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**Assessing the Environmental
Leadership of the European Union
through European speeches**

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ABSTRACT

Il tema della politica ambientale diventa sempre più importante nel mondo in cui viviamo. La salvaguardia dell'ambiente è un tema che continua a prendere sempre più importanza ed è chiaro che sia necessario fare qualcosa di più. Tutte le organizzazioni internazionali, gli Stati e la popolazione del mondo sono sempre più propensi ad aumentare il lavoro svolto per proteggere l'ambiente con le varie iniziative con l'obiettivo di ridurre le emissioni di carbonio, salvaguardare flora e fauna e ottenere innovazioni tecnologiche che aiutino il pianeta. Le opinioni e i comportamenti delle persone sul tema sono senza dubbio molto importanti per aiutare a proteggere il mondo; tuttavia, le opinioni e le azioni delle organizzazioni internazionali e degli Stati sono vitali. È da loro che deve partire il maggiore input per la creazione e il miglioramento di un sistema dove l'ambiente sia una priorità assoluta. Questo è ciò che ha portato all'idea di svolgere una ricerca su ciò che è stato fatto dall'Unione Europea in tema di ambiente da quando questo argomento ha assunto, per questa istituzione e per l'intero pianeta, un valore così importante. L'Unione Europea ha infatti una grande influenza, sia tra i suoi organi e membri, sia sul resto del mondo e le sue azioni hanno un peso considerevole sulle politiche a difesa dell'ambiente, specialmente a partire dagli anni '90. Il lavoro di questa organizzazione viene messo in luce dalla comunità scientifica, sottolineando l'importanza data a questa organizzazione internazionale. Sembra innegabile che l'Unione Europea abbia messo in campo molte risorse per ottenere un miglioramento globale delle condizioni ambientali.

Chiaramente, il lavoro delle organizzazioni internazionali non è affatto semplice, bisogna tenere in considerazione moltissimi aspetti. I dati di molti studi compiuti scientificamente riportano in maniera ovvia che la tutela ambientale ha valore, in primo luogo, a livello di sicurezza e protezione della Terra. Alcuni cambiamenti climatici si stanno rivelando delle vere minacce per la vita in generale. Cercare una soluzione senza usare la violenza è un punto cardine della lotta ai cambiamenti

climatici e capire come avvengono i processi nella lotta contro questi cambiamenti ci può aiutare a capire come affrontare le sfide che ci si presenteranno in futuro. Riuscire ad ottenere una politica ambientale più integrata nella società può avere solo degli effetti positivi, sotto ogni aspetto, anche quello economico che in genere viene superficialmente considerato alternativo alle politiche ambientali.

Un tema strettamente legato alle politiche ambientali è la leadership. Non si tratta di un titolo ufficialmente attribuito ad uno Stato o un'organizzazione, ma mostrare leadership su questo tema può essere un fattore molto positivo, in quanto comprende numerosi vantaggi. Ciò che risulta essere più importante in questo contesto è la necessità di capire se l'Unione Europea è riuscita a mostrare leadership negli ultimi anni, durante le negoziazioni e i vari processi internazionali a tema ambientale.

Per rispondere alla domanda di ricerca della tesi vengono utilizzate le fonti primarie e secondarie reperibili sul tema in generale, sulle negoziazioni e i vari trattati internazionali stipulati dall'UE. Tra i vari documenti da analizzare, si trovano in primo luogo dichiarazioni e discorsi dei rappresentanti dell'UE che fanno riferimento alla leadership. Altri documenti utilizzati sono gli studi e le ricerche degli esperti che trattano l'argomento in maniera diretta per avvalorare le deduzioni e offrire un'analisi sul tema più completa.

La domanda principale della ricerca si focalizza sulle dichiarazioni che sono state rilasciate da vari rappresentanti dell'Unione Europea durante gli incontri internazionali e interni all'istituzione negli ultimi anni. La maggior parte di queste sono dichiarazioni provenienti dalla Commissione Europea. È importante capire quale ruolo abbia svolto l'UE e quindi la Commissione dagli anni '90 in avanti. Per questa ragione concentrarsi sulle dichiarazioni rilasciate dovrebbe essere molto importante. I discorsi creati dovrebbero essere considerati come le parole dell'UE stessa e quindi come il suo diretto pensiero.

Il primo capitolo si concentra sul significato e l'utilizzo del termine 'leadership'. È molto importante capire che questo è un concetto molto ampio e difficile da spiegare con precisione. Spesso una definizione univoca non è stata fornita e quindi risulta complicato capire come si possa attribuire la leadership ad una determinata istituzione o organizzazione.

Una cosa su cui però la comunità scientifica ha trovato un grande accordo è la suddivisione della leadership in base ai tipi forniti tramite le diverse caratteristiche messe in campo dai vari attori presi in considerazione. In questo modo si può cercare di comprendere come alcuni attori abbiano avuto diverse esperienze su questo tema. Un altro vantaggio di questa catalogazione della leadership può essere la possibilità di capire chi ha mostrato un maggiore tipo di leadership in un determinato ambito, aiutando a definire meglio questo concetto. I tipi di leadership sono i seguenti: strutturale, strumentale, cognitiva, esemplare. Si differenziano tra loro in base a quale aspetto viene maggiormente sottolineato dai vari attori. La leadership strutturale si basa principalmente sulle risorse materiali disponibili per convincere altri a seguire le proprie azioni. La leadership strumentale, invece, si basa sulla diplomazia e la capacità di negoziare e raggiungere compromessi positivi. La leadership cognitiva è strettamente legata alla capacità di collegare le idee e gli interessi durante le negoziazioni. Alcuni temi cruciali per questo tipo di leadership sono l'esperienza su un determinato tema e la conoscenza scientifica. L'ultimo tipo di leadership è la leadership esemplare. La maggiore caratteristica di questo tipo è la dimostrazione di una possibile via che ha molti vantaggi inequivocabili e convince senza alcuno sforzo altri attori a seguire la stessa strada intrapresa da chi mostra l'esempio.

Questa suddivisione può aiutare a capire meglio chi è riuscito a esercitare una maggiore influenza nei vari processi internazionali riguardanti il tema delle politiche ambientali.

Infatti, la comunità scientifica si è spesso basata su questo aspetto per condurre ricerche sul tema in questione. La leadership europea subisce varie critiche e plausi dalla suddivisione in vari tipi e ognuno di essi crea nuove opportunità che l'UE sembra avere generalmente tentato di sfruttare. Molti autori si basano anche su vari altri aspetti, principalmente economici, politici e sociali per eseguire un'analisi sulla leadership europea. Utilizzare questo metodo per l'analisi di questa tesi serve a mantenere una linea comune agli altri lavori svolti e arricchire questo tema con un diverso approccio che contribuisce a fare luce su un punto molto dibattuto che comprende l'azione dell'UE e le sue conseguenze su questo particolare argomento dalla fine dello scorso secolo a oggi.

Il secondo capitolo presenta il punto principale su cui si basa questa tesi, l'analisi delle dichiarazioni presentate dai più autorevoli membri facenti parte dei vari organi dell'UE, in particolare della Commissione. Per comprendere le intenzioni di questa organizzazione, i discorsi analizzati includono un riferimento esplicito alla leadership, in maniera tale da poter includere dichiarazioni che possono essere sia positive che negative nei confronti della leadership europea. La maggior parte dei discorsi vede l'UE come leader in vari contesti e attribuisce un ruolo fondamentale all'UE nella maggior parte dei casi, basandosi anche sull'analisi che ha portato a riscontrare tutti i tipi di leadership precedentemente analizzati, soprattutto le leadership strumentale e cognitiva. Tuttavia, in alcune occasioni viene anche riconosciuta la marginalità o l'assenza di leadership durante alcuni processi e negoziazioni sull'ambiente.

In seguito, il terzo capitolo della tesi cerca di analizzare alcuni aspetti sui quali l'UE e i principali rivali individuati dalla comunità scientifica hanno adottato approcci diversi. I maggiori esponenti di una possibile leadership oltre all'UE sembrano essere gli Stati Uniti e la Cina, i quali hanno dimostrato nel corso del tempo un certo interesse per l'ambiente e hanno mostrato di avere un peso non indifferente durante le negoziazioni degli ultimi anni. L'analisi di questo capitolo mostra come i tre attori presi in considerazione abbiano adottato nel corso del tempo strategie e azioni

che hanno portato a risultati singolari. Le differenze principali si individuano nell'importanza data ad alcuni aspetti, come ad esempio le conoscenze scientifiche, l'esperienza e l'economia. Questi sono i maggiori aspetti che hanno portato ad una diversa interpretazione delle politiche con cui affrontare il problema del peggioramento delle condizioni ambientali. I soggetti presi in considerazione in questo capitolo hanno affrontato situazioni diverse riguardo alla leadership in base ai vari problemi interni che hanno dovuto risolvere, tra cui la mancanza di coordinazione tra gli organi che compongono questi attori e l'implementazione delle politiche ambientali.

Risulta quindi molto interessante che nel corso del periodo preso in considerazione l'UE abbia affermato più volte, tramite la Commissione, di aver esercitato leadership ambientale. Nonostante alcuni momenti meno favorevoli a questa affermazione, soprattutto verso la fine degli anni 2000, la Commissione Europea ha sempre cercato di continuare ad esercitare il proprio potere per dimostrare leadership, in particolare nel corso degli ultimi anni con l'adozione del Green Deal Europeo, che potrebbe dare un nuovo impulso alla ricerca di una nuova leadership.

Infine, occorre evidenziare, ad esempio, alcune delle modalità con cui si è svolta la ricerca principale di questa tesi. Non sono state prese particolarmente in considerazione le differenze tra i vari organi che compongono l'UE. Questo potrebbe aver portato ad una minore efficacia della ricerca; tuttavia, il focus principale riguardava l'intera organizzazione senza porre alcuna condizione o differenza tra gli organi che la compongono. Uno studio successivo a questa tesi potrebbe quindi analizzare le differenze tra i vari membri che compongono l'UE prendendo sempre come base per la domanda di ricerca lo studio delle dichiarazioni rilasciate dai vari organi interni dell'UE. Inoltre, una successiva ricerca potrebbe concentrarsi sulle possibili dichiarazioni rilasciate dagli attori esterni all'UE, per comprendere come questi abbiano agito. Una diversa ricerca potrebbe dare l'input per un'analisi su una base differente per ottenere informazioni più precise sul tema principale di questa tesi ed eventualmente ottenere un confronto con i dati ottenuti.

INTRODUCTION

When we think about the main topics discussed at the international level, one of the most important, which is constantly gaining importance with time, is the environment. There are many aspects related to the environment: climate change, globalization, economy, human rights, and many more. It is important to focus on protecting the environment and creating a sustainable system for the future generations that will inherit the world in the future. To manage to create a proper world the main institutions of the world should strongly cooperate to keep in balance all the aspects connected to the environment and protect the weakest areas of the world. To obtain an effective action to save and protect the Earth there should be a leader or a strong alliance of proper organizations, which could guide all the actors involved in taking action to prevent catastrophes all over the world. This important role is contended by many actors wishing to be recognized as an environmental leader, a position that could give a great advantage in shaping the actions of many Countries and in experiencing the lowest number of disadvantages when implementing new environmental policies. One of the actors that would like to be recognized as a leading actor is certainly the EU.

With this research I would like to analyze if it really wanted and managed to become an undisputed leader in this regard. It declared, through its representatives that it would like to run this role and it mainly tried. However, the first thing to keep in mind is that it is necessary to firstly define the concept and, subsequently, it would be possible to state whether the EU managed to become a leader or not. There are many environmental matters to take into account and being recognized as a leader requires obtaining followers that want an actor to lead. The EU might have managed to obtain a leading position among actors that should easily be able to cover EU's actions. For example, China and the US could both use their economic strength to prevail on the EU when negotiating new policies in international fora. However, the role of these actors will be analyzed in the thesis in order to understand what

possibilities all of them had to exert leadership. The timeline of the research is set to be between the late 1990s and the 2015, when the Paris Agreement got signed. This base is linked to the fact that the first intention of the EU to lead is based on the documents of the late 1980s and early 1990s. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 260) The timeline begins after almost a decade because exerting leadership requires time and the first occasion to provide leadership for the EU came with the arrival of the negotiations leading to the Kyoto Protocol. In the past the US are considered to have been at the forefront of exerting environmental leadership; however, the scientific community recognizes the retreat of the US during the period considered and a lowered level of the leadership of the US in environmental policies. This created a gap where the EU could have decided to assume a leading position and implement a greater quantity and quality of new policies to shape the actions of the world towards a better use of the environment for the EU. The deadline of the research is set at the time of the Paris Agreement, when the EU seems to have definitely lost its privileged position in the advancement of new environmental policies. It is necessary to understand if during this timeline the EU truly wanted to assert leadership in this respect. Many studies of the environmental policies of the EU show the importance of the actions of the EU during these years and the data that support its advancement in the field of the protection of the environment. However, there has been little focus on the importance of the declarations of the EU when trying to answer to the need of a leader. A deep analysis of the actions and declarations of the EU and its representatives and related institutions is required to understand if it wanted to exert leadership or not. I will mainly focus on the critical analysis of the speeches of the EU to understand if it really wanted to become a leader in environmental politics all over the world or if it just aimed at obtaining a leading position inside the borders of the EU, or if the leadership recognized by many authors was never intended to have existed for the EU. This means that the analysis of the declarations will have the aim of understanding the ideas of the EU, as a whole, on its leadership role. The way in which the words mostly referred to leadership will be used and the possible connections to more and

different aspects will be a part of the work of this thesis. There will also be an interpretation of the leadership extrapolated from the sentences of the speeches and a link to the types of leadership that are considered during this research.

Some of the main factors on which the thesis relies on, are the approval of the constituency and the perception of the identity developed by the EU itself. The EU has generally proved to be willing to guide the international community towards an environmental-friendly future, and the analysis of the speeches on this aspect should give further proof to this theory.

