commission 2019). This assertion represents the EU’s perspective on the usage of tools such as trade to advance climate ambitions.

The second set of Political Guidelines released on July 14, 2024, outline different key priorities: Defense and security, sustainable prosperity and competitiveness, democracy and social fairness, and leading in the world and delivering in Europe. The EGD is no longer titled as such and instead is presented as the Clean Industrial Deal “for competitive industries and quality jobs” (European Commission 2024). Subcategories are listed as follows: making business easier and deepen our Single Market, building a Clean Industrial Deal to decarbonize and bring down energy prices, putting research and innovation at the heart of our economy, boosting productivity with digital tech diffusion, investing massively in our sustainable competitiveness, tackling the skills and labour gap. The focus is on creating attractive conditions under which companies can implement the EGD. This is framed in direct reference to the US, stating “European companies and start-ups should not be forced to look at the United States, Asia or other markets to finance their expansion” (European Commission 2024). Therefore, an emphasis is placed on maintaining European-centered business and innovation. The dichotomy is internal rather than purely external facing. The second Political Guidelines document is different than the first, reflecting emerging challenges the EU faces.

## **2.2 EU Response to US Withdrawal**

The EU’s immediate response to the US withdrawal provides insight into the EU’s motivations and political priorities. The EPRS briefing contains references to a plethora of EU officials and their reactions to the withdrawal. These include European Parliament President Antonio Tajani, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete, Italy, France, and Germany joint statement, EU-China joint statement, EU-AU joint statement, and India-France joint statement. Together, these perspectives are analytically rich in demonstrating the EU’s self-proclaimed position in response to the US’ withdrawal.

The European Parliament’s Research Service briefing provides an overview of the immediate reactions within the EU to the US’ announcement in 2017. Importantly, it highlights the messages deemed most important from the EU’s perspective, as well as the consequences of US domestic deregulation, and reactions both in the EU and internationally to the withdrawal. This briefing serves as one of the most important pieces of evidence to this paper, as it brings together an array of actors into a single, concise, and research-focused depository of EU logic set against the context of the international situation.

EP President Antonio Tajani’s remarks reflect, most prominently, the first thematic element of global leadership and geopolitical positioning. He states three core statements. Firstly, “The Paris

Agreement must be respected. It is a matter of trust and leadership” (Tajani 2017). Secondly, “This Agreement is alive and we will take it forward with or without the US administration” (Tajani 2017). And thirdly, “The EU will continue to lead efforts against climate change and be a global pole of attraction for investment, innovation and technology, creating new jobs and boosting competitiveness” (Tajani 2017). Within the third statement is where broader internal logic of EU competitiveness arises. Overall, Tajani’s statement reinforces the perceived legitimacy of the PA, reaffirms the EU’s commitment while articulating leadership, and highlights economic benefits viewed as in correlation with the agreement’s achievement.

Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Cañete’s statement on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 contains several key statements that reinforce the EU’s global leadership, while also introducing a new idea as well. Addressing fears of weakening, Cañete states, “Today’s announcement has galvanized us rather than weakened us, and this vacuum will be filled by new broad committed leadership” (Cañete 2017). He reinforced other EU official statements with, “The world can continue to count on Europe for global leadership in the fight against climate change,” as well as “Europe will lead through ambitious climate policies and through continued support to the poor and vulnerable” (Cañete 2017). Here an additional layer of thematic element 6 is added, referencing ideals of a just transition.

The Italy, France, and Germany joint statement references speed of PA implementation stating, “we therefore reaffirm our strongest commitment to swiftly implement the Paris Agreement, including its climate finance goals and we encourage all our partners to speed up their action to combat climate change” (Embassy of Italy 2017). In addition, elements of a just transition are reflected with a commitment to stepping up action “to support developing countries, in particular the poorest and most vulnerable, in achieving their mitigation and adaptation goals” (Embassy of Italy 2017). Deeply prevalent are thematic elements 1 and 6 again.

The EU-African Union (AU) Joint Communiqué on Implementation of the Paris Agreement stood out as a concise and reaffirming stance. The joint statement published on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 establishes a “strong commitment to fulfill implementation of the Paris Agreement,” while calling “on all partners to keep up the momentum” (European Union & African Union 2017). Once again, this cooperative partnership angle indicates the EU’s geopolitical positioning, and strategy of leveraging global partnerships.

The EU-China joint statement took place at the 19<sup>th</sup> Summit between the EU and China, at which President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and President of the European Council, Donald Tusk were present along with other EU officials. President Juncker highlighted EU-China cooperation by stating, “As far as the European side is concerned, we were happy to see that China is agreeing to our unhappiness about the American climate decision” (European Union & People’s Republic of China 2017). He then goes on to state that this sharing of values is both “helpful” and “responsible.” Similarly to EP President Tajani’s remarks, Juncker reinforces the first thematic element of geopolitical positioning, by orienting the EU explicitly as a climate partner with China, ready to carry forward implementation of the PA.

In his address to the nation on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017, President of France, Emmanuel Macron reacted to the US’ announcement of its withdrawal by reaffirming France’s commitment, promising implementation by all other countries, and, interestingly, by inviting American scientists and researchers to France. He states, “To all scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs, responsible citizens who were disappointed by the decision of the President of the United States, I want to say that they will find in France, a comrade. I summon them, come and work here with us” (Macron 2017). This statement positions France geopolitically as a leader within the EU but also extends a cooperative arm to those who France recognizes may be heavily impacted by the dissolution of climate policies in the US.

In the India-France press conference held in Paris on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 both Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron reaffirmed support for climate change goals, while also strengthening bilateral cooperation. While Macron’s comments were largely focused on tourism, trade, and diplomacy, Modi made explicit reference to the Paris Agreement, stating “France and India worked shoulder to shoulder on the Paris Agreement and on climate change. I believe the Paris Agreement is a shared legacy, not only for our countries but for the entire world” (India Today 2017). This provides context and additional partnership on which the EU leveraged in their own reactions.

### **2.3 European Green Deal (Commission Communication COM (2019) 640 Final)**

Released by the Von der Leyen Commission on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the European Green Deal is the foundational policy architecture for EU climate policy, and achievement of the Paris Agreement goals to limit global warming ideally by 1.5C, and crucially by 2C. Each EU climate policy can be traced directly to specific provisions under the EGD. Its introduction came just two years after the

US announced its withdrawal from the PA, and one year before the formal withdrawal took effect. This primes it as an EU policy instrument impacted by the lack of US commitment.

At its core, the EGD targets climate neutrality by 2050 with a 50%—now, amended to 55%—reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 (European Commission 2019). Analysis reveals that it is explicitly framed as both an environmental and economic transformation, setting out a roadmap to be operationalized through legislation that spans across both the public and private sectors.

The EGD clearly announces the proposal of a European Climate Law (Regulation EU 2021/1119) to enshrine the 2050 climate neutrality target in binding legislation. The proposed law (that has since entered into force) leverages rationality that includes making the green transition “irreversible” and targets private investment with language including providing “predictability for investors” (European Parliament & Council 2021). This programmatic move from soft law—commission communications and strategic plans—into hard law is architecturally significant.

Regarding global leadership and positioning, the EGD explicitly states that “the environmental ambition of the Green Deal will not be achieved by Europe acting alone” (European Commission 2019). This implies the necessity of partnerships and an agenda that will prioritize collaboration with those who are “likeminded.” Normatively, this suggests countries who share the same environmental values as the EU. Additionally, reference is made to “others” again when stating that the EU “recognises the need to maintain its security of supply and competitiveness even when others are unwilling to act” (European Commission 2019). The implication ties security and competitiveness into the need for environmental sustainability, identifying others as potential threats to both aspects. Equally important is that the EGD directly connects to the Paris Agreement by situating the EU at “the forefront of coordinating international efforts towards a coherent financial system that supports sustainable solutions.”

Carbon pricing is referenced through a specific economic rationale, meant to enhance competitiveness while also achieving climate objectives. Carbon pricing is no longer sufficient in and of itself, but rather it must be “efficient” to “encourage changes in consumer and business behavior and facilitate an increase in sustainable public and private investment” (European Commission 2019). Forward thinking ambition is also prevalent with reforms to the Emissions Trading System, represented by statements such as “to reduce emissions in sectors outside the Emissions Trading System” (European Commission 2019). This clearly demonstrates the EU's perspective in 2019 on the perceived need for future emissions mitigation to extend to other sectors

besides power and heat generation, iron and steel, cement and lime, oil refining, pulp and paper, and glass and ceramics.

Both themes of competitiveness and carbon leakage identify the basis for extraterritorial climate measures, specifically citing “international partners [who] do not share the same ambition as the EU” as the driving cause for such policy. The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is introduced as a means to an end given the “differences in levels of ambition worldwide” (European Commission 2019). While the United States is not explicitly named, the anti-climate trajectory as evidenced by the preceding section, provides clear rationale for identifying the country as an actor with different levels of climate ambition. The EU is careful to adhere to international standards with explicit reference to ensuring that any future mechanisms would “comply with World Trade Organization rules and other international obligations of the EU” (European Commission 2019). Concretely, this EU document is the foundational textual precedent for Regulation 2023/956 establishing a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

Thematic element (5) supply chain & corporate accountability standards are indirectly identified through several vectors: The Farm to Fork Strategy addressed food supply chains, the circular economy action plan targets product life cycles and value chains, and the sustainability products policy and extended producer responsibility frameworks impose obligations up the supply chain (European Commission 2019). The groundwork for CSDDD is also laid out here through references to “green claims,” anti-greenwashing legislation, and the need to “embed sustainability in the corporate governance framework” (European Commission 2019). Therefore, the EU's approach to corporate accountability and due diligence functions as an integral part of the EU's normative perspective in accordance with the polluter pays principle, reinforced by economic rationales of long-term sustainability and fully informed investors.