The research will proceed as follows: first of all, a literature review will introduce the topic and offer a wide analysis of what has been written by the scientific community on this matter; moreover, a brief explanation of what kind of leader it could be, will be given. Secondly, the thesis will ask whether the EU really tried and wanted, or not, to be a leader, through its declarations and actions (summits, commitments, meetings, ...) Thirdly, there will be an analysis of the actions and the possibilities to exert leadership of the EU and other major possible environmental leaders, and how their job contributed or not to their possible leadership. In the meanwhile, the thesis will examine the steps taken by other institutions and organizations, and if they exerted a higher level of leadership over European's actions. An historical contextualization will follow the period taken in consideration, highlighting the achievements and the errors of the EU.

This short final analysis will also show the different approaches related to implementation and negotiation adopted by the EU and the other major powers possibly interested in leading global climate action, both domestically and on the international stage. Lastly, a conclusion will be given to sum up the basic concepts and try to give a final answer to the main question of the research and understand if there is a leading actor now or a plurality of leaders running the terms of environmental protection all together or no leader at all.

CHAPTER 1

THE EU: AN ENVIRONMENTAL LEADER

INTRODUCTION

In order to talk about the main question of this research, we need to understand what the general ideas on the topic are. Many experts have written their ideas and perceptions on the role of the European Union (EU) on the environment and examined the full context in which it operated, and their work is useful to try to understand the role of the EU regarding climate change and environmental protection of the world. We do so by utilizing the already existing research of other experts in the field of climate policy, European policy, and leadership. To answer the main question, we should focus on the period between the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and the Paris conference (2015). The EU might have reached its peak in effective leadership during that timeline, as the United States (US) decided to retreat from a possible leader's position after the first ratifications of the Kyoto Protocol, abdicating the role they were fulfilling up to that moment, and China had to cope with the problems that existed inside the Country in the early 2000s, so that it mainly decided to limit its actions to the internal side, in general. (Muldavin, 2000, p. 268) After that period, in the early 2010s we see a comeback of these two major players, which can be seen as the most important rivals of the EU in this respect; therefore, the leadership of the EU could have been weakened by the presence of these two actors, as well as by the new actors that began implementing their plans and showing leadership. This intervention of other players needed time to gain efficacy, just as the EU needed time to increase its reputation in this aspect before them. We might even consider the periods before and after this timeline, however, the US were generally considered to have exerted a high level of leadership in this sector (Daynes, Sussman, 2010, p. 3) and the EU didn't show a real interest in being a leader before 1987 (Weale, 1999, p. 40). The EU tried to deal with environmental

policies, however, it wanted to adapt policies to the situation where it needed to control the economy and environmental policies were generally seen to be negative for the economy. Exerting leadership on an international context requires time, motivation, and actions, therefore, a possible recognition for a status of leader for the EU could have happened after the 1990s, in particular from 1997 when the Kyoto Protocol was signed, and the EU was the main responsible for its entry into force. For what concerns the following period, there aren't enough data to clearly show that after the 2015 Paris Agreement, the EU lost its primary position in the creation and lead of new policies. However, other players arose in the international scene, as drawn by the Paris Agreement, possibly putting the EU in a position where the actions of this player might have obtained less consideration, and where it had to share its importance with other players. Therefore, the most interesting period of leadership should have happened to be between the late 1990s and the early 2010s. The other periods, before and after the timeline of the research, will be briefly considered, but not really taken into account.

I decided to focus specifically on this period because the definitions and all the key concepts connected to the term "leadership" lead me to believe that the leadership exercised in the last years by the EU can't make it rise above the other actors and it seemed to have been less important than the improvements of others. For the last years we should refer more to a possible multi-lead leadership, where no one can absolutely prevail on the others and the different types of leadership, which will be explained in this research, show that no actor could prevail on the others under every single aspect connected with this topic. In the timeline considered for the research, however, several research sees the EU as an actor that has exerted leadership. The main topic of the research will be the analysis of the speeches of the representatives of the EU, to understand if this organization wanted to be a leader for the environment, but it is necessary to define leadership in the first place.

DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

Let's start with the definition of "leadership". It isn't simple to give a single universal definition for this term, as leader can have multiple meanings depending on the context, and the value given to certain actions and declarations, moreover, we should also consider the perception and personal beliefs of this word by different people when trying to define a leader. Leadership has received attention as a term which is hard to define and that entails a multiplicity of significances. Some authors try to give a definition to this word in order to create a defined system in which to operate. (Lieberink Wurzel, 2017 p. 952) Others decide to explain what is possible to do to obtain leadership but give no unequivocal definition and simply rely on the existence of leadership, which can be exerted by players. (Falkner, 2007, p. 510)

Moreover, leadership in environmental matters isn't a title that is given to a certain actor officially, it isn't a status that defines the only and most powerful player of the international scene. It is an informal status given to an actor, which is able to influence many others with its ideas on the environment, with innovations, a strong conduction of negotiations and new improved ways of dealing with the environment under every aspect connected with this topic and which is widely recognized as a highly influential player of this category. However, it is not defined by a rule, there is no law or international agreement that gives a definition to this term, it is based on the perceptions of the institutions which have to act by following the actor considered to produce this leadership, generally seen as positive and advantageous.

It is not easy to define the concepts of leader and leadership, in particular when connected with the environment. It is clear that without an official definition and an effective status given to an actor it is hard to define the role, however, it would be imperative to define the concept if possible.

Leadership is a concept, which is considered as already defined in most of the research on this topic. (Evans et al., 2015, p. 8) Another research that tries to define leadership, sees this concept as a relationship between leaders and followers, or a

role during a negotiation. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 259) Environmental leadership has also been defined as a process, where a leader tries to influence the efforts of the international community to improve the quality of the natural environment. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 259)

Another way to achieve the recognition of leadership without giving a direct definition is through the classification of different types of leadership, which has been generally indicated by the existing literature and divided in possible categories. More authors concord on the existence of these 4 different types of leadership models and, in this research, it has been decided to rely on the same ones: structural, entrepreneurial, cognitive, and exemplary. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 260) (Parker et al., 2017, p. 242) (Parker, Karlsson, 2018, p. 522) (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 926) (Karlsson et al., 2012, pp. 47-48) (Wurzel, Liefferink, Di Lullo, 2019, pp. 250-251) It is important to notice that the different leaderships have to be utilized by every actor continuously, and also, they have to be controlled at the same time altogether to raise the level of leadership. It is necessary now to define why these categories have been created and what the difference among them is.

Structural leadership is firstly related to the concept of hard power. (Liefferink Wurzel, 2017, p. 957) It depends on the possibility to move a great deal of material resources in military and economic terms in order to motivate others to emulate the actions of the leader. When it comes to environmental policies, like climate change, the military power is quite useless as a coercive means to have another actor to cooperate. In general, the economic motivations can better improve the efforts for a cooperation under this aspect. (Liefferink, Wurzel, 2017, p. 957) this kind of leadership entails the creation of 'incentives, costs and benefits', which could convince others to change their behavior on certain aspects. (Parker et al., 2017, p. 242) (Parker, Karlsson, 2018, p. 522) However, this kind of leadership could also entail a negative aspect, as long as this kind of power also derives from the amount of GHG emission caused by a Country. It means that a higher level of emissions must be connected to a higher level of power in any negotiation on this aspect.

(Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 260) as an example, we can consider China's and USA's emissions of carbon dioxide, which give them a considerable weight in this matter. (Lieberink, Wurzel, 2017, p. 957) In the recent years they cooperated with the rest of the world to reduce their emissions and protect the world, however in the past their efforts could be considered too little when confronted with their structural leadership at the time and their low interest in some negotiations showed how much their structural power influenced the negotiations, even if they weren't willing to participate. The EU is strongly bonded with this leadership as its vast territory, the concentration of the population living within the borders producing emissions with their everyday life, and the high number of firms operating here, create a great amount of GHG emissions that give the EU a considerable weight in this matter. It is positive to see that since the official institutions and organizations decided to take on responsibility for the reduction of the emissions, there has been a rising attention for this aspect and many progresses have been achieved through the continuous work of the representatives. Moreover, an improvement in this type of leadership could only prove beneficial for the EU, putting the organization at a higher level for the recognition of leadership and enhancing the creation of beneficial effects for the environment globally.

Entrepreneurial (instrumental) leadership is related to diplomatic efforts, negotiations and bargaining skills to obtain a compromise, a solution or an agreement. (Lieberink, Wurzel, 2017, p. 957) It seems to be based on the soft power of an actor and can be seen as a lighter side of the structural leadership, as it is based on the skills and abilities of a player and not only on the more pragmatic side based on the economic or military weight. This leadership relies also on the creation of strong alliances to obtain a certain achievement. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 260) (Parker et al., 2018, p. 522) It would, in particular, be important to stress that an actor exercising this leadership should show its ability in solving negotiation problems and facing the differences among the parties involved in any negotiation. (Parker, Karlsson, 2017, p. 242) In the case of environmental matters, under this

kind of leadership, a leader should show its ability in facilitating environmental measures. It should use its top-quality bargaining skills and the achievements of its efforts as an example to show that the experience gained with these actions could make it show to the others a great path to follow and find common solutions for everyone. Another point in favor of the EU connected with this type of leadership is the multiple levels of the structure of the EU, which can make it properly bargain and obtain more with a larger number of possibilities to influence the outcome of a certain situation.

Cognitive (idea-based or ideational) leadership is related to defining interests through ideas, for example when using the concept of sustainable development, in which different and often diverging aspects like social, economic, and environmental concerns are generally given an equal weight. (Lieberink, Wurzel, 2017, p. 957) In addition, the 'arguing power' plays a fundamental role in setting the standards of policy evaluation, as this concept is generally backed up by science. (Lieberink Wurzel, 2017, p. 957) Other characteristics of this kind of leadership are 'problem naming and framing, agenda setting efforts and the discovering and proposing of joint solutions to collective problems.' (Parker et al., 2017, p. 242) (Parker, Karlsson, 2018, p. 522) This is an example that shows how important it is to remember to precisely define the contexts an institution is working on, to better understand how to proceed when trying to deal with hard concepts to analyze and define universally like the environment. Allies of this type of leadership are the scientific knowledge of experts of climate change and environment, knowledge coming from previous experiences and implementation. The EU has been increasing its own experience on this matter for long, and it should use it to complete the support received from scientific knowledge, which the EU strongly relies on when negotiating or implementing and modifying the policies that it would like to adopt. It should also be important to consider its ability and widely differentiated composition to create a worthy actor, which can rely on a strong legal and scientific base, but also on new useful ideas to improve the positive outcomes

of most negotiations. The creation of a strong basis of laws and treaties based on the sustainable protection of the environment should be seen as an important step taken towards the improvement of the efforts related to this model of leadership. This aspect improves the recognition of a more precise definition of a problem and, therefore, it is easier to give the right importance to every question that could arise when dealing with the main topic. It is also useful to consider this type of leadership as a practical side of the leadership, as it emphasizes the job of the negotiators at the table of negotiations, where it is important to reach a deal and consider every aspect involved, and the best way to do so is to give ideas instead of focusing on interests only.

Directional (exemplary leadership or leadership by example) leadership is related to the ability of an actor to influence the decisions on a particular aspect without imposing any coercive measure, but simply by showing to the other actors that the method implemented by this actor is extremely effective and this consequence convinces others to follow the example set by this firstcomer of the new policy. It is a unilateral action pursued by an actor willing to demonstrate the efficacy and efficiency of its solutions. (Parker, Karlsson, 2018, p. 522) It is related to the creation of a model domestically, which the Country wants to be exported outside. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 260). Exemplary leadership might also be related to an unintentional consequence of the own path of an actor. It's better to link this last model of leadership to the concept of 'pioneership' because the fact that a pioneer has no intention of leading others, sets the proper example of what exemplary leadership is. The typical pioneer doesn't have external ambitions and only accounts for its internal domestic policy, however, as a pioneer it can show the way to other actors, which might decide to follow the pioneer, turning it into an exemplary leader, even though it wasn't its intention in the first place. (Lieverink Wurzel, 2017, p. 957) It implies that the actor adopting this leadership has to be an example for the others and demonstrate that the method adopted is suitable for others and the outcomes will be positive for all involved. It means 'demonstrating

the feasibility, value, and supremacy of specific policy prescriptions.’ (Parker et al., 2017, p. 242) This type of leadership could obviously be used by the top players in economic and political terms, but also from any other Country with less power. The concept here is that if a Country can show a positive path to follow to achieve a reduction of GHG emissions without compromising the economic stability of the internal market and the relations with the others, then it should be followed and the remaining Countries and institutions could turn their assets to follow the example set by the first mover, be it a small underdeveloped one or a strong and rich one. In this case the EU could be considered as a great example to follow if the right options are pursued. It should be noted that the EU is an organization that comprehends different Countries, which differ one from another under many aspects, and as a whole, it can be compared to the widest and richest Countries of the world, making it an example for more actors, both on a single Country level, and on the EU level. If it can set a proper position and route to proceed, this could be accepted by many players as a leader’s way to follow. This should give the EU a great reason to try and consider this kind of leadership as a very important one.

It is impossible to truly state if leadership is mainly dependent on the ability to influence the outcome of a negotiation, on the soft or hard power of an actor, on the social and political perception of an actor on this matter, or if leadership is a mix of these definitions, and what weight they have in this situation. A specific feature of environmental issues is that, generally, they aren’t just related to a single Country, they spread across national borders and become international issues. Climate change is a simple example showing how this kind of problem affects the entire world, and not just a single State, bringing more problems for a definition.

Therefore, a working definition would be necessary when talking about ‘leadership’, to manage to give a proper sense to the research. The definition I will try to give is based on ideas and a general synthesis of the documents analyzed for this research. Leader in this research should mean ‘actor that can use its hard or soft power to impose its own ideas, persuade others to act, or lead a great number

of actors in a direction favorable for the guide, on the international and internal context'. This definition should give a proper meaning to the research and entail enough information and data to use.

In the following section, I will synthesize the main ideas of the authors, which claim that the EU managed to reach a position where its role and the actions pursued could be recognized as the ones of a leader. They mostly rely on the period after the Kyoto Protocol and give reasons to support the existence of a European environmental leadership.

EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP

After analyzing the existing literature, the first thing to notice is that after the well-accepted leadership of the US, which was considered as a leader in the period 1970s-1980s due to the actions taken by the American institutions, first of all the President Jimmy Carter, which produced the first ever comprehensive study of the global environment (Daynes, Sussman, 2011, p. 3), no one ever seemed to have managed to obtain a role of leader in an absolute sense. First, it is important to remember that the US during that period didn't receive a great number of followers for its environmental ambitions. The leadership exerted doesn't exactly compare with what has been possible to see in the recent past years, however, it can be seen as the starting point of the global environmental efforts to protect the planet. It is important to ask now, how did the EU get to a point where it is almost considered a leader in environmental aspects? Why is it important to identify a leader in the international context? It is necessary to focus on the perception of the EU among the members of the scientific community to understand the situation. Therefore, the first question to ask is: why is the EU considered to be a leader? It is possible to start with the perception of the representatives of the EU, other institutions, and people on this matter.

GREEN LEADER

The EU has strongly relied on the creation of an image of itself, in which it figured out to be like an environmental protector. Some research can give us a first idea concerning the myth of 'Green Europe'. A possible reason for European struggle to become a leader is that the EU requires legitimacy to rule in the international political context, as it is not a State; and a good motivation to exist in this context is to create positive myths regarding its own policy. (Lenschow, Sprungk, 2010, p. 133) In this case, the existence of the EU should make Europeans believe that their life will be better, and this idea creates a kind of good common sense, useful to create common values. In the case of the EU, it's very important to remember that it has existed for a short period of time and there might not be a great common sense of solidarity among the member States and among the citizens, in particular, if we consider that some States were enemies just less than some decades before the foundation of the earliest stages of the EU, as we know it to be now. The recognition of the EU as a leader in the international context would give it many advantages in the creation of a more united society internally and a stronger external value among the other Countries and institutions in more fields, connected or not with the environment. What's important to notice is that this process is very recent and it's still evolving, it needs time to effectively gain evidence and to become widely recognized. (Lenschow, Sprungk, 2010, p. 142)

It should be acknowledged that the strong will to develop a reputation as a civilian power played an important role. (Kelemen, 2010, p. 339) However, it is argued that the interaction of developments in domestic politics and international regulatory competition provides a more powerful explanation for the emergence of EU's environmental leadership. Instead of allowing globalization pressures to dictate the terms of its environmental policy, the EU has deployed strategies designed to spread its standards to other jurisdictions. (Kelemen, 2010, p. 339) This means that the EU didn't exert leadership, for example, on Kyoto simply in an effort to raise costs for

competitors. It did so, because the EU was going to take substantial, costly action on GHG emissions in any case due to domestic political pressure and it wanted other States to join them in the fight against climate change. (Kelemen, 2010, p. 344) This brings to the conclusion that the highest motivation for the EU in developing an environmental leadership was based on economic reasons, rather than social ones. This idea is connected to the first moves of the EU in environmental matters, when the main focus wasn't the protection of the environment. It was the economic aspect that gave the most important pressures.

It is important to notice that the EU played a major role in environmental negotiations in the twenty-first century, after it managed to save the Kyoto Protocol. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2008, p. 36) The focus is on the use of directional leadership by the EU, stating that it is appropriate for this organization to use this mode as a civilian power with a low coercive power. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2008, pp. 36-37) EU's leadership seems to be strong, however, it depends on both the EU itself and the actions that will be taken by other major players. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2008, p. 48) The research contributes to explaining the role of the EU during the 1990s and 2000s, claiming that the organization managed to exert leadership during this timeline.

It is also important to consider the relationship between different policy areas. As an example, the one between environmental policy instruments and European energy policy. They should be directly connected; however, it is shown that energy policy is treated as a different matter. (Tosun, Solorio, 2011, p. 1) Sometimes these two fields can be considered as contrasting each other, (Tosun, Solorio, 2011, p. 9) therefore, this could decrease the level and quality of new policies from the EU, as well as slowing down the negotiations on the environment in general because of the possible contrasts between the sectors.

A specific topic connected with the innovations of the EU as an environmental-friendly organization is 'environmental human rights', which the EU should be

considering and protecting with its work. (Pallemaerts, 2013, p. 9) It is recognized that the EU worked properly in some areas as access to environmental information, but not so good in others, as public participation in the negotiations, access to justice, and the legal recognition of human rights to a healthy environment. (Pallemaerts, 2013, p. 40) The EU lacked in being a leader to the effective promotion of environmental rights, it was mostly a follower. (Pallemaerts, 2013, p. 41) The strong recognition of the importance of the environment based on laws should be extremely important. Showing that the EU didn't advance in this respect seems to be a negative point when claiming that it has been an environmental leader. It should be noted, however, that simply creating a law can't be seen as an act of leadership, which would then rely on enacting the law and providing assistance to anyone who is negatively affected by those not respecting the law.

The EU tried to set an example for the others by being the first party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to put a concrete Greenhouse Global (GHG) emission reduction on the table of negotiations beyond the expiration of the Kyoto commitments in 2012. (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 924) This can be seen as an important step, after the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol, in exerting exemplary leadership. Being the first mover in that moment could be a strategy towards this type of leadership and an improvement of the role considered in this section. The EU has taken on a leadership role in promoting Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The EU has also tried to make more sensitive international trade institutions, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), on environmental matters. (Kelemen, 2010, p. 335) The EU is seen to have emerged as the global leader in international environmental politics in the years preceding the Copenhagen Agreement by many experts in this field of research. Its role is recognized with the many actions on multiple levels and the ideas exposed.

The connection between the EU and European citizens seems to work properly, as citizens of the EU showed to be concerned for the environmental questions and rely on the EU to reach a solution. (Lenschow, Sprungk, 2010, p. 142) Therefore, the

improvement in the recognition of its importance for the member States and citizens of the EU seems to be well established. A strong basis for the work towards a better environment and an effective positive employment of resources can greatly contribute to reaching the aims set by the organization, in particular if it is supported by the internal political and social structure.

During the Copenhagen negotiations major Countries didn't truly rely on the negative scientific predictions for the future, except for the EU that couldn't convince others to follow its lead. (Van Schaik, Schunz, 2012, p. 183) One point that resulted from the Copenhagen Agreement was the need for the EU to be more flexible and this research shows exactly that it was needed for future negotiations to become successful from the point of view of the EU. Actually, this is what happened in the negotiations that followed in the years later. Therefore, the EU has a great level of policy-making power, but a lower level of skills in implementation. (Skjærseth, Wettestad, 2002, p. 115) The EU is similar to an environmental regime when it comes to the implementation phase, meaning that it is based on principles and norms to create a system in which to work on a specific issue, in this case the environment. (Skjærseth, Wettestad, 2002, p. 103) Even if it seems that the EU doesn't have the ability to compete in the implementation phase as properly as other actors, it could provide useful information on the field of planning and negotiating in the first place, and the eventual ability in implementing the new policies would only be an incredible and positive example for other players.

The presence of the EU can be seen as fundamental for the member States. It becomes clear when talking about the EU Emission Trading System (ETS). When aiming to the establishment of this system, even the most advanced actors were skeptical about this innovation, however, the intervention of the European Commission could provide leadership for this aspect and positively influence this new policy. (Skjærseth, Wettestad, 2010, p. 320) This can be connected to the usefulness of the EU, as long as it managed to provide a great boost to the ability of the EU in coping with its troubles of implementation.

The creation of leadership is based on many aspects, which include economy, politics, science, and the acceptance of the society. There are an incredible number of different fields that are connected to the environmental leadership and processes that lead to this concept, and a stronger analysis would prove beneficial to this aspect. (Case et al., 2015, p. 413) This is a good reason to consider the aspects analyzed to be a first step in understanding if the EU can be considered a leader.

The next step of this review is the analysis of the internal structure of the EU, which would be useful to understand what dynamics shape the creation of new policies and how leadership is connected to the main organs of the EU.

INTERNAL STRUCTURE

It is important to consider that the EU is composed of many institutions, different member States and they all have to consider many actors' opinions and different regulations. Its ability to make many actors cooperate and create joint actions is remarkable. Keeping every relationship in place and managing to avoid conflicts within the roles of the EU is fundamental to assess leadership. (Zito, 2005, p, 373) This brings many responsibilities for the EU and a great opportunity to show that it is possible to make many actors cooperate for a positive job on the environment.

The number of levels through which the EU has to pass before being able to introduce new policies is crucial. There are many political organs that could interfere with the approval of new policies. This could mean more opportunities for innovations, but also more possibilities to end in joint decision traps and block or weaken the processes related to the creation of new ideas. (Rayner, Jordan, 2013, p. 76) Joint-decision traps are a problem that could occur in a situation where the costs might be very high for the actors involved in a negotiation and the outcome could result very disappointing and low in terms of efficacy. Even if the member States preferred to keep their control over many sectors connected with the

environment, the EU as a whole, managed to go ‘well beyond the lowest common denominator’ of the preferences of the same member States. (Rayner, Jordan, 2013, p. 86) This shows the skill to overcome the joint decision traps, which can be based also on the involvement of the media and NGOs. The media have a fundamental role, as long as they provide information given from experts in the sector. (Uusi-Rauva, 2010, p. 86) Their job provides a reason to improve the efforts in reaching a satisfying outcome, as the general public would surely appreciate a better agreement. Among all the actors that can be considered part of the negotiations for the environment, NGOs could be seen as a fundamental link between the institutional and citizens’ sides. They are granted the right to participate in the policymaking process and express their opinion, however, their opinion is generally not taken into account and developed during these negotiations. (Hallstrom, 2004, p. 188) NGOs have mostly covered their role to spread information about the new environmental policies. (Hallstrom, 2004, p. 189) This role can be influential under the aspect of creating the positive point of view towards the environmental attitude of the EU and contribute to the efficacy of the role of media.

Joint decision traps clearly apply to environmental negotiations in the EU, which is composed of many diverse members with different ideas and a theoretical low common denominator when it comes to taking a collective decision. (Deters, 2019, p. 315) At the beginning, the EU decided to intervene in environmental matters to protect the economy and the single market. This created an easy ground to operate. (Deters, 2019, p. 318) As time passed the situation became harder for effective implementation of new and strong policies. The arrival during the 2000s of more Countries and the crisis lowered the level and number of the new negotiations, making joint decision traps less probable. (Deters, 2019, p. 323) The author claims in the end that the EU managed to overcome the problem related to joint decision traps. This theory concords with the other ones as the economic crisis seems to have led to a decrease in new stringent environmental policies, and therefore, to fewer

occasions of joint decision traps. Research also affirms that joint decision traps have been overcome or avoided in some way. (Deters, 2019, p. 315)

The data prove that the different types of leadership are generally distributed among the main organs that compose the EU in its operational headquarters and member States. (Wurzel, Liefferink, Di Lullo, 2019, p. 266) A successful environmental policymaking requires the use of more leadership types simultaneously and this refers to the cooperation among all the actors considered in the EU. (Wurzel, Liefferink, Di Lullo, 2019, p. 267) It seems important to analyze in what ways the different actors decide to conceptualize leadership for the environment. (Uusi-Rauva, 2010, p. 86) The ability to avoid joint decision traps isn't enough to state that the EU managed to exert leadership, however, it can be seen as a first step towards this path and member States and citizens of the EU prove this ability with their approval. This means that the EU managed to show efficiency and an acceptable distribution of the efforts related to this matter.

What is interesting to notice is that the EU is a complex group of Countries and, as a whole, it accounts for a great deal of the international weight in environmental matters. (Vogler, 2006, pp. 1-2) The author explores the structure of the EU and shows that it led to inflexibility on some occasions, but also to many successes. (Vogler, 2006, p. 19) This resulted in the ability of the EU to show leadership during the early 2000s, with the Kyoto Protocol. (Vogler, 2006, p. 19) This can be considered as a further proof of the increased level of achievements that the EU can aim at. Avoiding joint decision traps and leading the operations seems to be a great example of what happened during the Kyoto Protocol.

The ability of the EU to exert leadership depends on the implementation of policies internally, firstly. (Bondarouk, Mastenbroek, 2018, p. 15) It is revealed that many aspects of the implementation haven't been properly analyzed, only the central issue of policies is clear. (Bondarouk, Mastenbroek, 2018, p. 24) The cooperation among the members of the EU should be better conceptualized to understand in the right

way, how effective their job is for the EU. (Bondarouk, Mastenbroek, 2018, p. 24) This reveals that many studies have focused on the outcomes of the implementation of policies, however, most of them didn't rely on the aspects directly connected and equally important to the main one. This concept can also be related to the aspect of joint decision traps and the situation of implementation in member States. As an example, related to the implementation of policies in the EU, it could be useful to discuss about the Brexit and the consequences that this situation will bring to the UK and the EU. It might seem that the UK leaving the EU could have a negative impact on British environment because of a diminished quality and quantity of new effective policies. However, research on this specific topic found out that the future for UK might not be that negative. (Burns et al., 2019, p. 285) This conclusion on the matter could be related to diminished research on the implementation of policies, and the low efficacy of them in the EU and proves that implementation isn't the major strength for the EU. However, its skill in providing new policies is still considered effective on many occasions.

The contribution of member States to the policies of the EU is highly dependent on some factors, as the knowledge of the experts involved in the creation of new policies, the early access of these experts in the process, and the creation of coalitions to exert influence in the process. (Haverland, 2009, p. 14) This is connected to the ability of the EU to go beyond the least common denominator of the member States when creating new policies and negotiating. Actually, the EU generally managed to exploit the opportunities offered by this context, while properly adapting to possible negative aspects. (Rayner, Jordan, 2013, p. 85)

Exerting leadership in this context is clearly also related to the ability to influence the decisions of other Countries. It is shown that the neighboring Countries of the EU are likely to follow and adopt some policies of the EU. (Knill, Tosun, 2009, p. 890) The findings also revealed the creation of strong networks where to exchange information on different environmental matters. (Knill, Tosun, 2009, p. 890)

This section revealed a good distribution and degree of leadership among the main organs of the EU, except for the implementation phase, which has mainly been the weakest spot for the EU. The next section refers to the financial crisis that began in the year 2007, which is perceived to have greatly weakened the environmental ambitions, policies, and recognition of leadership.

THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

Several studies try to show that the environmental policy of the EU has been negatively affected by the financial crisis of 2007. On this particular aspect, the analysis is based on the evidence that environmental policies were negatively affected, on the relevance of EU's actions after claiming its fundamental role in an international context, and on the importance of many aspects related to the environment, especially in the long term. (Burns, Tobin, 2016, p. 1485) It is stressed that analyzing the number of new policies created after the crisis might have little effect, as a reduction in new policies could be related to an effective implementation of previous policies. Therefore, there would be no need of new policies to develop. (Burns, Tobin, 2016, p. 1492) The research finds that the crisis probably had a negative impact on the environmental policy of the EU, however the existing literature, on which this work is based on, focuses on the economic aspects in general and little on the environmental ones. The external impact received with the crisis has probably weakened the environmental outputs of the EU, but it is important to reinforce this theory with other proofs.

The EU has also been proved to have showed hypocrisy, meaning that the environmental ambitions and reputation of the actor were not matched by talk, decisions, and actions. (Knill, Steinebach, Fernández, 2020, p. 364) The study confirms that the EU reduced the amount of new ambitious policies but kept its reputation as leader and favored the member States with a lighter regulation in this respect. (Knill, Steinebach, Fernández, 2020, p. 375) The data provided show that

the EU diminished the efficacy and number of new policies after the economic and financial crisis. However, it kept calling for new policies even if it didn't truly comply and improve most of them. (Knill, Steinebach, Fernández, 2020, p. 375) This research confirms most of the theories that call for a diminished importance of the EU in environmental matters after the crisis of 2007, and it can also be connected to the negative outcomes of Copenhagen. This suggestion is based on the link between the lower efficacy of implementation after the crisis and a preference for the EU of a lighter environmental regulation after the crisis.

The financial crisis of 2007 hit the member States of the EU in different ways. One of the most important sectors that got hit is definitely the environmental one, and the implementation of actions related to this sector has attacked the willingness of many member States to carry on with their environmental legislation. This created a situation in which some States could cope with their problems and others struggled to do so, reinforcing the 'leader-laggard dynamic' that affects the EU. (Melidis, Russel, 2020, p. 198) Interestingly, the data show that the implementation of environmental policies is positively seen after the crisis. It might be due to a fewer number of infringements or possibly related to reduced economic externalities. (Melidis, Russel, 2020, p. 206) By focusing on different aspects, the research tries to see the arrival of the crisis in a positive way, which narrowed the gap between leader and laggard States (Melidis, Russel, 2020, p. 206) This theory doesn't contrast with the others because it relies on the relationship between member States and not on the EU level. Under this aspect, it seems that the crisis improved the environmental situation of the EU through a reduction of the value of the economic side. This could be also related to the lower efficacy on the implementation phase for the EU. A drop in other phases like planning and negotiating could have led to a relatively better implementation. Actually, the negative impact of the financial and economic crisis hit the environmental policies, in particular in the first moments after the crisis. (Burns, Eckersley, Tobin, 2020, p. 15) It isn't easy to find many policies that were cancelled right after the crisis, it's

more probable for them to have been slightly weakened. The environmental ambition began being reduced later, in the years that followed. (Burns, Eckersley, Tobin, 2020, p. 15) It could be noticed that if policies didn't get eliminated, they have been carried on through tough times and this should motivate a belief of the skill linked to implementation. In the meanwhile, the environmental ambitions got slightly weakened but it took time for this to happen, and some more turning points, for example the Copenhagen conference.

This negative aspect is also influenced by the limited number of economic resources that the EU can use. This means having to deal in a particular way which requires a low budget to work with, in order to receive support in creating new policies. This might be considered as one of the biggest problems of the EU, which has become even worse after the financial crisis, specifically in confront with other major actors, for example the US and China. This situation creates a strong impact on the recognition of leadership, which is however, not only dependent on the economic resources, but also on many other aspects like motivation and cohesiveness, which are strongly linked to the European policy and highly favorable for this organization. The environmental policy of the EU is seen to be supported by the European citizens, who see this sector as a fundamental value for them. (Gerhards, Lengfeld, 2008, p. 235) This support is also found to be dependent on the Country of origin and its economic and ecological modernization. (Gerhards, Lengfeld, 2008, p. 236) This aspect seems to be particularly important, as it can be connected with the negative situation that resulted shortly after the crisis and that weakened environmental policies in general. The crisis clearly affected in a negative way the economies of the Countries composing the EU, the support of the public got reduced and this gave an input for the reduction of new policies and subsequently of the ambitions towards the environment.

The crisis has certainly been a negative aspect for the EU, but the environmental policies didn't get eliminated right away, they mainly got slightly weakened. This brings to the next section, the perception of the EU as a leader by others, in

particular before and after the Copenhagen negotiations, which can be seen as a turning point.

LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWERS

After considering the situation of the crisis, it is also fundamental to look at leadership from another point of view, which is the followers' side. The EU has worked hard to become a climate leader and its job is clearly considered to be successful by the EU itself, some organizations, and a wide part of the scientific community. However, it needs to be recognized by the possible followers as well. (Karlsson et al., 2012, p. 48) It seems to be equally important and advantageous for this organization to become a leader both internally and externally, to create a stronger positive view for its own existence. The idea of 'Green Europe' can be seen as a crucial 'brand attribute' of Europe, in order to distinguish it and make it rise above every other political entity. (Lenschow, Sprungk, 2010, p. 136) It seems to be an achievement that the EU could work for, to increase its status and become more successful in the operations leading to protecting the environment. Environmental issues were recognized to be the second most important aspect that the EU should be dealing with to improve life of its citizens, in 2007. (Lenschow, Sprungk, 2010, p. 145) In the same year, the EU was also considered by the majority of member States, to be ahead of the US in policies regarding the protection of the environment. (Lenschow, Sprungk, 2010, p. 146) It seems like actors trying to be leaders are typically recognized as such by their own home constituency. (Parker et al., 2017, p. 244)

There are data that rely on the situation in 2008 and show that the most recognized actors running for an imaginary role of leader were usually China, supported by the BASIC coalition (Brazil, South Africa, India and China), and the EU, even if they differed depending on the specific subject considered. (Karlsson et al., 2011, p. 101) on the same line the US was possibly seen as a leader for the promotion of new

technological solutions to climate change. (Karlsson et al., 2011, p. 102) The results were highly influenced by the geographical origin of respondents, their roles, and the specific challenges posed by climate change to the major Countries. (Karlsson et al., 2011, pp. 103-104) The research focuses on the value given to leadership by the possible followers in environmental matters. This seems extremely crucial, as it stresses the importance of the recognition of leadership by others and recognizes the wide variety of aspects related to the environment connected with the specific skills of each player considered. In particular, the survey based on the answers given by experts involved in the processes of the negotiations can lead to a specific recognition of the main aspects to consider for leadership from a group of experts, who can focus on the real and effective work done by the institutions. The paper then gives an idea on the types of leadership that the EU should adopt to keep up with the role it was trying to fulfill, stressing that directional and idea-based leadership were employed quite well, but should be better implemented with the structural mode. (Karlsson et al., 2011, p. 104) Actually, managing to deploy all kinds of leadership should be seen as imperative to complete strategies related to exerting leadership in environmental matters and the 'weaknesses' related to the structural leadership are confirmed in this occasion.

The following year, the same authors tried to collect data from 2008 to 2010, in order to improve the previous research with more recent and objective data and explain why the respondents decided to recognize as possible leaders the actors considered for the research. (Karlsson et al., 2012, p. 46) With the outcomes of Copenhagen, the EU lost a great amount of recognition as leader, and the US raised its support. The most recognized players were the 3 previously considered, even if there were some changes and no absolute prevailing of one on the others. (Karlsson et al., 2012, pp. 52-53) There was no absolute recognition of a leader. To really exert leadership, they should have cooperated and first steps towards this direction can be seen from the improvements made throughout the years taken into account, during the negotiations. (Karlsson et al., 2012, p. 54) It should be noted that the data

collected seem to be objective and reflect as truly as possible the situation before and after the Copenhagen Agreement, considered as a turning point for the EU in the fight against climate change. This gives a strong and effective analysis of the context surrounding that specific moment. It is interesting to notice that the EU after the COP15 lost some general recognition as leader but managed to continue in being considered a possible leader with the other major contenders.

The EU can generally be considered a leader in the 2000s, until the COP 15, where it faced many problems related to its negotiating skills. (Groen, Niemann, Oberthür, 2012, p. 174) It seemed to have rapidly taken back its role as a leader in the following COP 16, but the outcomes and ambitions looked to be far lower than before. (Groen, Niemann, Oberthür, 2012, p. 174) It is interesting to notice that the tensions among member States of the EU didn't vary significantly from a conference to the other, but the most dangerous aspects that prevented the creation of a united front in the first conference expired, leaving the stage to a greater cooperation among States. (Groen, Niemann, Oberthür, 2012, p. 186) The research shows that the EU is seen to be working better if it tries to have its own member States to cooperate, and this seems to be possible if they manage to cope with the subjects that create the deadliest internal divisions. In this example, the EU changed its operational settings for the negotiations in a single year, turning a poor demonstration of leadership into a higher level of negotiating image that obtained a better outcome from the bargaining, even if the outcomes and ambitions were reduced. This study seems to be important because it shows that it is possible for this organization to operate effectively, be flexible, and adapt its position over a short period of time, if needed.

It is important to consider the big differences that occurred between the Copenhagen and Paris Agreement, which can both be seen as turning points on the environmental climate negotiations of the last years for the EU. The first meant an incredible marginalization of the EU during the negotiations, and the second can be seen as the rise of the EU as a leader, a concept that combines the role of a leader

and a mediator. (Oberthür, Groen, 2017, p. 1) This concept seems to be important because it gives a new role to the EU, which can be seen as a combination of the modes of leadership previously considered. The paper focuses on the success of the EU during the Paris Agreement and praises the ability showed during the negotiations. Where it proved its skill in adapting to the changing international context. (Oberthür, Groen, 2017, p. 6) It seemed, with the Copenhagen Agreement, that the EU would have lost its weight in environmental negotiations, however, it managed to adapt to the new challenges and provide a good level of leadership, even if in a slightly different way. This research adds a new important concept and role to the EU that could be seen as a new life under the aspect examined.

CONCLUSION

The literature review shows that there are contrasting opinions on the true and definitive role of the EU on the environment in the international context. One of the most recent research projects shows that the EU generally managed to cope with the challenges posed by the international context and to exert leadership with varying degrees of efficacy. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2021, p. 1095) This work sums up the literature to the last year and considers the most important aspects of environmental policy in the EU. There is the possibility to see a future stronger development of EU's environmental strategy. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2021, p. 1109) Thanks to this job it is possible to have a full and recent overview of the topic.

The EU is generally perceived to be an effective and strong supporter of measures favoring the protection of the environment. However, the role of 'leader' isn't an absolute attribute of the EU and even if we might consider that it has ever been a leader, this perception isn't constant in time, in particular considering the perception of the EU during Copenhagen, where its possible leadership has been completely ignored. These are the main assumption on the role of the EU on this topic and the ideas show what is generally written about this topic by the international scientific

community. To sum it briefly up, we could say that the EU is widely recognized to have declared a desire to become a leader and really struggled to become one, however, its actions and the support obtained show that it didn't become a real leader recognized by every player, for what regarding environmental policies. It reached a high degree of power in this matter, it worked well and with a strong ambition, but it didn't get to be fully recognized by the others.

It would be important to understand if the EU itself has ever perceived to have become a leader. What seems to have generally been neglected is an analysis of the personal intentions of the EU as an organization composed of many organs. There are member States, the Council, the Parliament, the Commission, and every actor connected to them. One of the main issues of the EU is considered to be the ability to speak with one voice. This issue became a problem on the occasions that led to different opinions of the European members, but also one of the strongest elements that improved the leadership exerted by this organization on the few occasions that favored the EU. The first thing that could be considered this voice, are the speeches delivered by the representatives of the main organs of the EU and analyzing them would prove helpful to find some new hints related to the recognition of the hope for the EU to exert leadership.

In the following chapter an immersive analysis of the declarations of the EU will be provided, in order to show that it wanted and tried to become the leader of the environmental protection of the world. I will comment how the representatives of the EU declared their willingness to obtain a leading role and analyze how these statements influenced the actions of the EU and, eventually, other institutions.

CHAPTER 2

EU'S DECLARATIONS ON LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

The main goal of this chapter is the analysis of the declarations of the EU, through its representatives. The EU didn't just state a single time to be ready to become a leader in international environmental politics, it did continuously in the period that we are considering now, which is something that any other actor doesn't seem to have really tried to do as much as the EU. Most of the other possible leaders had moments of uncertainty that led them to partially refusing leadership or showing far too little interest. This is one of the main reasons why we can see the EU as a possible leader in this aspect. An analysis of the declarations in which the EU stated to be willing to become a leader will show that the hope to reach that position has a strong backup and the definition of leader provided during the first chapter of this research, as an actor which uses ideas and diplomacy to get to have others to follow him, can support its credibility as a leader.

We can say that the economic resources of the EU can't be compared to the ones of the main rivals considered to be possible leaders, China and the US, in particular. However, the idea of leadership in environment, the support of the European citizens, the process of accepting external laws, the social perceptions of these years, and the concern of the EU for the other Countries, all over the world, show that in those fields, a possible leadership can be somehow exerted by this International Organization (IO), though this aspect isn't a feature that can easily embrace every institution that composes the EU, as the actors part of it aren't always on the same line of action for what regarding the environmental policy and ambitions. Therefore, the declarations can help to find out more on the matter.

The analysis given by the scientific community is mainly based on data obtained from the economic or political research related to the environment. Several papers give an analysis of the leadership of the EU based on questions proposed to respondents which say whether the organization considered became a leader or not, in their opinion. Some other research decided to define what has been done by the EU and state if it became a leader or not, based on the economic or environmental improvements.