Finally, thematic element (6) just transitions and social equity, references the European Pillar of Social Rights as a guide to ensure that disadvantaged communities are not left behind during the Green Transition (European Commission 2019). Language establishes that “this transition must be just and inclusive” and that it “must put people first” (European Commission 2019). Following this logic, a dedicated Just Transition Mechanism is proposed for regions, industries, and workers most affected. This social equity dimension is notably more developed than in the 2017 crisis-response documents, with additional reference to energy poverty and the need to ensure affordable energy

access. Once again, this falls under the EU's normative perspective on human rights and social necessities on the path towards a carbon neutral future.

## **2.4 EU Legislation Under the EGD**

The EU Climate Law entered into force on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021, effectively writing the EGD's objectives and strategic oversight into law. It includes several key legal obligations, the most important of which is carbon-neutral by 2050. Intermediate targets are also identified and made legally binding. These include, “reducing net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 55% by 2030, and by 90% by 2040, compared to 1990 levels” (European Commission n.d.). The last provision was most recently added in 2026, signaling a continued operationalization of EU carbon-neutrality priorities.

The Fit for 55 package is a comprehensive plan for achieving climate neutrality by 2050, therefore focusing on key emitting sectors that must be cut by 55% by 2030. In other words, it operationalizes the European Green Deal and the European Climate Law. Launched in July 2021, one year after the US formal withdrawal, and supplemented in December 2021, it comprised 13 proposals to revise existing legislation and 6 new legislative proposals (European Parliament Research Service 2022). The EPRS briefing gives a clear and concerted description of the Fit for 55, with key objectives for each legislative decision. The Fit for 55 legislation not only depicts ambitious targets for the EU supranationally, but it also extends to member state targets under the revised Effort-Sharing Regulation and mandatory carbon removal targets under the LULUCF Regulation (310 Mt CO<sub>2</sub> by 2030). It effectively transformed the soft commitments of the EGD and the high-level binding target of the Climate Law into sector-specific, enforceable commitments. Therefore, the ambitions are directly translated into both supranational and national law, signaling a move towards stricter climate regulation, and marking a qualitative shift from a legal framework to granular legal obligation.

Carbon pricing and market mechanism logic represents the cornerstone of the package with ETS referenced as a key tactic of ensuring emissions within the energy sector—recognized as “the heart of the climate neutrality transition” (European Parliament Research Service 2022)—reduce while attracting investment. Concretely, the revision introduced through the Fit for 55 raised the cap reduction rate, introduced a new ETS II covering road transport and buildings—which are notoriously difficult—extended the original ETS to maritime transport, and phased out free allowances for airlines. A Market Stability Reserve reform complemented these changes, highlighted in the documents supporting pieces of legislation. The EU's ambition remains incredibly

important, with the package creating a multi-layered carbon pricing architecture spanning virtually all sectors of the economy and highlighting key sectors that are notoriously difficult to mitigate such as aviation and maritime.

The Social Climate Fund is a dedicated social equity mechanism financed by the ETS II for road transport and buildings. Its purpose as described is to protect low-income households, small businesses, and transport users from carbon pricing costs (Widuto 2023). Later on, the decision to phase in introduction of ETS II (operational from 2027) as well as the Fund's design reflect a response to internal turmoil and public voices, most notably the *gilet jaunes* protests in France which voiced concerns for high fuel prices and low minimum wages. The Fund represents the EU's most elaborated just transition mechanism in any single EU climate instrument and highlights the importance and sheer impact of workers to EU climate rationale.

The development of CBAM began with a proposal released on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, a policy instrument placing a carbon price on imports of carbon-intensive goods such as steel, cement, aluminum, fertilizers, electricity, and hydrogen, from countries without equivalent—ETS—carbon pricing ((COM(2021) 564 final). While initially announced in the 2019 EGD, the proposal translated climate objectives into actionable legislation. It was formally adopted two years later from proposal on May 10, 2023, entering a transitional reporting phase on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, with the full financial mechanism applying from 2026. The gradual phase-in of the legislation is due to push back from industry and external actors, and equally due to international legal obligations under WTO law. The phase-out of free allowances under the domestic ETS necessarily also needed to be reflected in the phase-in of CBAM to allow for proper proportionality between external and internal measures.

Carbon leakage and extraterritorial measures are represented in the externally facing CBAM regulation, which is explicitly included as part of the Fit for 55 and presented as the linking point between internal ETS systems, the phase out of internal free allowances, and external actors exporting to the EU ((COM(2021) 564 final). The briefing makes the causal connection explicit: as free allowances are reduced, CBAM compensates by pricing the carbon content of imports. The aim is to ensure that non-EU producers face equivalent carbon costs when selling into the EU market, protecting domestic competitiveness while also leveraging climate leadership, and the famous Brussels Effect.

The REPowerEU Regulation is an important cornerstone of the EU's strategic direction and decoupling from fossil fuel energy sources. Spurred by the Russian War of Aggression in Ukraine,

it establishes a roadmap for fully ending the EU's dependency on Russian energy, primarily of which natural gas and oil are the forms (European Commission 2022). It is also comprised of several key structural policy elements and programs. In April 2022 the EU Energy Platform was launched, followed in 2025 by the expanded version, the EU Energy and Raw Materials Platform, focused on diversifying the EU's energy supply (European Commission 2022). In April 2023, AggregateEU was launched, a program for joint purchasing of gas (European Commission 2022). This financial mechanism coupled with the diversification mechanism represent the EU's overall strategy in mitigating fossil fuel use in response to the Ukraine crisis.

The EU had proposed a comprehensive reporting framework aimed at corporations operating and selling products within the EU. These included the trifecta: EU taxonomy, Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). Each one of these tools serves to reshape corporate sustainability disclosure duties and impose due diligence requirements across production chains. The EU Taxonomy provides key definitions regarding which economic activities qualify as environmentally sustainable, thereby influencing access to green finance and investor perceptions (European Commission 2023). The CSRD broadens and formalizes sustainability reporting through detailed, mandatory disclosures subject to audit, increasing both transparency and compliance costs (KPMG 2022). The CSDDD then requires companies to identify, prevent, and mitigate human rights and environmental risks in their operations and supply chains ((Directive (EU) 2024/1760).

Important to keep in mind, however, is the current Omnibus I proposal which includes revisions to these frameworks, effectively scaling them back. Unfortunately, it also leaves key climate mitigation policies vulnerable as these are often the first attacked by industry lobbyists, complaining of rising production costs, and a decrease in overall competitiveness. According to the Council of the EU, the Omnibus I proposal, “reduces complexity and unnecessary barriers, cuts red tape, enhances efficiency and introduces more flexibility for companies that remain subject to its scope with the aim to boost EU competitiveness, especially in a constantly changing geopolitical framework” (Council of the European Union 2026). The Omnibus itself was introduced in 2024 as part of a wider priority landscape of simplification in response to the Enrico Letta (‘Much more than a market’) and Mario Draghi (‘The future of European competitiveness’) reports. As of February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026, the Council of the EU signed off on the simplification, giving it the green light to move forward.

## **2.5 Summary of EU Climate Policy Evolution**

The evolution of the EU's climate policy from 2019-2026 has been dynamic and responsive to challenges facing the EU both internally and externally. The EU's immediate response to the announcement of the US withdrawal in 2017, was strong and varied, occurring at the supranational level, Member State level, and through international partnerships. The following explosion of climate policy frameworks and instruments represented a rapid operationalization of the decarbonization objectives agreed upon in the Paris Agreement. In between the two Von der Leyen Commissions (2019-2024 & 2024-2029), however, the EU has demonstrated a shift in policy priorities. Concerns over security and defense have replaced climate-neutrality as the top goal, and following both the Letta and Draghi reports, internal concerns of economic competitiveness are rising. The simplification packages impacting the CSRD and CSDDD evidence this, as does the Better Regulation agenda as a whole. Overall, EU climate policy has been crafted into a holistic framework, that until 2024, has been rapidly increasing in ambition.

## Chapter 3: Process Tracing Analysis of Transatlantic Influence

### 3.1 Analytical Framework

Process tracing consists of testing conditions upon which phenomena occur through the identification of causal mechanisms. This thesis draws a narrative framework, utilizing a four-step testing process. The four mechanisms in order of impact are political signaling, leadership vacuum, EU policy acceleration, and EU policy externalization. Each claim to be tested is found in the section accorded to it. In order to be tested, additional tests must be passed. There are three differentiated categories that mini tests fall into: hoop tests (checking necessary conditions), smoking-gun tests (providing strong confirmation), and straw-in-the-wind tests (providing modest support). For each mechanism, a series of mini tests are conducted.

### 3.2 Mechanism 1: Political Signaling

*Claim: US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement triggered EU repositioning as a leader in international climate governance.*

#### Conditions

The first step in the process-tracing narrative identified in this thesis is political signaling. Following the U.S. announcement of its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, the EU needed to demonstrate its repositioning as a global climate leader while simultaneously expressing its commitment to further climate action. To test this mechanism, the observable implications are explicit public statements by EU institutional actors that portray the EU assuming a climate leadership role in the immediate aftermath of the withdrawal announcement. Conversely, falsifying evidence would consist of statements that are purely reactive in nature or that primarily express hope for a future U.S. return to the Paris Agreement rather than signaling a strategic repositioning of the EU. Such evidence would undermine the proposed signaling mechanism. The key sources for analysis include the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) briefing published in June 2017, statements by European Parliament President Antonio Tajani and other EU representatives, the EU–China Summit Joint Statement, and the EU–African Union reaffirmation of support for the Paris Agreement. Below is a chart identifying each piece of evidence, and the test it satisfies.