However, it would be necessary to understand in the first place, if the EU had the idea of becoming a leader of the environmental protection and what the perception of the EU on this aspect and its possible leadership are, or if it just wanted to improve the efforts under this aspect on the internal side and experts in this sector began believing that the EU wanted to show the skills linked to this specific role. The figures and outcomes of the different research in the papers read, generally give positive feedback to the actions and the role of the EU in having exerted leadership throughout the years. However, does the EU really mean to be a global leader for every other institution and Country? This will be explained during this chapter where many official declarations will show the efforts of the EU in becoming a widely recognized leader.

This chapter, in the next section, will introduce some of the earliest statements found to support a European leadership and it will present the methods and aims of the analysis of the speeches used for the research. The successive section, containing the analysis of all the documents, has been divided in three more sections to differentiate the role assumed after the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol, after the adoption of the Copenhagen Agreement, and after the adoption of the Paris Agreement. Those could be seen as turning points of the environmental policies in general, and in particular for the EU. The conclusion at the end will sum up the key points of the chapter.

The declarations have been chosen based on the specificity of the speech mostly created by the representatives of the many bodies that compose the EU, ranging from the environmental commission to the European Commission, the Council, and the Parliament, taking into account only the ones regarding the leadership of the EU or its ability to influence important negotiations on the environment, both positively and negatively, during the timeline taken into account for the research that starts in 1990 with the Dublin declaration and should end in 2015 with the Paris Agreement. However, some speeches created after the Paris Agreement have been analyzed to better understand the concepts connected to the preceding years. The analysis that follows the declarations aims at showing that the words used are generally trying to highlight the crucial role of the EU on every occasion and showing that this actor is the one on which most institutions rely on for the advancement of new policies and agreements on this subject. If there is a high level of recognition of the need of European leadership to improve the environment all over the world, and a continuous request of European action to prevent worsening conditions on this theme, then it is possible to recognize that the EU has showed willingness to become an environmental leader.

ANALYSIS OF THE OFFICIAL DECLARATIONS

To answer to the main questions of the research, it is necessary to explain what method is used in the analysis to understand if the goals of the declarations have been met or not. In this research, the analysis is based on the official declaration of the representatives of the EU, on the documents written on official meetings, on press releases, and on speeches addressed directly to the official bodies that compose the EU. There is a particular focus that is directed to take into account only the speeches that involve the use of the leadership as the main aspect of the declaration or act considered. Therefore, the speeches not including a reference to leadership, or the main role of the EU, have been excluded from the analysis.

During the research of the speeches including the term ‘leadership’, most of the speeches resulted to be made by the Commissioners for the Environment, for Energy and Climate Action, the European Council, and the Presidents of the European Commission. These institutional representatives show how the reference to leadership is mostly defined by some of the most authoritative actors of the EU on the matter of environmental protection. To connect the term ‘leadership’ with the environmental theme, the research of the declarations or direct acts of the EU has been linked with the presence of expressions as ‘environmental protection’ or ‘environmental policy’ to find suitable speeches. This doesn’t necessarily mean that every speech will be positive for the EU and claiming that the EU has always been a leader for the environment, there might be occasions where the leadership could be denied or considered to be shared with other actors. It is important to keep in mind that the main aim of the research is to understand the role of the EU in the environmental protection and how it is seen from this organization. There are high expectations for many positive comments about this situation, however, it might not be the case on some occasions, mainly after the most important crises that hit the world after the 2000s, in particular the financial crisis and the Copenhagen Agreement. The ideas expressed in these speeches can give us hints on the perception of the representatives of the EU, regarding the most important moments of the last decades. There should be a recognition of leadership for this organization on many occasions as long as it would prove beneficial to be considered a leader from the followers, however, it would be important to state if the moments taken into account are effectively seen to be characterized by leadership or not. Some articles coming from other research will give a wider point of view to confront and reinforce, with a general analysis on this topic, the main hypothesis of the thesis.

The representatives of the EU stated on many occasions that they wanted the EU to be a leader in environmental politics. An analysis of these declarations will be provided in the following section to understand in what way they tried to announce the EU’s involvement in environmental politics to the rest of the world. The

announcements regarding leadership happened before, during, and after lots of international meetings and climate summits. Since the 1990s, the EU seems to have tried to impose itself as a great leader and it managed to gain a fundamental international support with time. One of the oldest statements identified of the intention to lead the environmental protection, for the EU can be found in the Dublin Declaration of 1990. The words in the declaration show the willingness of the EU to address environmental problems as a serious threat to life itself. The declaration states:

“There is (...) an increasing acceptance of a wider responsibility, as one of the foremost regional groupings in the world, to play a leading role in promoting concerted and effective action at global level. ... The Community’s credibility and effectiveness at this wider level depends in large measure on the ability to adopt progressive environmental measures for implementation and enforcement by its member States. The internal and external dimensions of Community environment policy are therefore inextricably linked. ... [The EU’s] capacity to provide leadership in [the] sphere [of global environmental politics] is enormous. The Community must use more effectively its position of moral, economic and political authority to advance international efforts to solve global problems and to promote sustainable development and respect for the global commons.” (Council, 1990, pp. 25-27)

After many years of work, the EU managed to obtain the possibility to operate on the international context for account of the member States that composed the EU and could act for what regarding the environment on behalf of the member States since the beginning of the period, which is analyzed in this research. This was the right moment for the EU, as a peculiar IO which isn’t a State and is different from most types of coalitions on the international scene, to become a global leader. In 2000, Commission President, explained that the EU was ready to take on the challenge to face the responsibilities of this particular role with this sentence, “We

must aim to become a global civil power at the service of sustainable global development”. (Prodi, 2000)

This analysis is also useful to understand the reactions and the perceptions of the EU after the main events that characterized the period taken into account. The evolution of the complexity, the specific words, and the main objectives and achievements of the EU will be easily grasped by the speeches put in a chronological order. This order is particularly useful to understand the involvement of the EU throughout the period and the possible changes in the perceptions of the role that the EU was covering in a certain moment. The chronological order of the analysis will also help to understand the reactions of the actors involved into the main events that characterized the last 30 years for what regarding the environment, both positively and negatively.

THE DOCUMENTS

The documents, which will be analyzed, have mostly been selected through research on the internet using mainly the institutional website of the EU to obtain the primary sources necessary for the analysis. In general, the declarations are directed to the European Parliament or are delivered in the context of the most important international meetings leading to the adoption of new agreements on the environment. The European Commission has been the institution that mostly resulted interested in expressing the need for leadership, generally asking for the contribution for the entire EU. This leads to focus on the work of the Commission which results to be the actor that looks to be influencing this theme at the higher level of intensity among the various institutions of the EU. The focus on this particular institution is also reinforced by the previous analysis of other authors on a similar line. (Knill, Steinbach, Fernandez, 2020, p. 368) The official speeches taken into consideration for this research and subsequently analyzed during this chapter are 24, they were delivered by many representatives of the main institutions

of the EU, many of them worked directly for the institutions created to drive the environmental policy of the Union. Other declarations come from the Presidents of the Council, the Parliament, and others. Their words are the ones of the most important authorities and can clearly be considered as the own words of the EU. Using more representatives as the voice of the EU has more meanings for the purpose of the research. It can be related to the ability of the EU to speak with one voice, considering that there are many organs, and they need to cooperate. This ability has been called to be a central issue for the EU. The theme of leadership through the unitary voice action is presented on a great number of research. This issue is recognized to be central also from the EU, for example, the President of the Commission, Barroso stated in 2005 that the EU had obtained more skills in being a unitary actor that can express the intention of the EU with a single voice on more subjects. (Vogler, Bretherton, 2006, p. 1) It would be easy to simply rely on this affirmation to accept the skill to speak with one voice. However, there have been a high number of occasions where there wasn't a single voice for the EU, and this played against the organization for the majority of the acts and negotiations. Managing to show that there is a solid connection and an effective relationship among the words of all the parts that compose the EU, from member States to specific commissions, would improve the efficacy of this ability that seems to be crucial for the recognition of the importance of the EU. Using these speeches is useful to see if there are different opinions inside the organization regarding its own policy and the issues connected, or if all the levels of the EU agree on the efficacy of the environmental legislation, and on the possible leadership that should be exerted both internally and externally. Examining the value and importance of the speeches can help us to have an idea of the perception of the EU of the influence exerted on the rest of the world and on member States in the past and possibly also for the future. The speeches analyzed can have two primary aims: to inform or to persuade. They are generally used by the speakers to inform of the new challenges that will be necessary to face or to give data and achievements of the policies taken. Another aspect is the need for a certain actor to convince the audience to take a

specific action for the protection of the interests of the environment, safeguarding the interests of the EU, the economy, and the people as well. The methods considered are both used for these occasions by the speakers and the analysis will give a deeper understanding on the usage of the declarations and how they motivated or not the operating staffs during the various meetings. The analysis will be divided in three parts with the first one being related to the moment when the EU had shown its skill and managed to save the Kyoto Protocol. The second part starts after the crises that affected the world and the negotiations since the end of the 2000s. The third part sees the declarations created after the Paris Agreement, which can help to understand the perceptions on the preceding situation.

AFTER THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

Following the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, which can be seen as a basis of the highest and earliest stage of involvement of the EU for a leadership role, the declarations considered for the research contain a reference to leadership and generally call for positive aspects related to the work of the EU. In the early 2000s, the greenest member States of the EU were leading the actions about the environment in general and tried to export their standards to other States to improve the efficacy of their policies. (Kelemen, 2010, p. 340) This was a great boost to the ideas of the EU, which was becoming more and more aware of the need to protect the world and, subsequently, the Commission and the Parliament could rely on very strong supporters for their environmental ambitions after the accession of Sweden, Austria, and Finland in 1995. (Kelemen, 2009, p. 341)

One of the first official speeches considered for this research, which claims that the EU should show leadership in the protection of the environment, is the one of Margot Wallström.

On 15 October 2002, in Brussels, the member of the European Commission, responsible for the Environment, Margot Wallström, made a speech regarding the costs of the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

“The title of this workshop, “Managing carbon risk”, begs the question “What risk?”. Of course, this workshop will essentially concentrate on how climate change is affecting and will affect your businesses. Some of you see it as a threat, others may see it as an opportunity.

I want to underline though that the major risk is climate change itself and its potential impacts. From what the scientists tell us, these would mostly be borne by the less developed countries, where the poor are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Future generations - our children and grandchildren – would pay a heavy price if we decided to sit on our hands and do nothing.” (Wallström M. 2002)

The first thing we notice in the first part of the speech is that climate change is immediately recognized as a threat by the Commission in which the responsible for the Environment was working. The first thoughts are directed to future generations and the higher costs that they will have to bear if serious actions aren't taken immediately. The speaker summarizes the main steps taken by the European Commission to fight climate change and praises the great job of the other components of the EU, which worked in favor of an effective protection of the environment. The EU-ETS trading system was analyzed during the speech in particular, and it is considered essential to manage to control the reductions of GHG emissions. There is also a direct reference to the job of scientists, which can be seen as a first step towards the usage of the cognitive type of leadership. At the end of her speech the speaker said:

“I want to make sure that we succeed in establishing emissions trading in the European Union. I hope that your sector will support us in this endeavour.

Finally, I would like to highlight a risk that exists to “my business.” Because this emissions trading proposal is a cornerstone of the Community’s Kyoto implementation strategy, the EU’s credibility is at stake should it fail. The EU is being watched closely from all corners of the globe to see whether it lives up to its leadership credentials. We therefore need to lay the foundations for fulfilling our obligations under the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol - and beyond.” (Wallström M. 2002)

This is one of the earliest mentions to leadership we can see in a speech of a representative of the EU, found during the research of the declarations directed towards an audience after the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol. We should also notice that the speaker stresses the need to obtain a very effective implementation of the strategy of the EU-ETS, claiming that “the EU’s credibility is at stake should it fail”. This is a first confirmation of the ideas of the representatives of the EU on the actions of the EU. The credibility of the EU regarding its leadership credentials depends on the managing of the commitments of the Kyoto Protocol. These words seemed to be directed to convincing to take serious action in respecting the deadlines and posing a true basis for a future greater effort.

As reported, the EU must lay solid foundations for the first commitment of the Protocol, and the speaker adds that her institution is willing to do something beyond. I would affirm that she is referring to a new Protocol that should have been created after the Kyoto one. However, to create a new one, a strong leadership was needed. These are the elements that in 2002 drove the actions of the EU. In this speech we can witness that the EU is already claiming to be a leader and that it seemed necessary to safeguard this position with a good implementation of the GHG reductions to appear credible as a leader in the period following the Kyoto Protocol. This hope is also reinforced by the call for scientific knowledge to support the new actions of the institutions.

Another member of the European Commission, Responsible for Environment, Stavros Dimas, delivered a speech in Brussels, on the 22 November 2005. The conference was held to underline the efforts of Europe on climate change. In this speech we can see a clear reference to the leadership of the EU in the first few sentences, as reported right below.

“From the beginning of next week, delegates from 189 countries will be assembling in Montreal for two weeks of discussions on the future international climate change regime. In these discussions, the EU will continue to exert leadership, building on the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol but also on recent scientific evidence, particularly in the Arctic, that the impacts of climate change might be felt far more rapidly than previously expected.

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to set out the Commission’s view on the talks in Montreal and to outline the next steps for the EU’s own Climate Change Policy.

For the EU, meeting the reduction target of -8% as foreseen in the Kyoto Protocol is vital for the credibility of its international stance on climate change. If we are to expect other countries to join us in our efforts to cut emissions of greenhouse gases, we have to demonstrate that the EU can, first of all, meet its own emission targets and, secondly, that this does not come at the cost of our economic growth.” (Dimas S. 2005)

As it happened in 2002, the leadership is a crucial aspect for the EU. In particular, the speaker says that the EU will continue to exert leadership, meaning that in his own opinion the EU is already at the top of providing an excellent degree of actions to protect the environment. What’s more important to notice is that the credibility of the EU as a leader under the aspect of the environment relies again on meeting the focal points of the Kyoto Protocol. If we compare the points of this speech with the previous one, we can see a pattern on recalling the leadership and also in

connecting an effective leadership with the efficacy of the Kyoto Protocol, which is then connected to retaining the credibility of the EU. It looks like the EU is trying to stick to the idea that fulfilling its Kyoto commitments will ensure its leadership for the future. This leads also to the aspect that meeting the expectations in this moment could prove beneficial to obtaining more followers when dealing with the aspect of leadership, proving that the entrepreneurial type of leadership is predominant in this moment.

The ideas supporting the actions of the EU, in this case, are mainly the scientific knowledge, which is already calling on an immediate prevention of future disasters, and the will to obtain the results needed for the Kyoto Protocol. The possible objective of the IO we are analyzing, is to possibly reinforce its leadership by having other Countries to join in the fight against the rise of GHG emissions. The loss of the support of the US is a stressful disadvantage for the EU, which would have really needed such a formidable player, in economic and political terms, in its team. Moreover, it would be important to show that the economic growth isn't negatively affected by measures directed at the protection of the environment. This aspect can be related to the exemplary leadership and having in mind that this type of leadership could be a great boost seems to be part of the ideas of the EU.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, stepping up the fight against climate change has been my highest environmental priority since I took office last November.

At Montreal, the EU will re-assert its leadership on climate policy. It will do so with the aim of starting a process towards a future climate change regime that involves all major emitters.

The EU will also continue to deliver on its commitments by determined action at home. The second Climate Change Programme which I have already mentioned will provide the framework for new measures to cut emissions.

Climate change concerns us all. I call on all our partners, industrialised countries, emerging economies, industry, and society at large, to recognise

the need for action and to join us in our efforts towards a low carbon future. The international community has all the tools to fight climate change and there is a broad consensus about the type of measures necessary. Let us hope that Montreal will be remembered as the moment that the international community took up this gauntlet.” (Dimas S. 2005)

In the final part of the speech, the idea of reasserting leadership on climate policy is highlighted once again. It is also important to notice that the next step of this plan involves bringing other Countries and institutions towards a new system in which the major emitters of GHG are in charge of protecting the environment. This can undoubtedly be recognized as an effective plan to assert leadership in the future by rounding up enough players to set the standard for the protection of the environment. Again, the purpose here is to convince others that it is necessary to follow and help the EU to protect the environment.

In these few sentences we can witness the process required to become a leader; the EU, through the commissioner, is showing a strong reliance on its political and idea-based power linking its efforts to the cognitive and instrumental leadership. It is trying to obtain a strong consensus outside, and it is clearly increasing its efforts on the inside to show the ability to lead a group of States under its own guide. In this case, the Commission isn't simply reinforcing the bindingness of its efforts for its own Countries, just like a pioneer would do. It is instead claiming to be a leader and calling others to follow its steps in the protection of the environment and, subsequently, increase the measures taken by everyone.

On 14 November 2006, the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso delivered a speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Here the President is reinforcing the necessity of the EU to speak with a single voice, even if it is composed of many members which can't always think in a single way. Being

a concise and unitary actor would give the EU a far stronger weight in the international context.

“The document 'Europe in the World' tackles the need to develop a global voice which matches our economic weight in the world. This will also reinforce our efforts in areas where we have already exerted leadership, notably in the debate on a future international climate change regime.”
(Barroso J. M. 2006)

In this speech the EU is also clearly looking at the future and getting ready for a future where it will be necessary to produce a new international agreement regarding the protection of the environment and it takes a strong position in prevision of a new climate change regime. This part seems to be aimed at praising the effective strength shown during the negotiations, but also at reconsidering the negative aspects that influenced the Kyoto Protocol, which saw the withdrawal of the US. This idea takes into account the entrepreneurial leadership, and the reference to the US can be seen as an acceptance of the relatively high economic weight, which is, however, still not competitive enough when confronted with other major Countries.

A new speech emphasizing the need for a strong action on climate change was delivered in Brussels, on 12 June 2007 by the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso. In the first few paragraphs he follows the pattern already observed with the previous speeches analyzed, which see the leadership of the EU not only as a plausible possibility, but as a real and already accepted fact that should be recognized as such by everyone else. The first part of the speech is mainly aimed at informing the audience of the successes of the EU in occasion of an important anniversary, which sees a growing effort of this organization in providing positive actions towards the environment.

“As we take stock of Europe's achievements in this 50th anniversary year of the Treaty of Rome, there can be no doubt that environmental protection is one of our greatest success stories.

Action by the European Union and member States has been responsible for major improvements in the field of environment protection - air and water quality, pollutants, protection of nature areas, and chemicals to name a few. And we have adopted the world's most ambitious strategy for combating climate change.

In short, we are delivering a Europe of results, in a policy area that the peoples of Europe care deeply about. In fact, no fewer than 72% of respondents in a recent Eurobarometer survey favoured more decision-making on the environment at European level. The message is clear: when it comes to protecting Europe's environment, Europeans want 'more Europe.'

It is easy to see why. Our citizens recognise that the environment and pollution know no borders. They understand that progress depends on international action. The European Union provides a unique, legally binding framework for this. The strength and effectiveness of cooperation between the EU and its Member States have made us global leaders in protecting the environment.” (Barroso J. M. 2007)

The speaker stresses the importance of environmental protection for the entire world, as well as the undeniable job and progresses of the EU in this aspect. The strongest claim here is the recognition of the plan and actions supporting the EU's strategy in combating climate change as the most ambitious of the entire world. There are also data highlighting the willingness of the citizens of the EU to be part of an organization that really cares for the future of the environment and that can share its efforts in many different and equally fundamental aspects with others to come to the final result of a better life for everyone. There is again an affirmation of the leadership of the EU on the world as global leader in the protection of the

environment. However, not only the incredible work of the EU is recognized in this speech, but it is also particularly interesting to notice that a strong cooperation between the member States and the EU at the time, laid an effective basis for the advancing of the environmental actions. Once more, the cooperation of the members and the ability to follow the same path is evidently getting more and more crucial to state that there is a leadership for the EU. On the same line, it could be possible to affirm that the operations of the EU are reflected in the will of the Europeans, who care for the environment in Europe, as well as outside the borders of the Union. This can be seen as an idea of an actor exerting leadership, one which provides help, guidelines, and support for the others. This brings to the idea that entrepreneurial leadership is mostly used here.

“The Commission's integrated climate and energy package, approved by European leaders in March, sets out a clear and ambitious strategy for action. It is nothing less than a commitment to restructure Europe's economy towards a low-carbon future.

Now we must move rapidly to implement the package. That means convincing our international partners to follow our lead and start negotiations on a bold new global climate agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol when it expires in 2012.” (Barroso J. M. 2007)

In these sentences a strong claim can be considered. The European Commission has an ambitious strategy ready to be put in action. This is based on the fact that in the year 2007 the EU was already projecting the efforts to a future in which the economy would be based on a low-carbon consumption basis. The situation can be seen as a first move of an actor willing to show its ability in providing a new system that can become favorable for every player willing to join this leader and form a stronger group. Moreover, it wanted to begin implementing the transition from the fossil fuel reliance to the new and greener economy as soon as possible, in order to convince the international partners to stick with the ideas of the EU and start a new

round of negotiations to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which was about to expire. It is possible to connect this moment to the exemplary leadership because the EU seems to be the first and most ambitious player hoping to forge a new and better system for the future. However, The Commission wasn't just trying to make the EU the first in obtaining a low-carbon economic system, the aim was rounding up enough followers to start the negotiations on a new treaty that could have possibly been based on the strategy adopted by the greener Countries, which, in this case, could have been made of the EU itself in the first place. It is clear that this part of the declaration aims at obtaining a path to follow for the audience, which has to be focused on making the EU a leader ready to be above the others during future international environmental negotiations.

“Innovation, stimulated by policy initiatives, has made Europe a world leader in a number of environmental technologies, such as wind power. Implementation of our climate and energy package will unleash a new wave of eco-innovation, as the most dynamic firms compete to be first on the market with the low-carbon technologies of the future. European industries must seize this opportunity with both hands.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The range and effectiveness of our environment policy is one of the EU's major achievements, as well as one of its most popular.

There has been substantial progress to improve human health as well as the environment itself. It has helped European industry to become a world leader in a number of high growth sectors, and it has created millions of jobs.”
(Barroso J. M. 2007)

In this last part of the speech, we can see a short briefing of the greatest achievements of the EU as a leader and innovator of environmental policies, from a social and also from an economic perspective. It is considered that the European firms and the market itself would greatly benefit from the opportunities of the

environmental innovations. The first benefits of the initial implementation are the advancement of the EU as a world leader in many sectors and the creation of new job opportunities. The general appreciation of the policies of the EU regarding the environment is stressed once again in this declaration and this is reflected in a stronger recognition of the IO as a leader. The final sentences of the speech seem to be a request to the audience, which require a further cooperation with firms and companies in reaching an innovative and more sustainable system.

The 2000s saw a steady increase in the recognition of leadership from the European membership and from people and organizations in general. This was the result of many years of hard work directed to the improvement of the environmental legislation and which seemed to have reached a peak with the negotiations related to the Kyoto Protocol. This moment in particular, could be seen as a turning point for the EU and the same aspect can be connected to the main assumptions analyzed in the literature review. The research gives a positive value to the Kyoto Protocol, which is reflected in the declarations taken in consideration so far. The institutions of the EU, after the first stages of this important bargaining, seem to be taking for granted the recognition as a capable and effective leader. However, the final part of the decade, from 2007 to 2010 sees another round of turning points, mostly seen to be negative, as it is characterized by the financial crisis and the Copenhagen Agreement. These two different events certainly had a negative and important impact on the efficacy of the policies of the institutions. The crisis reduced the economic and political power in terms of resources in particular, whereas the Copenhagen Agreement led to a far diminished level of leadership that could have been observed before that event. In the years preceding and following the financial crisis the speeches of the institutions analyzed have continuously claimed to see the EU as a leader and that it was willing to increase its status throughout the upcoming years. In this occasion the scientific community has different opinions on the role of the EU, but the analysis of the declarations of the representatives of the EU could provide a new point of view that might benefit further research on the subject.

In 2007, Margot Wallström, the Commissioner for Institutional Affairs and Communication Strategy; formerly Commissioner for the Environment, praised the benefits brought by the idea of a 'Green Europe' claiming that the EU can reach a future where it will be the best example of environmental protection for the entire planet. (Lenschow, Sprungk, 2010, p. 141) Clearly relating this idea to the exemplary type of leadership that seems to be used on this occasion:

In 50 years' time I want Europeans to be able to look back on this decade as the start of a new era for Europe and the world. I want people to say:

- Those were the years when we began to put into practice the concept of smart growth.
- That was the time when we decided to become the most energy-efficient region in the world.
- That was the decade when we began in earnest to shift our social systems towards sustainable development, combining economic growth with social responsibility and environmental protection. (Wallström M. 2007)

The Lisbon Council meeting in early March 2008 represented an occasion for Commission President José Manuel Barroso to formulate these sentences during a speech, which clearly show once again the commitment of the EU to the environmental advancement, and in this particular occasion praise the job of the greener, Nordic Countries, which in general showed a stronger strategy for the environment (Lenschow, Sprungk, 2010, p. 141):

“Let's finally lay to rest the idea that there is a trade-off between high standards of environmental protection and competitiveness. There isn't. Just look at some of the Nordic countries. We can do well by doing good. Europe

must lead the world in the shift to a hi-tech, low carbon economy.” (Barroso, 2008)

AFTER THE CRISES

It is possible to define the image of the European commission as a weakened actor, pressured by the economic concerns over the environmental ones since the mid-1990s. The situation is seen to be worsening after the financial and economic crisis of 2008, which caused stagnation and a subsequent dismantling of some of the already existing policies on the environment. (Knill, Steinbach, Fernandez, 2020, p. 364) This aspect caused consequences in the implementation of the new environmental policies and the crisis caused a strong shift to a prioritization of the economic aspects, during those years. (Knill, Steinbach, Fernandez, 2020, p. 364)

However, this claim could be argued to be not entirely true, as the European Commission announced, through its many speeches and press releases, its willingness to improve their efforts to protect the environment, even after the financial crisis. Moreover, the new policies and negotiations, in particular leading to the Paris Agreement, seemed to be aiming principally at creating a sustainable developmental economy, providing leadership, and improving the efforts to change the focus on the mere economic aspects to a wider range of data to consider, also aiming at the improvement of the quality of life and other factors not taken into account by the economic data and indicators, leading to an improvement of the benefits of the EU and the rest of the world in general.

Margot Wallström, The Vice-President of the European Commission, in Uppsala, Sweden, on 28 November 2008, delivered a speech in which she praises the EU for its incredible efforts in combating climate change and where she remembers that it's necessary to stick to the values shown in the past to be able to provide the right

means to fighting climate change. This would put the basis to operate in order to create a new global agreement the following year in Copenhagen.

“Ever since ratifying the Kyoto Protocol in May 2002, the EU has been at the forefront of efforts to combat climate change. And we need to stay in the forefront if we are to have a new global climate agreement in Copenhagen next year.” (Wallström M. 2008)

The possibility given by the future meeting can be seen as a crucial one from the words of the speaker in this occasion. The reference to the last important agreement from the year 2002 shows that after years of efforts, the time for a new serious achievement had come. This was also the right time to begin introducing new occasions to provide leadership. The election of the new President of the US gave a new input to the gathering of international partners willing to cooperate.

“Moreover, President-elect Barack Obama (as we just heard) clearly has ambitions to combat climate change. He has stated his intention to implement an emissions trading scheme, similar to the EU's but embracing the whole US economy. And to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with 80% by 2050. He has announced plans to improve US energy efficiency, to reduce US oil consumption by at least 35 percent by 2030 and – very encouragingly – to galvanize new international partnerships to combat climate change.