**Table 3.2.1: Process-Tracing Evidence Matrix – Mechanism 1 (Political Signaling)**

| Date | Source | Evidence | Evidence Type | Test Result | Sufficiency Logic |
|------|--------|----------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
|------|--------|----------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|

|                                          |                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                  |      |                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Jun 2017<br>(~3:30 pm EST)             | President Trump, White House Rose Garden                                     | US withdrawal announced; ceases all implementation including Green Climate Fund.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Causal trigger                   | N/A  | Demonstrates causal trigger                                                                                     |
| 1 Jun 2017<br>(21:44 CET)                | EP President Antonio Tajani, EP Press Release                                | "The Paris agreement is alive and we will take it forward with or without the US administration"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Smoking gun & Hoop test          | Pass | Clear political signaling demonstrating EU leadership                                                           |
| 1 Jun 2017<br>(same day)                 | Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete, Climate Action & Energy press statement    | "The world can continue to count on Europe for global leadership in the fight against climate change." / "The Paris Agreement is fit for purpose and will not be renegotiated" / "Europe will lead through ambitious climate policies and through continued support to the poor and vulnerable. The EU will strengthen its existing partnerships and seek new alliances from the world's largest economies to the most vulnerable island states. This partnership will of course include the many US businesses, citizens and communities that have voiced their support for Paris and are taking ambitious climate action." / "Today's announcement has galvanized us rather than weakened us, and this vacuum will be filled by new broad committed leadership" | Smoking gun & Hoop test          | Pass | Actively looks to the EU's leadership position in the future, referencing a "vacuum" left in the US' wake       |
| 1 Jun 2017                               | Joint statement by Italy, France, and Germany                                | "We therefore reaffirm our strongest commitment to swiftly implement the Paris Agreement, including its climate finance goals and we encourage all our partners to speed up their action to combat climate change." / "We will step up efforts to support developing countries, in particular the poorest and most vulnerable, in achieving their mitigation and adaptation goals."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Hoop test & coalition building   | Pass | Proof of EU tactic of "coalition building" to assert itself as a climate leader in the new geopolitical context |
| 1-2 Jun 2017<br>(Brussels / Addis Ababa) | EU + African Union Joint Communiqué on Implementation of the Paris Agreement | "The EU and AU reaffirm their strong commitment to full implementation of the Paris Agreement, and call on all partners to keep up the momentum"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Hoop test & Coalition-building   | Pass | Reinforcement of coalition building and strong political signaling to implementation of PA                      |
| 2 Jun 2017<br>(16:15 Brussels)           | President of the European Council Donald Tusk                                | "Today, we are stepping up our cooperation on climate change with China. Which means that today, China and Europe have demonstrated solidarity with future generations and                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Smoking gun & coalition building | Pass | Explicit reference to US withdrawal as a "mistake" and commits to action regardless of the US' stance           |

|                                             |                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                   |      |                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                             |                                                                                               | responsibility for the whole planet. We are convinced that yesterday's decision by the United States to leave the Paris Agreement is a big mistake, bigger than not ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, because Paris is fairer. But the fight against climate change, and all the research, innovation and technological progress it will bring, will continue, with or without the US." |                                                   |      |                                                                                                                |
| 2 Jun 2017, Paris, France                   | French President Emmanuel Macron                                                              | "I reaffirm clearly that the Paris agreement remains irreversible and will be implemented, not just by France but by all the other nations." / "I call on you to remain confident. We will succeed, because we are fully committed."                                                                                                                                                | Hoop test                                         | Pass | Reaffirms the EU stance as a Member State, actively signaling to US affected scientists to come work in France |
| 2 Jun 2017 (Brussels)                       | EU + 79 ACP States (African, Caribbean, Pacific), Joint Communiqué                            | "We... will defend the Paris Agreement. We are all in, and our joint commitment to this Agreement today is as in Paris: irreversible and non-negotiable."                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Hoop test & Coalition-building                    | Pass | International coalition building, signaling support and commitment to PA                                       |
| 2 Jun 2017 (Brussels, 19th EU-China Summit) | EU + Chinese Premier Li Keqiang / Joint Leaders' Statement on Climate Change and Clean Energy | "The Paris Agreement is an imperative more important than ever." / "highest political commitment to effective implementation." / Commits to cutting fossil fuels, green tech, \$100bn finance                                                                                                                                                                                       | Smoking gun & Coalition-building; Caveat—see note | Pass | Demonstrates priority of climate objectives through international partnerships                                 |
| 22 Jun 2017 (Brussels)                      | European Council Conclusions on the Paris Agreement                                           | "The Agreement remains a cornerstone of global efforts ... and cannot be renegotiated." / EU will "continue to lead in the fight against climate change"                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Hoop test & Institutional lock-in                 | Pass | Explicitly uses language asserting EU as a climate leader                                                      |

Organized by (Anthropic 2026)

## Hoop Test

From a process-tracing perspective, the evidence passes the hoop test, demonstrating that EU institutions responded to the U.S. withdrawal with substantive, policy-relevant statements rather than remaining silent or limiting themselves to purely diplomatic expressions of concern. The documentary record demonstrates such a response, through language present in EP President Tajani's remarks, Climate Commissioner Cañate's press statement, the Joint Statement made by Italy, France, and Germany, the EU and AU Joint Communiqué, the EU + 79 ACP states Joint Communiqué, and the European Council's Conclusions on the Paris Agreement. Drawing from

each of these statements, there is demonstrable evidence that the EU immediately acted to politically signal its commitment to the PA, not just through mission-oriented statements, but through concerted efforts to take the Agreement forward into implementable action. Thereby, this satisfies the hoop test, confirming that the US withdrawal became an issue to which EU policymakers actively reacted.

### **Smoking Gun**

Three pieces of evidence are potential smoking guns, due to the fact that they each provide strong support for the political signaling claim and are highly unlikely to exist if the hypothesis being tested were not true. EP President Tajani's and Commissioner Cañate's remarks function dually as a smoking gun and satisfying the hoop test because they highlight the EU's commitment to acting as a leader in the new leadership vacuum, while explicitly referring to the US. This evidence is difficult to refute and strongly supports the hypothesis. Donald Tusk's remarks on June 2<sup>nd</sup> are also evidence of a smoking gun, as they commit to action in the wake of the US withdrawal, with, again, direct linkage to the US. And, finally, the EU-China Joint Statement references "now more than ever" being the time to act in favor of climate action, one day after President Trump's withdrawal announcement. The immediate response is not only sufficient causal proof but also asserts the EU's strategy of utilizing partnerships in their new leadership position.

One potential caveat, however, to the EU-China Joint Statement on Climate Change, is that the evidentiary value of this document remains slightly limited, since the statement was released within twenty-four hours of President Trump's withdrawal announcement and was produced in the context of the broader EU-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Consequently, while the statement strongly suggests an effort to fill the leadership vacuum created by the U.S. withdrawal, it cannot by itself rule out alternative explanations for EU-China cooperation. It is therefore better understood as supportive evidence rather than a fully decisive smoking-gun test. Regardless, it is not fulfilling a sufficiency test, such as the hoop test, and therefore is still strongly in favor of the hypothesis.

### **Straw-in-the-Wind**

In addition to the chart, there are several smaller pieces of supporting evidence that function in parallel with the hoop test criteria and smoking gun criteria. These straw-in-the-wind pieces of evidence, although substantially weaker, are relevant to the wider analysis of EU reaction. Firstly, the UNFCCC response, stating that the PA "cannot be renegotiated based on the request of a single Party," is significant because it establishes the international norm under which the EU operates. Its

refusal to engage with the US' demands also provides diplomatic leverage for the EU to respond in kind.

Across the 2017 statements, support for the Paris Agreement is treated as non-negotiable, a position that remains visible in subsequent policy instruments. These statements therefore constitute a critical juncture in the evolution of EU climate governance. They help explain the EU's later willingness to adopt unilateral climate-related trade measures, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), by reinforcing the perceived necessity of stronger action to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement. With the United States positioned outside the Paris framework, the EU's understanding of competitiveness shifted from one based on cooperative burden-sharing toward one centered on competitive differentiation through climate leadership.

### **3.3 Mechanism 2: Leadership Vacuum**

*Claim: The EU moved to fill a governance gap created by US absence.*

#### **Conditions**

The second mechanism in the causal chain is testing the leadership vacuum claim, effectively demonstrating that the EU moved to fill a governance gap created by the US' absences in climate leadership. To prove this claim, EU documents must explicitly reference the leadership gap created by US absence, and frame EU action as filling it—not merely as independent EU interest. Additionally, to pass the hoop test, the EGD (2019) must contain language conditioning EU unilateral instruments on the persistence of international ambition divergence. Failure of this test would be observable in indicators that policy acceleration post US withdrawal cannot be attributed to the vacuum mechanism but rather to other factors. Sufficient smoking gun criteria is the EGD's explicit conditionality, including language such as “should differences in levels of ambition worldwide persist” serving as the textual trigger for CBAM introduction. This directly operationalizes the vacancy condition identified by the theory. The falsification condition for this theory would be evidence that the EGD's policy programme was fully pre-designed before the US withdrawal and shows no structural response to it. In this case, the vacuum mechanism would not connect signaling to acceleration, therefore failing to meet the sufficiency criteria. Key evidence includes the EGD COM (2019) 640, Commission political guidelines 2019, and Von de Leyen leadership agenda framing.

**Table 3.3.1: Process-Tracing Evidence Matrix – Mechanism 2 (Leadership Vacuum)**

| Date             | Source                                      | Evidence                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Evidence Type     | Test Result | Sufficiency Logic                                                                                                                        |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Jun 2017       | EP President Antonio Tajani                 | "The Paris Agreement must be respected. It is a matter of trust and leadership."                                                                                                                                                                        | Straw-in-the-Wind | Pass        | Indicates EU concern with climate leadership following US withdrawal. Suggestive but not sufficient evidence of a leadership vacuum.     |
| 1 June 2017      | EP President Antonio Tajani                 | "This Agreement is alive and we will take it forward with or without the US administration."                                                                                                                                                            | Straw-in-the-Wind | Pass        | Demonstrates EU willingness to continue leadership despite US absence. Suggests emerging governance gap.                                 |
| 1 June 2017      | EP President Antonia Tajani                 | "The EU will continue to lead efforts against climate change."                                                                                                                                                                                          | Straw-in-the-Wind | Pass        | Demonstrates a continuity of policy, offering slight support, but lack of causal reference.                                              |
| 1 June 2017      | Climate Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete    | "Today's announcement has galvanized us rather than weakened us, and this vacuum will be filled by new broad committed leadership."                                                                                                                     | Smoking Gun       | Pass        | Direct reference to a "vacuum" caused by US withdrawal. Strong evidence that EU actors perceived a leadership gap requiring replacement. |
| 1 June 2017      | Climate Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete    | The world can continue to count on Europe for global leadership in the fight against climate change."                                                                                                                                                   | Straw-in-the-Wind | Pass        | Establishes EU as a global climate leader for the future, but lacks reference to vacuum.                                                 |
| 2 June, 2017     | EU-China Summit                             | "The EU and China consider climate action and the clean energy transition an imperative more important than ever."                                                                                                                                      | Straw-in-the-Wind | Pass        | Indicates EU partnership efforts to amplify climate measures in response to a lack of commitment in other actors.                        |
| 2 June 2017      | French President Emmanuel Macron            | "To all scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs, responsible citizens who were disappointed by the decision of the President of the United States, I want to say that they will find in France, a comrade. I summon them, come and work here with us." | Straw-in-the-Wind | Pass        | Demonstrates active efforts to attract climate expertise and reinforce leadership after US retreat.                                      |
| July 2019        | Ursula von der Leyen I Political Guidelines | Political Guidelines state that citizens want "Europe to lead the way" on climate change                                                                                                                                                                | Hoop Test         | Pass        | Demonstrates institutionalization of climate leadership in response to public pressure as a strategic EU objective after withdrawal.     |
| 11 December 2019 | European Green Deal (COM(2019)640)          | EGD states that "international partners do not share the same ambition as the EU"                                                                                                                                                                       | Hoop Test         | Pass        | Explicitly frames EU climate action relative to insufficient action by others. Consistent with governance-gap logic.                     |

|                  |                                    |                                                                                                                                           |                  |      |                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11 December 2019 | European Green Deal (COM(2019)640) | EGD states: “should differences in levels of ambition worldwide persist” the Commission will propose a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism | Smoking Gun      | Pass | Strongest evidence in the mechanism. Directly links international ambition divergence to new EU climate instruments. Operationalizes the leadership-vacuum hypothesis through policy design. |
| July 2021        | European Commission                | Proposal for CBAM published                                                                                                               | Outcome Evidence | Pass | Demonstrates translation of leadership vacuum logic into concrete regulatory action.                                                                                                         |
| 2023             | Regulation 2023/956                | CBAM enters transitional phase                                                                                                            | Outcome Evidence | Pass | Confirms filling of leadership vacuum with external-facing regulatory policy                                                                                                                 |

Organized by (Anthropic 2026)

### **Hoop Test**

Necessary evidence requires that the EU explicitly link its climate ambitions to a divergence in international leadership. This condition is satisfied through the EGD statements, and the Political Guidelines of Von der Leyen Commission I, repeatedly referencing the EU’s climate leadership assertion correlating with international partners failing to match EU ambition.

### **Smoking Gun**

The strongest evidence in support of Mechanism 2 is (1) Cañete's statement that “this vacuum will be filled by new broad committed leadership” and (2) the European Green Deal’s statement that “should differences in levels of ambition worldwide persist” the Commission will introduce CBAM. Not only does this directly implicate the vacuum left by the US withdrawal, but it argues that future climate policy will be guided by the continued assessment of ambition of international actors.

### **Straw-in-the-Wind**

Weaker but relevant pieces of evidence for the leadership vacuum claim include EP President Tajani’s remarks, indicating EU concern with climate leadership, and suggesting a governance need. By stating, “This Agreement is alive, and we will take it forward with or without the US administration,” he suggests an emerging governance gap that needs to be addressed. However, this is not in and of itself sufficient to reference a vacuum necessitating EU leadership. Similarly, Commissioner Cañate’s statement establishes EU leadership, but without explicit reference to the vacuum left by the US, and the Eu-China Summit along with Macron’s invitation to US scientists to come to France, are supporting pieces of evidence to the EU’s concerted look to the future, but do

not—in the case of Macron—speak for the whole EU. The China Summit statement assumes a partnership strategy indicating this may be one of the ways the EU will carry out PA objectives.

### 3.4 Mechanism 3: Policy Acceleration

*Claim: The leadership vacuum produced a measurable development of EU climate instruments beyond what was planned pre-withdrawal.*

#### Conditions

The third mechanism, following the leadership vacuum claim, is the policy acceleration criteria. The claim that must be satisfied to determine causality in this regard is: the leadership vacuum produced a measurable development of EU climate instruments beyond what was planned pre-withdrawal. This inherently is one of the most difficult to prove criteria because the observable implication is that EU climate instruments adopted post-2017 should show higher ambition, broader scope, and faster timelines than pre-2017 trajectories suggested. Within this same vein, documents should justify escalation with reference to international divergence. To properly satisfy the claim's criteria, the Fit for 55 package must represent a qualitative escalation, rather than merely routine ETS revision, and must be explicitly linked to the Climate Law's binding targets. If the acceleration claim is not evidenced, then the hoop test would effectively fail. For the smoking gun test, sufficient evidence, although not enough to fully exclude other possibilities, is an analysis of the COM (2021) 564 CBAM proposal demonstrating divergence-conditionality rationale. Concretely, the instrument explicitly triggered by the persistence of the condition the leadership vacuum mechanism identifies. This functions appropriately because CBAM's final design and political justification became substantially more compelling under conditions of persistent international climate-policy divergence following the U.S. withdrawal. Key evidence to be examined for this mechanism is the European Climate Law (Regulation 2021/119), the Fit for 55 package, COM (2021) 564 explanatory memorandum, CBAM recitals, and a timeline comparison of pre/post-2017 ETS revision proposals. However, if the Fit for 55 scope and timeline can be fully explained by internal EU Green Deal politics with no reference to international divergence, acceleration cannot be attributable to the US withdrawal.

**Table 3.4.1: Process-Tracing Evidence Matrix – Mechanism 3 (Policy Acceleration)**

| Date | Source                                                                           | Evidence                                                                                            | Evidence Type     | Test Result | Sufficiency Logic                                   |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 2015 | Proposal to revise the directive on the EU emissions trading scheme (EU ETS), to | "To achieve the target of reducing EU emissions by at least 40% by 2030, the sectors covered by the | Baseline Evidence | N/A         | This establishes the EU pre-US Withdrawal ETS logic |

|                  |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                |                               |      |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  | enhance cost-effective emission reductions and low carbon investments - 2015/148(COD) | EU ETS will need to reduce their emissions by 43% compared to 2005."                                                                           |                               |      |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 22 November 2017 | Council General Approach on ETS Revision                                              | ETS-centered approach focused on achieving the existing 40% emissions-reduction target through market-based reforms and low-carbon innovation. | Straw-in-the-Wind             | Pass | EU implements policy in line with the PA, and demonstrates adaptability to global situation, but came too soon after to show proper acceleration in response to US. |
| 2021             | Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 (European Climate Law)                                      | Binding legal commitment to climate neutrality by 2050 and at least 55% emissions reduction by 2030.                                           | Hoop Test                     | Pass | Demonstrates that climate ambition was institutionalized through legally binding targets, creating the basis for subsequent policy acceleration.                    |
| July 2021        | Fit for 55 Package                                                                    | Package explicitly designed to implement Climate Law targets through extensive reform across multiple sectors.                                 | Hoop Test (Critical Evidence) | Pass | Demonstrates qualitative escalation beyond routine ETS revision.                                                                                                    |
| July 2021        | COM (2021) 564 CBAM Explanatory Memorandum                                            | Carbon leakage framed as a consequence of unequal climate ambition between the EU and external partners.                                       | Smoking Gun                   | Pass | Indicates that persistent divergence in climate policy is driving the need for a border adjustment instrument.                                                      |
| July 2021        | COM (2021) 564 CBAM Explanatory Memorandum                                            | CBAM presented as preserving environmental effectiveness while encouraging comparable climate action abroad.                                   | Smoking Gun                   | Pass | Shift towards unilateral regulatory leadership conditioned by external divergence.                                                                                  |
| 2021             | CBAM Recitals                                                                         | CBAM linked to achievement of EU climate objectives and maintenance of EU climate ambition.                                                    | Smoking Gun                   | Pass | Demonstrates acceleration in both scale and instrument choice, consistent with the hypothesized mechanism.                                                          |