With the US on board, the world certainly looks headed down the road to Copenhagen, and Europe is very much in the driving seat, steering global progress towards a global agreement, and never holding back.” (Wallström M. 2008)

The speech than focuses on this new aspect. For what regarding the cooperation of the US, the election of President Barack Obama had a strong impact on the relevance of the US in environmental matters. The US must always be considered fundamental in environmental negotiations. The economic, political and social weight based on the level of GHG emissions gives an important value to the

presence of this actor. The structural leadership seems to be one of the main features in this case, but with the arrival of the new President, a new wave of care for the environment and the other types of leadership began receiving more attention and a growth in consideration of their usage. The new presidency was called to keep up with the Countries that had already began reducing their GHG emissions. President Obama gave a strong signal of cooperation with his ideas, and this looked to be very important for the EU. The advancing of the US in the field of climate policy meant having a possible outstanding partner at the future negotiations in Copenhagen, where the EU would be the driving leader of the group of Countries and institutions that would decide the future of the environmental policies of the world. The EU is perceived once again as a leader, mainly from the point of view of the Europeans. From now on, the US would constantly be called to improve their efficiency in implementing environmental policies and being a supporter to the lead of the EU.

Therefore, after years of efforts to reach a leading position and a serious involvement of the EU through all the institutions that compose it as the Council, the Commission, and the EP, the image of the European Union as a leader in international fora could be widely announced by former Commissioner for the Environment Stavros Dimas affirming in 2009 that the lead of the EU is widely accepted. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 261)

The EU has also managed to present itself as a unitary actor with one voice on some occasions, feature that is considered to be one of the most important and controversial for this organization. Being able to reach an internal cohesion also created a consensus among the most important members of the international scene. An interviewee clearly explains this position regarding the EU stating that in the early 2000s the Union was struggling with reaching an internal position, whereas towards the end of the decade, the meetings of the member States were quite effective and fast, which leads to a simpler negotiation with external actors. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 261)

The US, Japan, and China all decided to affirm the leading role of the EU, which is also backed up by its coherence in environmental policies even before the fundamental negotiations leading to Copenhagen. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 262)

In 2009, 16 March, in Washington D.C. the new member of the European Commission, responsible for environment, Stavros Dimas, delivered a speech to recall the importance of the actions of the European Union and to improve the main efforts leading to the future meeting in Copenhagen, where the EU and the US would seriously have to strengthen the cooperation. At the beginning of the speech the speaker stresses once again the need for a strong leadership of the European Union to lead the environmental actions of the world, in order to reach greater benefits, related to the actions of single Countries and institutions that might put unwanted obstacles in the roads of other players.

“Concluding an ambitious, global and comprehensive agreement in Copenhagen in December is vital for our climate - and vital for the international policy architecture if we are to avoid a damaging hiatus at the end of Kyoto’s first commitment period in 2012.

Achieving this goal is going to take strong leadership. The European Union has been providing this for the past decade or more.

First, the 15 member states at the time of Kyoto are well on track to deliver on our commitment to an 8% reduction by 2012. We have achieved an absolute decoupling of emissions from economic growth.

Second, looking beyond Kyoto we have set ourselves the most ambitious targets anywhere in the world on moving towards the low-carbon economy and addressing energy security.” (Dimas S. 2009)

It is clear from these few sentences that without a strong leadership, after the end of Kyoto’s first commitment period, there wouldn’t be any new and more effective

international agreement on the protection of the environment. It is particularly interesting to notice that the speaker announces that the EU has provided leadership for the past decade or more. This statement ensures that the EU has been a leader since the establishment of the basis of the Kyoto Protocol. Following the words of the speaker, we see that meeting that Kyoto commitments seems imperative and that there should be a quite easy path awaiting the member States of the EU in the following years leading the expiration of the Kyoto commitments. member States of the EU have already made enormous progresses in meeting the objectives considered fundamental in the Kyoto Protocol. There was a good attitude even though the financial crisis was hitting some economies very hard, and the institutions were still willing to reinforce the transition to a greener economy, which could partially be seen as an economic disadvantage.

The idea of leading by example is very welcomed and effective in the opinion of the Commission, as explained by Stavros Dimas, who refers to the leadership of the EU stating that European leadership is necessary to be able to fight climate change and that cooperation from the other actors of the international stage is required. He successively praises the job of the EU referring to it as an inspiration for global partners. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 265)

The next sentences give a first reference to the role of the US and other Countries. They are recognized by the EU as important actors that should support and join the leadership of the EU. This means that the EU is mainly focusing on the fact that it needs followers to exert leadership. In this section we can see that the EU calls other Countries to cooperate and improve their actions towards the fight against climate change.

“So the European Union has done its homework and is leading the way forward, in terms of both our domestic action and our proposals for global policy.

But the fact is that, for Copenhagen to be a success, leadership is needed from all developed countries, and most of all from the United States as the world's biggest economy. That means leadership in reducing emissions, and leadership also in scaling up financial assistance to help developing countries cope with climate change.

Europe and the United States must start working together. I am convinced that climate change and energy security will become one of the most important chapters in our transatlantic relations over the coming months. Without joint leadership, we will never get the developing world on board, as we must if we are to stand any real chance of bringing climate change under control.” (Dimas S. 2009)

The speaker reminds to everyone that the EU is leading the environmental actions of the world and domestically, in the best way it could. However, it seems that it is insufficient for a future where the Kyoto Protocol will be expired, and all the Countries of the world will have to meet and negotiate a new treaty. That's why the EU, while looking at the future Copenhagen meeting, calls on the developed Countries, and the US in particular, to follow the path of the EU and show the developing Countries that it is necessary to involve every institution and Country in a new and effective treaty. The involvement of the US in particular would be a great boost to the leadership of the EU, considering that the US was at the time, by far, the strongest and richest economy in the world. Joining forces with the US would provide a great help to the weak spots of European leadership when confronted with the US, mainly the structural leadership, where the US has an outstanding advantage.

A new treaty was necessary, in order to receive consensus from developing Countries, which might consider it too hard and complicate for them to implement a change in their own economy. The economic growth of developing Countries is clearly more fragile when considered in relation with the one of developed

Countries. The developing Countries would really like to receive a support from the developed ones and if the more advanced Countries managed to show to the less developed ones that implementing a greener economy isn't too harmful for the economy, then they could be more easily convinced to follow the plan of the EU and reinforce its leadership.

“Even if time is short, it is crucial to make swift progress on your domestic legislation by Copenhagen in order to create the necessary climate of trust. The outside world is looking to the US to lead by example. Credible leadership is only won through concrete action.” (Dimas S. 2009)

This sentence is very important in my opinion, because it shows that the EU is looking at the US as a strong ally, which however, isn't properly working to protect the environment. The strong economy of the US should make it a leader automatically, however, the fact it has looked to be not interested at all until the election of President Obama, made it an unreliable leader. The EU would like to call the US a reliable partner, in order to receive the necessary backup and support to exert a complete leadership. Actually, in the speech, the speaker says that credible leadership is obtained only through concrete actions, and this shows the main difference between the approach of the EU and the US. In my opinion, the EU is affirming that it has been the only credible environmental leader until that moment, because, the EU fulfilled the commitments of the Kyoto Protocol, whereas the US didn't ratify it. The EU has been preparing itself to create a new treaty for years, whereas the US has probably been increasing its GHG emissions to favor its economy, while the EU was relying on scientific knowledge in the first place and on protecting many aspects of the environment itself. The different types of leadership can support this theory, as the EU was using its entrepreneurial, cognitive, and exemplary leadership to improve the efforts towards the environment, whereas the US mainly relied on the structural leadership to protect the economic interests. It did so, however, in a negative way. The EU had been at least coherent in protecting the global environment up to that moment.

These are the aspects that the Commission is stressing, through the words of its member, as necessary to proceed with a new binding treaty. It is calling on other Countries to make progress on their climate policies to advance in the real protection of the environment and to obtain a new advancement. The Commission is clearly exerting leadership and pushing other actors to do more for themselves and the others. This should be considered as claiming and trying to exercise leadership. The Commission is trying to positively influence the ideas of everyone else and possibly obtain their support and cooperation to reach a new objective. This idea was already considered to be a definition of leadership in the beginning of this research to try and give an explanation to the role of the EU. The same concept explained above has also been briefly summarized at the end of the speech as reported now.

“Copenhagen is the world's opportunity to prevent climate change from reaching devastating levels. We must seize it.

The time has come for all developed countries to share leadership so that we can get developing countries on board. We cannot control climate change without them.

Europe feels the wind of change blowing through Washington and looks forward to working together with the United States and other major developed and developing economies to get the ambitious, global and comprehensive agreement that is needed in December. Across the Atlantic, Europe and America must cooperate in leadership to ensure we succeed.” (Dimas S. 2009)

This final part shows the strong need for the EU of the support and cooperation of others to manage to exert leadership. This theory can be connected to the idea that a leader needs followers to fulfill its role. It might be considered also that the EU needs the US to exert leadership. If this is the case, then it means that the EU itself seems to be not able to be a leader on its own. All the concepts explained above

have been stressed once again in the final part of the speech to ensure that the European plan goes as decided, in order to obtain the help of the US and a new treaty in Copenhagen.

There are also problems that originate from the fact that the EU is composed of many members with different targets. In particular, the member States, which would see new restrictions on their territories as a threat to their economy, were generally opposing the environmental actions of the other institutions that compose the EU. The States with the strongest economies were frightened by a reduction of their manufacturing power, and the Eastern States, which entered the EU during the 2000s, wanted to receive some more assurances on their possibilities to grow as European economies, before participating in the advancements of new environmental policies (Oberthür, Dupont, 2008, p. 46). The 2008 economic and financial crisis increased the fears related to the new climate deal, which, in the opinion of some member States, would prove too expensive. In 2008, when the crisis began and hit the financial world, many States questioned the social and economic costs of the package on GHG emission and demanded revisions and concessions to increase the share of emissions permitted to the companies. (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 935)

As an example, Poland depends on coal for more than 90 per cent of its electricity and, therefore, demanded to have the possibility to increase its cap on GHG emissions due to the high costs foreseen. In Italy, Silvio Berlusconi decided to threaten to veto the package, saying that Italian businesses weren't able to cope with the proposal of the new costs of the regulations. (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 935) For what regarding Germany, which could be seen as a traditionally strong Country that would hardly feel threatened by an imposition on economic terms, Angela Merkel also criticized some aspects of the restrictions that would have to be put on car manufacturers and called for delays in the move to full auctioning of permits

for the manufacturing and industrial sectors. (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 935) These are all examples that show how many different opinions can be found among the member States that compose the EU and the different visions that can be seen between the EU and States level.

The French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, was aware that a failure in completing the climate package before 2009 would be an incredible negative outcome for the image of the EU and its credibility in the negotiations leading to the Copenhagen meeting. This is the reason that drove Sarkozy to work extensively to keep the climate plan on track and succeeded in securing a deal acceptable to all member States and the Parliament, showing the relatively acceptable ability of the EU to work in accordance with the parts that compose it. (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 935) The final agreement preserved the headline goals of the '20-20-20' plan and went along with the proposal of the Commission of January 2008. The final package included revisions and new regulations, therefore, the Commission decided to announce that they were sending a clear signal to their international partners about their determination to address climate change and stated that everyone should follow the example set. (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 935)

The premises of the agreement were quite negative; however, the final position of the member States was positive on the deal, showing the ability of the EU to be able to cope with its problems if necessary and reach a definitive position in line with the expectations. On this occasion the member States were reluctant at the beginning, however, after the intervention of the Commission, they all managed to agree on the subject. Therefore, Barroso pointed out that in less than a year member States have agreed unanimously on the most ambitious proposals anywhere in the world and this resulted in a stronger perception of the credibility of the EU. (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 936) However, the future negotiations resulted in a weaker position of the IO on the international context. Actually, the Copenhagen Agreement showed that the situation wasn't as positive as it was expected to be, under many aspects.

After the outcome of Copenhagen, the EU does not seem to have abandoned its leadership ambitions. President Barroso decided to write a letter to the governments of member States to ask for new initiative to demonstrate that the EU was still willing to do something about the environment and doesn't mean to turn its back to the original aspirations it had announced. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, pp. 267-268)

One of the few times that the speeches were made public to widely accept the debacle at Copenhagen, Commission President Barroso observed that the agreement reached in Copenhagen was far under the expectations of the EU:

“This was a positive step but clearly below our ambition. We have to be honest when we analyse this result, there are good things and not so good things.

I will not hide my disappointment regarding the ambition in terms of the binding nature or non-binding nature of the future agreement. On this particular point, the text agreed today falls far short of our expectations.

Quite simply, our level of ambition has not been matched, especially as there was not an agreement on the need to have a legally binding agreement.”
(Barroso J. M. 2009)

This showed the fact that the EU was aware of its ambitions and the final result of the agreement. The Commissioner here shows that the leadership exerted hasn't been effective enough in keeping up with the expectations of the EU. This leads to a diminished entrepreneurial and cognitive type of leadership exerted on this occasion.

What follows is a period in which the EU doesn't effectively claim leadership, in the way it did before, for some years. The debacle in Copenhagen seemed to have shown that there were problems that needed to be fixed before trying to recall leadership. There are occasions to declare that the EU is exerting leadership,

however, it takes some years to see a recognition of its leadership as largely undisputed and widely accepted to be taken for granted.

On 16 June 2011, Barroso decided to speak at the launch of IPCC's Special Report on Renewable Energy sources and Climate change mitigation (SRREN). He praised the job of the scientists and citizens for the protection of the environment and states once again that the EU is bringing on its climate leadership with this sentence: "Europe also faces a great test to its green leadership in this decade." (Barroso J. M. 2011) The reference goes to the developing Countries that are improving their efforts on the adoption of renewable energy and the EU has to catch up with them in order to keep on providing leadership on renewable technologies. The leadership is considered to be tested on this occasion, possibly also as a result of the outcome of Copenhagen. Now the cognitive leadership is being reinforced by the reliance on the job of the scientists.

On 22 March 2012, in Brussels, Janez Potočnik, the European commissioner for the environment made a speech to celebrate the water day and reminded that the EU should be at the forefront of protecting natural resources.

"Let's set the pace and make the EU a role model that other countries can follow, from which the world can learn, let's show the benefits that "respect" for the earth's precious natural resources can bring to our environment, but also to our health, well-being and prosperity." (Potočnik J. 2012)

The speaker focuses on the need to gather followers and states that the EU could be a model for anyone. This is a sentence created for a single day and related to the need to protect the resources of water; however, it shows the commitment of the EU to not abandon its efforts for the protection of the environment in the entire world, even if leadership is not so sure to have been exerted as it was during the

late 2000s. This speech of the commissioner clearly focuses on the use of the exemplary leadership, setting the EU as a role model that others should follow.