Organized by (Anthropic 2026)

**Table 3.4.2: Baseline Comparison of ETS Revision Proposals**

| Year | Document                                           | Policy Logic                           |
|------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 2014 | European Council 2030 Climate and Energy Framework | 40% emissions reduction target by 2030 |
| 2015 | COM(2015) 337 Final (Phase IV ETS Reform Proposal) | Incremental strengthening of ETS       |

|          |                                              |                                                                                         |
|----------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Feb 2017 | European Parliament Position on ETS Revision | Continued ETS-centered approach                                                         |
| Nov 2017 | Council General Approach on ETS Revision     | Pre-withdrawal policy baseline                                                          |
| 2021     | European Climate Law                         | Legally binding 55% target and climate neutrality                                       |
| 2021     | Fit for 55 Package                           | Economy-wide implementation package                                                     |
| 2021     | COM(2021) 564 (CBAM Proposal)                | New trade-climate instrument addressing carbon leakage under divergent climate ambition |

Organized by (Anthropic 2026)

### **Hoop Test**

Both charts corroborate a concerted increase in policy acceleration between 2017 (pre-withdrawal) and 2021, CBAM’s Proposal introduction. The hoop test is satisfied, crucially with the EU Climate Law implemented along with the Fit for 55 Package. Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 (European Climate Law) demonstrates an institutionalization of legally binding targets, creating the foundation for policy acceleration. The Fit for 55 Package developed under the EU Climate Law evidences the qualitative escalation of climate policy. Table 6.4.2 succinctly maps the evolution of EU ETS revision proposals showing that in line with the PA, there is a clear acceleration from November 2017 to 2021.

### **Smoking Gun**

The CBAM Explanatory Memorandum provides strong support for the hypothesis, stating that “As long as significant numbers of the EU’s international partners have policy approaches that do not result in the same level of climate ambition as the Union, and differences in the price applied to GHG emissions remain, there is a risk of carbon leakage.” This provides the crucial logic upon which the acceleration of climate policy development takes place. It also links the CBAM Regulation to the EU Climate Law, and the Fit for 55, referencing a “strong relationship” between the EU ETS and CBAM.

### **Straw-in-the-Wind**

The Council General Approach on ETS revision came in November 2017, only a few months after the US withdrawal announcement. It provides logic surrounding the ETS approach, citing cost efficiency, innovation, and low-carbon technologies as key priorities. This supports the overall timeline of policy implementation in line with the PA, however, it comes to closely on the heels of the US withdrawal to provide sufficient evidence of causality. Nevertheless, it demonstrates EU ambition increasing, with strong support from political leaders.

### 3.5 Mechanism 4: Externalization

*Claim: Policy acceleration produced instruments that extraterritorially project EU climate objectives through trade and regulatory tools.*

#### Conditions

The fourth and final mechanism in the causal chain, effectively functioning as the main result of the US withdrawal, is that of increased externalization, specifically of climate norms. In this context, the claim follows as: policy acceleration produced instruments that extraterritorially project EU climate objectives through trade and regulatory tools. Observable implications are the existence of EU instruments adopted post-acceleration containing explicit extraterritorial mechanisms, not merely domestic obligations. Additionally, these mechanisms should be framed as responses to the failure of global convergence. In order to pass the hoop test, it must be proven that CBAM functions as a border standard-setter, rather than a purely revenue-based tool, and that the CSDDD imposes obligations on non-EU companies. Failure of this test occurs if externalization is not structurally embedded in the instruments. A strengthening but not wholly sufficient observation linked to the smoking gun test is that CBAM's actual-emissions methodology combined with the third-country operator registry creates direct incentives for non-EU producers to decarbonize to EU standards. In other words, it is the operationalizing of the Brussels Effect facilitated through a regulatory instrument rather than market diffusion. It follows that key evidence includes the CBAM Regulation 2023/956 (Articles 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 27), CSDDD 2024/1760—demonstrating extraterritorial scope, civil liability, and Paris-aligned transition plans—, and the Fit for 55 aviation/maritime ETS extension. If CBAM and CSDDD, however, can be fully explained as domestic competitiveness and supply chain instruments with no extraterritorial internet, the externalization mechanism is not properly evidenced. It must be stated, nevertheless, that there is nuance due to the international legal controversies regarding the WTO legality of CBAM, necessitating an EU response that highlights the non-discriminatory rationale behind the extra-territorial impacts.

**Table 3.5.1: Process-Tracing Evidence Matrix – Mechanism 4 (Policy Externalization)**

| Date      | Source                                      | Evidence                                                                                  | Evidence Type     | Result | Sufficiency Logic                                 |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------|
| July 2021 | Fit for 55 Package – Aviation ETS Extension | EU climate obligations extended to international aviation activities connected to the EU. | Straw-in-the-Wind | Pass   | Movement beyond domestic climate governance.      |
| July 2021 | Fit for 55 Package – Maritime ETS Extension | Shipping operators face ETS obligations for voyages involving                             | Straw-in-the-Wind | Pass   | Continuation of willingness to regulate emissions |

|           |                                                     |                                                                                                       |             |      |                                                                                                                         |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|           |                                                     | EU ports, including portions of international routes.                                                 |             |      | generated partly outside EU territory.                                                                                  |
| May 2023  | CBAM Regulation (EU) 2023/956, Article 4            | Importers must surrender CBAM certificates corresponding to embedded emissions in imported goods.     | Hoop Test   | Pass | Actionable compliance obligations extend to products produced outside the EU.                                           |
| May 2023  | CBAM Regulation, Article 6                          | Declarants must report actual embedded emissions from third-country production processes.             | Hoop Test   | Pass | Establishes that EU regulation reaches beyond domestic production and directly evaluates foreign emissions performance. |
| May 2023  | CBAM Regulation, Articles 8–10                      | Verification procedures and recognition of carbon prices paid in third countries.                     | Hoop Test   | Pass | Creates a regulatory interface between EU climate law and foreign production systems.                                   |
| May 2023  | CBAM Regulation, Article 27                         | Establishment of monitoring and review mechanisms for implementation and international effects.       | Hoop Test   | Pass | Confirms that external impacts are an intended feature rather than an incidental consequence.                           |
| May 2023  | CBAM Actual-Emissions Methodology                   | Foreign producers can reduce CBAM obligations by lowering actual emissions intensity.                 | Smoking Gun | Pass | Creates direct incentives for non-EU producers to decarbonize according to EU regulatory standards.                     |
| May 2023  | CBAM Third-Country Operator Registry                | Foreign installations can register emissions data for EU compliance purposes.                         | Smoking Gun | Pass | Demonstrates institutionalized integration of non-EU producers into an EU regulatory framework.                         |
| June 2024 | 2024 CSDDD (Directive 2024/1760) – Scope Provisions | Large non-EU companies operating within the EU market become subject to due diligence obligations.    | Hoop Test   | Pass | explicit extraterritorial regulatory reach                                                                              |
| June 2024 | CSDDD – Paris-Aligned Transition Plans              | Covered firms must adopt climate transition plans consistent with Paris Agreement objectives.         | Hoop Test   | Pass | Extends EU climate governance requirements to firms headquartered outside the EU.                                       |
| June 2024 | CSDDD – Civil Liability Provisions                  | Subjects non-EU companies to legal consequences for failure to comply with due diligence obligations. | Hoop Test   | Pass | externalization is structurally embedded in the regulatory framework rather than merely aspirational.                   |

Organized by (Anthropic 2026)

## Hoop Test

CBAM and the CSDDD represent the strongest evidence for externalization of EU climate policy instruments. Both aim at mitigating carbon emissions from non-EU companies that do business in the EU. CBAM Article 4 stipulates that goods can only enter the EU market if provided by a CBAM declarant, in effect demonstrating the fact that CBAM certificates must be shown for all third countries. Article 6 provides requirements for CBAM declarants as part of the CBAM official registry, once again reinforcing the implementation of policy externalization. Articles 8-10 detail the verification procedures and requirements, recognizing carbon prices paid in third countries and questioning whether they are equivalent or not. Article 27 directly addresses circumvention by third countries, giving the Commission authority to take measures against countries who do not comply, and therefore demonstrating that external impacts and consequences are a purposeful policy decision. The Hoop Test is passed.

The CSDDD addresses reporting procedures for non-EU countries, explicitly addressing extra-territorial regulatory reach, extending EU climate governance requirements to firms headquartered outside the EU, and embedding policy externalization into the climate framework. Strong evidence is present in the liability provisions of the CSDDD, the Paris-Aligned Transition Plans, and the overall scope provisions as well.

### **Smoking Gun**

Within CBAM's methodology, it allows foreign producers to reduce CBAM obligations if they can prove in alignment with the Regulation that they reduced their emissions intensity. This provides direct incentives for non-EU operators to reduce emissions, effectively providing strong evidence for policy externalization, although lacking the explicit linkage to uneven ambitions. Similarly, the third-country registry functions as a strengthening instrument, that functions dually as evidence passing the Hoop Test and Smoking Gun Test.

### **Straw-in-the-Wind**

The two ETS extensions under the Fit for 55 Package, targeting maritime and aviation sectors, are pieces of evidence that serve as Straw-in-the-Wind logic, since they demonstrate the EU's continued willingness to reshape existing climate policy to match global leadership ambitions, but they do not function as newly developed legislation in and of themselves.

### **3.6 Rival Explanations**

While the US withdrawal constitutes the primary causal mechanism in this paper's analysis, two alternative explanations warrant systematic examination. The first holds that EU climate policy regulation development was endogenous to the Green Deal's internal political logic, particularly that the Von der Leyen Commission's mandate and the Fit for 55 legislative program were sufficiently determined by domestic factors and that the same instruments would have emerged regardless of US withdrawal. The second concerns Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which effectively exposed the EU's dependency on Russian fossil fuels, therefore introducing an immediate security imperative into the Green Transition. Both rivals are assessed through sequencing and framing tests. It is argued that the endogeneity rival is relevant, although unable to account for the divergence-conditionality design embedded in EU communications, and that the Russia factor operated as an additional parallel accelerant rather than a replacement of the US-withdrawal mechanism. This leads to the conclusion that two causal streams produced reinforcing effects, rather than competing ones.

#### **3.6.1 Rival Case A: Internal EU Drivers**

Rival A asks whether CBAM conditionality emerged solely from internal EU political dynamics rather than from international ambition divergence. Two tests are conducted: 1) a framing test, examining the political rationale presented in official documents, and (2) a sequencing test, assessing whether divergence-conditionality language appeared only after the 2017 U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement had been absorbed institutionally.

The framing test draws on the European Green Deal Communication (COM(2019) 640). Three passages undermine Rival A. First, the document states that “as long as many international partners do not share the same ambition as the EU, there is a risk of carbon leakage,” linking the problem directly to differences in international climate ambition. Second, it specifies that “should differences in levels of ambition worldwide persist,” the Commission will propose a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism. This establishes a clear conditional relationship between international regulatory divergence and CBAM adoption. Third, the Communication states that the EU must maintain its competitiveness “even when others are unwilling to act.” Although this phrase reflects continuity in EU climate leadership rather than a direct causal mechanism, it nevertheless situates policy development within an international context. Together, these passages demonstrate that CBAM was justified by external ambition divergence rather than solely by internal EU considerations, causing Rival A to fail the framing test.

The sequencing test examines whether such divergence-conditionality language existed before 2017. Analysis of the 2015 ETS Revision Proposal, file name Commission Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2003/87/EC to enhance cost-effective emission reductions and low-carbon investments (COM/2015/337) demonstrates that reference to the activities of international actors is absent completely. The word “international” occurs 13 times throughout the document, most heavily in relation to international competitiveness. There is no mention of the need for European unilateralism as it relates to the development of international carbon credits, and CBAM conditionality regarding international regulatory divergence is equally non-existent. It is, however, worth noting that carbon leakage framing does mention “other major economies,” stating that the development of rules aimed at mitigating carbon leakage in energy intensive industries will continue “as long as no comparable efforts are undertaken in other major economies.” This is important because it does demonstrate a continuity of the EU's willingness to act. However, the language is much weaker, and only mentions economic rationale linked to maintaining the EU's international competitiveness, rather than developing a rationale linked to climate governance.

A second document used to test the sequencing test, is the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework conclusions (EUCO 169/14), published on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014. This pre-withdrawal framework for the EU's perspective on climate policy rationale in line with the Paris Agreement notably lacks international ambition conditionality language, rather framing ETS, once again, as a tool for economic competitiveness. It also demonstrates the EU had much different priorities, stating that the “economic and employment situation remains our highest priority.” Internal priorities took precedent over that of international climate actors. This provides a stable basis for which Rival A is disproven.

The EU's shift in climate policy, from internal priorities to external conditionality language demonstrates that EU internal trajectories alone were not pre-planned, nor would the rationale for policy development have been the same without international actors limiting their climate contributions.

### **3.6.2 Rival Case B: Russian Invasion of Ukraine 2022**

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 represents a major international shock warranting systematic examination. The central question is whether post-2022 EU climate policy acceleration follows

energy security logic or climate divergence logic. The key documents tested are CBAM (2023/956), CSDDD (2024/1760), and REPowerEU (COM/2022/230).

The scope test analyzes CBAM and CSDDD for energy security language. In CBAM, such language is entirely absent. Framing is directed exclusively toward Paris Agreement objectives, referencing “the risk of carbon leakage that results from the Union's increased climate ambition.” Key terms such as energy security, strategic autonomy, Russia/Ukraine, fossil fuel dependency are notably absent. The CSDDD similarly contains zero energy security language, with framing clustered around human rights, Paris Agreement objectives, corporate governance, and supply chain accountability. The word “security” appears only in contexts of personal data and human rights. The closest the document comes to supply chain security is Recital 9's reference to “critical raw materials value chains,” framed in terms of corporate resilience rather than energy dependency.

In contrast to both CBAM and the CSDDD, the REPowerEU (COM/2022/230) legislation presents energy security logic as the justificatory framework for the document. Within the opening paragraph, REPowerEU establishes the causal logic, stating that “Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine has massively disrupted the world's energy system” and “...has heightened energy security concerns, bringing to the fore the EU's over-dependence on gas, oil and coal imports from Russia.” Other explicit references to the question of energy dependence follow with phrases such as “reduce dependence on fossil fuels,” “lack of reliability of Russian energy suppliers,” and “phase out Europe's dependency on Russian energy imports.” The stark difference between the rationale of REPowerEU, and both CBAM and the CSDDD, confirm that despite all instruments being finalized in the period following the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, there are two causal streams—climate ambition divergence and energy security—operating in parallel, demonstrated in the documentary evidence.

The sequencing test corroborates this finding. CBAM's core legislative framework predates the 2022 invasion, ruling out energy security as a driver. CSDDD, finalized in 2024, maintains the same climate-divergence framing throughout. Rival B therefore operates as a parallel causal stream confined to REPowerEU, rather than an alternative explanation for the primary mechanisms. The two streams reinforced rather than competed with one another.

### **3.7 Outcome: Regulatory Divergence**

The EU's acceleration of climate regulations, contrasted with the US' phases of deregulation, leads to an outcome in which the two global powers experience regulatory divergence. The EU introduces

more stringent regulations, while the US continues to roll back existing climate frameworks. Characteristics of the US approach under President Trump between 2017 and 2024, include the calls for non-binding targets, economic security tied to nationalism, national sovereignty, energy security, and institutional political rhetoric signaling trends of “unfairness” to American workers. This difference in climate policy ambition reaches farther than mere regulatory divergence, signaling a shift away from Transatlantic cooperation under shared values, and into a more strained, complicated international relationship vulnerable to shifting political dynamics.

### 3.8 Chart: Causal Chain Synthesis



(Anthropic 2026)

## **Conclusion**

This thesis aimed to reconstruct the causal pathways through which the US withdrawal from the PA impacted subsequent EU climate policy development, ranging from 2019-2026. The central research question was, “How has the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement contributed to regulatory divergence between US and EU climate policy, and what are the implications of this divergence for the continued development of EU climate policy?”

The study was guided by case study methodology driven by process-tracing, and effectively used mini-tests, causal claims, and critical document analysis to produce findings. The aim was to draw the causal narrative, identifying critical political messaging and internal logic, that the EU's development of climate policy followed in the wake of the US withdrawal. This study concludes that the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, accompanied by domestic deregulatory policies, triggered a multi-step EU response, resulting in sharp regulatory divergence.

The US, breaking from the multilateral international system, left a leadership vacuum in its wake. This “breaking away” prompted the EU to utilize its public voice, in a concerted effort to assert itself as a climate leader on this new international stage. It leveraged leadership across the EU organs (Parliament, Council, and Commission), while also employing international partnerships (AU and China Summit) as a means of strengthening the force and legitimacy of its messaging. With the US's domestic deregulatory behavior as evidenced through the four significant rollbacks highlighted—*Pollutant-Specific Significant Contribution Finding for Greenhouse Gas Emissions From New, Modified, and Reconstructed Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units, and Process for Determining Significance of Other New Source Performance Standards Source Categories; Strengthening Transparency in Pivotal Science Underlying Significant Regulatory Actions and Influential Scientific Information; National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures; and the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision*—the need for both acceleration and externalization of climate policies to address the significantly reduced commitment of the US to carbon mitigation resulted in tangible, concerted, and implementable climate regulation within the EU.

Testing rival hypotheses also revealed important aspects of the EU's climate policy. Firstly, certain elements of the internal logic of climate policy existed before the US withdrawal, namely the ambitions for reaching carbon neutrality. What changed was the political packaging, and overall momentum necessary to facilitate policies passing through the Council and Parliament. Similarly,

the Russian War in Ukraine prompted an explicit answer to energy dependencies by revealing a vulnerability—dependence on Russian oil and gas—and mitigating it as quickly as possible through REPowerEU. This suggests that when faced with crisis, the EU’s adaptability allows for flexibility of policy timelines and scope ambitions. This also suggests that future climate policy will continue to depend on the extent to which the US’ withdrawal now under the second Trump Administration represents a threat to the Paris Agreement’s objectives, and whether, as evidenced through the Omnibus I legislation, internal political discourse will start to shape EU climate policy rather than external events.

The findings suggest that EU policymakers should be cognizant of this climate policy divergence between the US and EU, understanding that the US’ deregulatory strategy runs much deeper than the introduction of new controls and procedures. Instead, as evidenced through the four policies chosen for the purposes of this thesis, but also through the completed list of deregulatory environmental policies (Brookings 2026), the Trump Administration has undertaken—and is currently following—a systemic disintegration of the foundation upon which American climate policy can be passed. The EU, therefore, can no longer rely on the historic Transatlantic relationship based on traditional cooperation, nor can it cast it to the side completely. Rather, by understanding the causal pathway that US deregulation has impacted EU climate policy through, policymakers can continue to accelerate externalized climate policy, resisting the urge to buckle to oversimplifications and internal fears of competitiveness. The future of the Paris Agreement, and the future of the EU’s regulatory strength as an international power, will continue to be defined by its climate neutral objectives, and by the Commission’s guiding priorities.

Theoretically, this thesis contributes to the study of EU climate governance by examining the relationship between political rhetoric and legislative outcomes. By comparing the justifications used by EU policymakers with the content of enacted legislation, the thesis provides insight into how political actors construct legitimacy for climate policy and whether legislative instruments reflect the political logic presented in public discourse. In doing so, it contributes to broader social science debates on policy framing, political legitimacy, and the translation of political ideas into institutional outcomes.

A brief note on the opportunity for future research: due to the constrained time and length of the thesis, there was not sufficient time or space to lengthen the process tracing narrative on the US side to account for the second Trump Administration and the additional deregulatory policies that have

been implemented since. Further research could be conducted, adding to the findings with stronger analysis of chronological policy shifting, and an added causal mechanism for lobbying. Interest groups have large amounts of power, specifically private industry, and analyzing their strength both in the US and effectively in the EU would greatly add to the understanding of the complexities present in the Transatlantic relationship.

## **List of Abbreviations & Acronyms**

**ACP** – African, Caribbean and Pacific (Group of States)

**ANWR** – Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

**AU** – African Union

**CBAM** – Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism

**CCS** – Carbon Capture and Storage

**CSDDD** – Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive

**CSRD** – Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive

**DOE** – Department of Energy (US)

**EGD** – European Green Deal

**EP** – European Parliament

**EPA** – Environmental Protection Agency (US)

**EPRS** – European Parliamentary Research Service

**ETS** – Emissions Trading System

**EU** – European Union

**FTA(s)** – Free Trade Agreement(s)

**GHG** – Greenhouse Gas

**LNG** – Liquefied Natural Gas

**LULUCF** – Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry

**NATO** – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

**NEPA** – National Environmental Policy Act (US)

**OECD** – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

**PA** – Paris Agreement

**SDG(s)** – Sustainable Development Goal(s)

**UNFCCC** – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

**US** – United States

**WTO** – World Trade Organization

## **Annex of Charts, Tables, & Documents**

### **Charts**

#### 6.8 Chart: Causal Chain Synthesis

### **Tables**

- **Table 6.1** – Process-Tracing Evidence Matrix – Mechanism 1 (Political Signaling)
- **Table 6.3.1** – Process-Tracing Evidence Matrix – Mechanism 2 (Leadership Vacuum)
- **Table 6.4.1** – Process-Tracing Evidence Matrix – Mechanism 3 (Policy Acceleration)
- **Table 6.4.2** – Baseline Comparison of ETS Revision Proposals
- **Table 6.5.1** – Process-Tracing Evidence Matrix – Mechanism 4 (Policy Externalization)

### **Documents**

#### **US-side documents:**

- [Statement by President Trump on the Paris Climate Accord \(June 1, 2017\)](#)
- [UNFCCC Response Statement \(June 1, 2017\)](#)
- [2019 U.S. Formal Withdrawal Statement \(Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Nov 4, 2019\)](#)
- [Pollutant-Specific Significant Contribution Finding for GHG Emissions From New, Modified, and Reconstructed Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units \(EPA GHG Threshold Rule\)](#)
- [Strengthening Transparency in Pivotal Science Underlying Significant Regulatory Actions and Influential Scientific Information \(EPA Science Transparency Rule\)](#)
- [National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures \(DOE NEPA Rule\)](#)
- [Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision \(BLM, Aug 17, 2020\)](#)
- [United States' National Security Strategy \(Nov 2025\)](#)

#### **EU-side documents:**

- [Political Guidelines for the Next European Commission 2019–2024 \(Von der Leyen Commission I\)](#)
- [Political Guidelines 2024–2029 \(Von der Leyen Commission II / "Europe's Choice"\)](#)
- [EPRS Briefing: US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on climate change \(PE 603.976, June 2017\)](#)

- [EP President Antonio Tajani's Press Release \(June 1, 2017\)](#)
- [Statement by Commissioner Arias Cañete on US withdrawal \(June 1, 2017\)](#)
- [Italy, France, and Germany Joint Statement \(June 1, 2017\)](#)
- [EU-African Union \(AU\) Joint Communiqué on Implementation of the Paris Agreement \(June 1–2, 2017\)](#)
- [EU-China Joint Statement / Joint Leaders' Statement on Climate Change and Clean Energy \(19th EU-China Summit, June 2, 2017\)](#)
- [EU + 79 ACP States Joint Communiqué \(June 2, 2017\)](#)
- [European Council Conclusions on the Paris Agreement \(EUCO 8/17, June 22, 2017\)](#)
- [French President Macron's Address to the Nation \(June 2, 2017\)](#)
- [India-France Joint Statement \(June 3, 2017\)](#)
- [The European Green Deal \(Commission Communication COM\(2019\) 640 Final, Dec 11, 2019\)](#)
- [European Climate Law \(Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1119\)](#)
- [Fit for 55 Package \(EPRS Briefing PE 733.513\)](#)
- [Effort-Sharing Regulation \(revised, under Fit for 55\)](#)
- [LULUCF Regulation](#)
- [CBAM Proposal \(COM\(2021\) 564 Final, July 14, 2021\)](#)
- [Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism Regulation \(EU\) 2023/956](#)
- [REPowerEU Plan \(COM\(2022\) 230 Final\)](#)
- [EU Taxonomy Directive](#)
- [Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive \(CSRD\)](#)
- [Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive \(Directive \(EU\) 2024/1760, June 13, 2024\)](#)
- [Omnibus I Proposal \(2024 simplification package\)](#)
- [2030 Climate and Energy Framework Conclusions \(EUCO 169/14, Oct 24, 2014\)](#)
- [Proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2003/87/EC \(2015/148\(COD\); COM/2015/337\)](#)
- [Council General Approach on ETS Revision \(Nov 22, 2017\)](#)
- [European Parliament Position on ETS Revision \(Feb 2017\)](#)

## Bibliography

- African Union & European Union. (2017, June 2). EU–African Union joint communiqué on the implementation of the Paris Agreement. <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20170602/eu-african-union-joint-communiqu%C3%A9-implementation-paris-agreement>
- Anthropic. (2026). Claude. <https://claude.ai/>
- Arias Cañete, M. (2017, June 1). Statement by Commissioner Arias Cañete on the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement [Press statement] European Commission.
- Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2019). Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines (2nd ed.). University of Michigan Press.
- Beaucillon, C. (2023). Strategic autonomy: A new identity for the EU as a global actor. *European Papers*, 8(1), 417–428. <https://www.europeanpapers.eu/en/europeanforum/strategic-autonomy-new-identity-eu-global-actor>
- Biniarz, S. (2024). *The climate crisis: How the U.S. is leading the global response*. American Foreign Service Association. <https://afsa.org/climate-crisis-how-us-leading-global-response>
- Boasson, E. L. (2018). EU climate policy: Industry, policy interaction, and external environment. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315580623>
- Brogi, A. (2023). Transatlantic relations after Trump: Mutual perceptions and strategy in historical perspective. In R. Jervis et al. (Eds.), *Chaos reconsidered: The liberal order and the future of international politics*. Columbia University Press.
- Brookings Institution. (2026). Tracking regulatory changes in the second Trump administration. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/tracking-regulatory-changes-in-the-second-trump-administration/>
- Climate Hughes. (n.d.). Environmental law and climate change. <https://climatehughes.org/law-and-climate-atlas/environmental-law-and-climate-change/>
- Concito. (2026). Earth system governance. <https://concito.dk/en/udgivelser/earth-system-governance/>

Council of the European Union. (2017, October 13). Council conclusions on the Paris Agreement and preparations for the UNFCCC meetings. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/10/13/conclusions-paris-agreement-and-unfccc-meetings/>

Council of the European Union. (2017, November 22). Reform of the EU emissions trading system: Council endorses deal with European Parliament [Press release]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/11/22/reform-of-the-eu-emissions-trading-system-council-endorses-deal-with-european-parliament/>

Council of the European Union. (2019). The European Green Deal (Document 15051/19). [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/47573/st\\_15051\\_2019\\_init\\_en.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/47573/st_15051_2019_init_en.pdf)

Council of the European Union. (2026, February 24). Council signs off simplification of sustainability reporting and due diligence requirements to boost EU competitiveness. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/02/24/council-signs-off-simplification-of-sustainability-reporting-and-due-diligence-requirements-to-boost-eu-competitiveness/>

Dent, C. M. (2021). Trade, climate and energy: A new study on climate action through free trade agreements. *Energies*, 14(14), 4363. <https://doi.org/10.3390/en14144363>

Directive (EU) 2024/1760 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on corporate sustainability due diligence. (2024). Official Journal of the European Union, L 2024/1760. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:L\\_202401760](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:L_202401760)

Directorate-General for Climate Action. (2018, July 13). EU–China leaders’ statement on climate change and clean energy. European Commission. [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2018-07/20180713\\_statement\\_en.pdf](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2018-07/20180713_statement_en.pdf)

Eurobarometer. (n.d.). Climate change. European Commission. <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3472>

European Commission. (2015). Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2003/87/EC to enhance cost-effective emission reductions and low-carbon investments (COM(2015) 337 final; CELEX: 52015PC0337). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52015PC0337>

European Commission. (2016). Global Gateway. International Partnerships. [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/global-gateway\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/global-gateway_en)

European Commission. (2017, February 15). EU emissions trading system: Parliament vote marks major step towards reaching agreement. Climate Action. [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-other-reads/news/eu-emissions-trading-system-parliament-vote-marks-major-step-towards-reaching-agreement-2017-02-15\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-other-reads/news/eu-emissions-trading-system-parliament-vote-marks-major-step-towards-reaching-agreement-2017-02-15_en)

European Commission. (2017, June 2). EU and 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries press ahead on Paris implementation, call on global community to maintain climate efforts. [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-other-reads/news/eu-and-79-african-caribbean-and-pacific-countries-press-ahead-paris-implementation-call-global-community-2017-06-02\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-other-reads/news/eu-and-79-african-caribbean-and-pacific-countries-press-ahead-paris-implementation-call-global-community-2017-06-02_en)

European Commission. (2019, December 11). The European Green Deal (COM(2019) 640 final). [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1fEuropean - 01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1fEuropean - 01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

European Commission. (2019). Political guidelines for the next European Commission 2019–2024. [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/063d44e9-04ed-4033-acf9-639ecb187e87\\_en?filename=political-guidelines-next-commission\\_en.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/063d44e9-04ed-4033-acf9-639ecb187e87_en?filename=political-guidelines-next-commission_en.pdf)

European Commission. (2021, July 14). Proposal for a regulation establishing a carbon border adjustment mechanism (COM(2021) 564 final). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52021PC0564>

European Commission. (2022, May 18). REPowerEU plan (COM(2022) 230 final). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0230>

European Commission. (2023, June 27). Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2486 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2020/852... [https://finance.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/taxonomy-regulation-delegated-act-2022-environmental\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://finance.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/taxonomy-regulation-delegated-act-2022-environmental_en_0.pdf)

European Commission. (2024). Political guidelines 2024–2029. [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648\\_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%2024029-2029\\_EN.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%2024029-2029_EN.pdf)

European Commission. (n.d.). About the EU ETS. Directorate-General for Climate Action. [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/carbon-markets/about-eu-ets\\_en#our-climate-ambition-for-2030](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/carbon-markets/about-eu-ets_en#our-climate-ambition-for-2030)

European Commission. (n.d.). European Climate Law. Directorate-General for Climate Action. [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-climate-law\\_en#milestones](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-climate-law_en#milestones)

European Council. (2017, June 22). European Council conclusions on the Paris Agreement on climate change. Council of the European Union. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/06/22/euco-paris-agreement/pdf/>

European Parliament & Council of the European Union. (2021). Regulation (EU) 2021/1119... EUR-Lex. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32021R1119>

European Parliament Research Service. (2017, June). US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on climate change (PE 603.976). [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2017/603976/EPRS\\_ATAG\(2017\)603976\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2017/603976/EPRS_ATAG(2017)603976_EN.pdf)

European Parliament Research Service. (2022). Fit for 55 package (PE 733.513). [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733513/EPRS\\_BRI\(2022\)733513\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733513/EPRS_BRI(2022)733513_EN.pdf)

European Parliament. (2022). EU climate policy: Industry, policy interaction, and external environment (PE 733.556). [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/733556/EPRS\\_ATAG\(2022\)733556\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/733556/EPRS_ATAG(2022)733556_EN.pdf)

Gupta, J. (2019). Access and allocation in earth system governance. Routledge.

India Today. (2017, June 3). Narendra Modi in Paris: Climate deal shared legacy of world, article of faith for India. <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/narendra-modi-in-paris-climate-deal-paris-agreement-emmanuel-macron-980796-2017-06-03>

Italy, France, and Germany. (2017, June 1). Statement on the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on climate. Embassy of Italy in Washington, D.C. [https://ambwashingtondc.esteri.it/en/news/dall\\_ambasciata/2017/06/dichiarazione-italia-germania-francia-2/](https://ambwashingtondc.esteri.it/en/news/dall_ambasciata/2017/06/dichiarazione-italia-germania-francia-2/)

- Jones, E. (2025). Transatlantic rupture: Legitimacy, integration and security. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00396338.2025.2481771>
- Keohane, R. O., Victor, D. G., & Haas, P. M. (2011). The regime complex for climate change. *Perspectives on Politics*, 9(1), 7–23. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/perspectives-on-politics/article/regime-complex-for-climate-change/F5C4F620A4723D5DA5E0ACDC48D860C0>
- King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing social inquiry*. Princeton University Press.
- KPMG. (2022). The corporate sustainability reporting directive (CSRD). KPMG. <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmgsites/ch/pdf/the-corporate-sustainability-reporting-directive.pdf.coredownload.inline.pdf>
- Landrigan, H., Imdieke, A., & Pearson, P. (2026, February 5). Increasing methane emissions from northern Arctic wetlands and lakes. International Cryosphere Climate Initiative. <https://iccinet.org/increasing-methane-emissions-from-northern-arctic-wetlands-and-lakes/>
- Macron, E. (2017, June 2). Address to Americans on the Paris Climate Accord. *American Rhetoric*. <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/emmanuelmacronparisclimateaccordenglish.htm>
- Majone, G. (1994). The rise of the regulatory state in Europe. *West European Politics*, 17(3), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402389408425031>
- Moro, B., Martini, L. S., & D'Amico, G. (2026, January 30). The Green Deal under attack. ECCO Climate. <https://eccoclimate.org/the-green-deal-under-attack-us-influence-and-the-struggle-for-european-autonomy/>
- Nordensvärd, J., & Ketola, M. (2021). Populism as an act of storytelling. *Environmental Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2021.1996818>
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2026). Multi-level governance. <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/multi-level-governance.html>
- Palacková, E. (2017). The race for climate leadership. *European View*, 16(2), 251–260. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12290-017-0451-9>
- PBS NewsHour. (n.d.). Trump called climate change a "con job". <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/trump-called-climate-change-a-con-job-at-the-united-nations-here-are-the-facts-and-context>

Regulation (EU) 2023/956 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 establishing a carbon border adjustment mechanism. (2023). Official Journal of the European Union, L 130, 52–104. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/956/oj/eng>

Ricks, J. I., & Liu, A. H. (2018). Process-tracing research designs. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 51(4), 842–846. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096518000975>

Sabin Center for Climate Change Law. (2020, August 17). BLM greenlights drilling in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Columbia Law School. <https://climate.law.columbia.edu/content/blm-greenlights-drilling-arctic-national-wildlife-refuge>

Sabin Center for Climate Change Law. (2020, December 4). DOE eliminates environmental assessment of natural gas exports. Columbia Law School. <https://climate.law.columbia.edu/content/doe-eliminates-environmental-assessment-natural-gas-exports>

Sabin Center for Climate Change Law. (n.d.). EPA issues rule to hamstring GHG regulations. Columbia Law School. <https://climate.law.columbia.edu/content/epa-issues-rule-hamstring-ghg-regulations-0>

Selin, H., & VanDeveer, S. D. (2011). US climate change politics and policymaking. *WIREs Climate Change*, 2(1), 121–127. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.94>

Tajani, A. (2017, June 1). EP President Tajani: The Paris Agreement is alive. European Parliament.

The Economist. (2025, July 31). Donald Trump’s war on renewables. <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2025/07/31/donald-trumps-war-on-renewables>

The Guardian. (2017, June 1). World leaders react after Trump rejects Paris climate deal. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jun/01/trump-withdraw-paris-climate-deal-world-leaders-react>

The White House. (2017, June 1). Statement by President Trump on the Paris Climate Accord. Trump White House Archives. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-paris-climate-accord/>

The White House. (2025, December). National security strategy of the United States of America. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-National-Security-Strategy.pdf>

The White House. (2026, January 7). Fact sheet: President Donald J. Trump withdraws the United States from international organizations. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2026/01/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-withdraws-the-united-states-from-international-organizations-that-are-contrary-to-the-interests-of-the-united-states/>

UNFCCC. (n.d.). UN climate chief: Tackling climate crisis is the hardest but most important thing humanity has ever faced.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2015, December 12). Paris Agreement. United Nations. [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf)

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2017, June 1). UNFCCC statement on the US decision to withdraw from Paris Agreement. <https://unfccc.int/news/unfccc-statement-on-the-us-decision-to-withdraw-from-paris-agreement>

U.S. Department of State. (2017, June 1). On the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. <https://2017-2021.state.gov/on-the-u-s-withdrawal-from-the-paris-agreement/>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2021, January 6). Strengthening transparency in pivotal science underlying significant regulatory actions and influential scientific information (40 C.F.R. Part 30; EPA-HQ-OA-2018-0259; FRL-10019-07-ORD). [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-01/documents/final\\_rule\\_strengthening\\_transparency\\_in\\_pivotal\\_science\\_underlying\\_significant\\_regulatory\\_actions\\_and\\_influential\\_scientific\\_information.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-01/documents/final_rule_strengthening_transparency_in_pivotal_science_underlying_significant_regulatory_actions_and_influential_scientific_information.pdf)

Widuto, A. (2023, October). Social Climate Fund (At a Glance, PE 753.971). European Parliamentary Research Service, European Parliament. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/753971/EPRS\\_ATA\(2023\)753971\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/753971/EPRS_ATA(2023)753971_EN.pdf)

Wike, R., Poushter, J., Silver, L., & Fetterolf, J. (2025, June 11). U.S. image declines in many nations amid low confidence in Trump. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2025/06/11/us-image-declines-in-many-nations-amid-low-confidence-in-trump/>

Word Frequency. (n.d.). Word frequency analyser. <https://wordfrequency.org/>

Yan, B. (2020). The EU-China-US trilateral relations in global climate governance. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429026201-9>

Yin, R. K. (2018). Case study research and applications: Design and methods (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.