On 12 November 2014, Miguel Arias Cañete during a speech in front of the EP refers the opportunity that the EU should take to prevent the rise of global temperature.

“it remains within our power to tackle climate change and limit global warming to less than 2°C.

We have a choice and we must have the political courage to act now, with ambition and collectively. This needs to be our common political commitment in the coming months and years, and I am confident that I will be able to also count on you to show that the European Union maintains its global leadership on climate action.” (Cañete M.A. 2014)

On this occasion the leadership of the EU seems to be taken for granted, especially in the fight against the global warming that affects the world. This speech directed to the EP from the Commission is a request to continue the job linked to the structural and entrepreneurial leadership showed up to this moment and the speech then refers to the need to focus on respecting the deadlines established mainly for the year 2030, showing a great interest in the completion of the tasks required to meet the achievement of maintaining the rise of the temperature below 2°C. This might have happened due to the upcoming negotiations in Paris that gave new possibilities to push for a new leadership.

on 9 September 2015 the European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, addressed the European Parliament with a speech on climate change.

“One example of where we Europe is already leading is in our action on climate change.

In Europe we all know that climate change is a major global challenge – and we have known for a while now.

The planet we share – its atmosphere and stable climate – cannot cope with the use mankind is making of it.

Some parts of the world have been living beyond their means, creating carbon debt and living on it. As we know from economics and crisis management, living beyond our means is not sustainable behaviour.” (Juncker J. C. 2015)

The speaker affirms that the EU is leading in the field of climate action and that it should help other Countries and governments in understanding how to cope with the challenges posed by the crisis of the environment, considering that the EU has a long experience in this field and in the management of resources and the economic aspects connected to this issue.

In a following paragraph of the speech, the President refers to the future adoption of the Paris Agreement, assuring that a binding and ambitious deal will have to be adopted by the EU and the parties to the conference. After making a list of the efforts of the EU for the entry into force of the new agreement, the speaker makes this statement: “My Commission will work to ensure Europe keeps leading in the fight against climate change. We will practice what we preach.” (Juncker J. C. 2015) The cognitive leadership based on the experience of the EU seems to be connected to its structural leadership when affirming that this organization is ready to help others in fighting climate change. Once again, we see the work of the Commission in leading and asserting leadership is stressed as a fundamental aspect to keep in mind. During the speech, the President reassures that the EU is always willing and committing to follow the path, which has been preparing for the past years, to obtain the agreement it was aiming for. These concepts were even recalled by the tweets of the speaker himself and Natasha Bertaud, coordinating

spokesperson for European Commission President, on the same day, seeing this job in a very positive way.

AFTER THE PARIS AGREEMENT

In Brussels, on 14 December 2015, the Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete delivered a speech on the Climate deal in Paris of COP21, which finally produced a valuable agreement that got signed and seemed satisfactory. The speech reports the achievements of the EU and the value of this new treaty where the parties decided to create the most important climate deal of the past decade.

“After many years of relentless efforts, we got a global climate deal in Paris.

This deal is a major win for the global community. The Paris agreement is the first-ever truly global climate deal.” (Cañete M. A. 2015)

The agreement is what the EU has been seeking for many years, a new deal that replaced the old and expired Kyoto Protocol and which was shaped also by the EU. Even if the agreement wasn't completely what the EU had hoped for, it was strongly influenced by the job it had done in the years before. It could be possible to state that the years spent trying to exert leadership have finally created an occasion for the EU to do what it had hoped to do. This theory could also reinforce the idea that obtaining leadership depends on a continuous effort that requires years to become effective. This doesn't mean that the EU only did good in the past, as in the following part of the speech will be reported.

“But before, let us step back and look at what happened at the Copenhagen conference in 2009.

Why did Copenhagen fail?

For three reasons:

First, because the world was not ready.

Second, because many countries were not willing to commit.

And third, because all those countries not willing to commit managed to sharply divide the developed and the developing worlds and create two opposite blocks.

Indeed, in Copenhagen the story was about countries against countries, developed versus developing, them and us.” (Cañete M. A. 2015)

The failure of the Copenhagen Agreement hasn't been widely recognized by the European Union until the creation of the Paris Agreement. It was necessary to talk about the situation and doing it after the COP21 was a good idea to admit that the deal of 2009 didn't work out properly. Having the possibility to rely on a new effective agreement, gave the EU a hope to minimize the troubles caused by the preceding failure. It is also worth noticing that the EU obtained a binding climate deal, just as it hoped for in 2009, however the deal wasn't like the one that the EU wanted in 2009. It hoped for a more binding and inclusive agreement. The situation was, however, different in the past, as long as now the developing and developed Countries had a different share in percentage.

“Today, developed countries account for less than 35% of total emissions – and falling. Developing countries account for 65%.

Without major developing countries emitters such as China, India, Brazil, South Africa or Indonesia, we simply cannot fix the climate.” (Cañete M. A. 2015)

The objective grasped from these words is to manage to fight climate change by convincing others to join forces to annihilate the problem. This should be seen as an act in trying to demonstrate leadership, as we can witness with the following words of the speech, where the speaker praises the EU and his predecessor for the important job, which shows these efforts.

“In the climate conference of Durban in 2011, the EU and a number of developing countries pushed jointly and got countries to agree a roadmap towards Paris.

I want to pay tribute to my predecessor Connie Hedegaard for her magnificent work and relentless efforts to bring all countries, developed and developing, around the table.” (Cañete M. A. 2015)

In the successive paragraphs of the speech, a series of actions from the institutions and the representative of the EU is presented and the extensive efforts and achievements of the EU are shown. With all these things the EU is trying to show that it did its best to obtain a new climate deal and it now managed to do so. What is not so easy to accept is that the EU is the only and main responsible for the creation of the COP21 climate deal. It surely pushed very hard to obtain a deal with its negotiating skills, however, it isn't probably the only responsible for the deal. The last part of the speech clearly shows how the EU strongly contributed to the arrival of a deal.

“But the hard work has only just begun. What has been promised must now be delivered.

Today, let me assure you once thing: we should all be proud of Europe.

Europe has gone through turbulent times over the last few years.

The economic and social crisis has tested the limits of solidarity and questioned the confidence of Europeans on their leaders.

Today, Europeans should be proud of Europe. We should all be proud of Europe.

We made a major contribution for a deal to happen in Paris.” (Cañete M. A. 2015)

It is clear now that the past crises have been a negative aspect for the EU. However, the words used here seem to bring to a positive response of the organization against those moments, and the Paris Agreement is a new positive step that carries on the will of the Commission in protecting the environment.

On 8 February 2016, Miguel Arias Cañete made a speech on EU's climate and energy policies after COP21, shortly after the official creation of the Paris Agreement.

“The Paris Agreement has been an unprecedented historic success. It is the first purely multilateral agreement on climate change, covering 195 countries and 98.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

The deal has been a great success for the EU's climate diplomacy.” (Cañete M. A. 2016a)

The first words on the agreement show the importance it has. Almost every Country and almost 100% of the GHG emissions are contained in the plan of action. With these words the entrepreneurial leadership can be seen as a basis of the agreement, as the diplomatic and negotiating abilities have been greatly employed to get to this result. The EU has finally brought the world to addressing climate change and the threats of the environment with a binding and effective agreement. This is what results from the words of this speech.

“Reaching the Paris deal has been an arduous and challenging task.

Now all signatories have to live up to their responsibilities and implement the agreed provisions.

This is why the EU is committed to maintain the international momentum in order to ensure the full and timely implementation of the Agreement.

The objective is to maintain our international leadership in climate diplomacy, increasing our efforts in sharing our own experiences on designing and implementing climate and energy policies.” (Cañete M. A. 2016a)

With these words we can see that the Commissioner is considering the implementation of the Paris Agreement as an achievement of the EU, as if it was the initial objective of the organization, after the disappointing outcome of Copenhagen. Maintaining the efforts at the level for the agreement was considered a priority to maintain the international momentum, which could be seen, in other words, as a way to maintain the international leadership claimed up to the moment of the speech and which has been partially confirmed by the arrival of the new binding agreement on the protection of the environment, and which has been for long pursued by the EU, not only on the international context, but also internally, among member States.

There are also academic pieces of work that show how the Commission responded to the challenges posed by the economic threats, since the first years of the crises. If the basis for examination is the number and frequency of press releases, and the environmental policy principles developed to go along with the economic ones, some authors expect a decoupling of talk, decisions, and actions, which would allow the European Commission to keep up the reputation it gained during the past years, while adapting to the preferences of the member States on the economic aspects. The hypocritical entrepreneurship seems to be the most probable path followed in this occasion, based on the data collected during the research of some authors. (Knill, Steinbach, Fernandez, 2020, p. 364)

The data of a research show that until 2005 the EU grew steadily in the promotion of new environmental ideas. After that year the creation of new environmental frames stagnated, but stopped at a high level, at the same level of the economic

ideas. A new growth for the environment started in 2016, after the adoption of the Paris Agreement. The same concepts apply for the different themes directly related to the environment almost in the same years. (Knill, Steinbach, Fernandez, 2020, p. 369)

Even if it could be argued that this situation leads to a weakened promotion of new policies from the 2005 onwards, it is necessary to remember that this occurred after reaching a high level of environmental protection. The worst decrease of new policies can be observed after the Copenhagen Agreement, which showed the problems of the international context regarding the environmental policies to be adopted and the internal and external authority of the EU. Actually, after the success of the meeting in 2015 the EU started again to promote new policies, as the member States of the EU seemed to be more cooperative and the rest of the world showed willingness to proceed with a stronger action against global warming and climate change, backed up by the commitments of the Paris Agreement and the need to contain global warming below a growth of 2°C.

In another speech of the Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete, delivered at the public session of the Environment Council on 4 March 2016 in Brussels, the speaker makes a strong statement in which the EU isn't just seen as a leader from the past years, it is also called to go on providing leadership in the international context. There is an implicit reference to the position of the member States, which are considered to be on the same line of the EU level when talking about the environment.

“We have already reflected on the historic achievement of Paris and the opportunity the global low carbon transition presents. But much work lies ahead. In our Communication adopted on Wednesday, we set out our initial reflections on implementing the Paris Agreement in the EU. Our message is

clear: the EU needs to continue to show global leadership.” (Cañete M. A. 2016b)

In particular, there is a reference to the job of the EU as an innovator and pusher of new ideas, from the achievements of the Paris Agreement to the challenges and opportunities of the global low carbon transition. The types of leadership used here seem to be the exemplary leadership, based on the idea related to the need to implement as soon as possible the new commitments of the agreement, and there might also a slight reference to the structural leadership connected to the ability of the EU to use its resources for the creation of a new and effective carbon transition. However, there is more to do in the future, and it is necessary, from the words of the speaker, that the EU continues to show leadership in the global context. This means that this organization is really willing to provide a stronger effort in protecting the environment and is clearly reaffirming its leadership in environmental matters.

It would be also important to underline the differences reported in the creation of the Paris Agreement, with the ones of the Copenhagen Agreement.

“The Paris Agreement was without a doubt a great success for EU climate diplomacy.

The EU spoke with a unified voice which was crucial in the lead-up to Paris and in developing the High Ambition Coalition – the alliance of countries that fought for a high level of ambition – which shaped the successful outcome.” (Cañete M. A. 2016b)

Stating that the COP21 Agreement was a major success for the EU is undoubtedly a great improvement for the EU over the Copenhagen Agreement. The difference is clearly reported in the speech, where it is stressed that the force of the EU came from the unified and single voice that wasn't obtained at the previous agreement. In particular, the creation of a coalition of Countries gave a positive outcome for the EU and reinforced its entrepreneurial leadership, differently from the

Copenhagen negotiations, where a coalition of Countries became more relevant and successful in influencing the outcome of the negotiations.

The next speech comes from the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker on 14 September 2016, delivered at the European Commission in Strasbourg, in which many topics on protection are covered, and among them we can find something about the environment.

“The last point I want to make is about responsibility. About taking responsibility for building this Europe that protects.

I call on all EU institutions and on all of our Member States to take responsibility.

We need to remember the sense of purpose of our Union.” (Juncker J. C. 2016)

This is simply the introduction to a part of the declaration in which the EU is called by the speaker, “world leader on climate action”. The Commission seems to be at the forefront of fighting the environmental problems. However, it is important to notice that the speaker talks about the EU and its member States, and it calls on them to take responsibility to protect the Europeans and the rest of the world. He does this request by asking to take responsibility as if it was expected by them to do so, just as if the EU was a leader and it was called to do its own job.

“Slow delivery on promises made is a phenomenon that more and more risks undermining the Union's credibility. Take the Paris agreement. We Europeans are the world leaders on climate action. It was Europe that brokered the first-ever legally binding, global climate deal. It was Europe that built the coalition of ambition that made agreement in Paris possible. But Europe is now struggling to show the way and be amongst the first to ratify our agreement. Only France, Austria and Hungary have ratified it so far.

I call on all Member States and on this Parliament to do your part in the next weeks, not months. We should be faster. Let's get the Paris agreement ratified now. It can be done. It is a question of political will. And it is about Europe's global influence.

The European institutions too, have to take responsibility.” (Juncker J. C. 2016)

Again, in this part we can witness the importance given to the EU in general on environmental action. There are strong claims about the leadership of the Commission on climate action, and the incredible efforts for the Paris Agreement. The Commission praised the job done up to that moment linking this part of the speech to the recognition of an entrepreneurial leadership based on the ability to create a strong coalition. However, the position of the EU seemed to be declining in 2016, as the members of the IO weren't ratifying the agreement. Therefore, they seem to have done a great work and exerted leadership to create the COP21 Agreement, however, they were struggling to keep up with the expectations of other actors after the agreement. It seemed imperative to ratify the agreement as soon as possible. What was at stake then, was the global influence and credibility of the EU and its institutions. It might have been possible that the arrival of new participants in the protection of the environment pushed the level of the efforts higher than expected for member States in particular, and that a new call for their cooperation was needed to keep up with the leadership and reputation that were asked for.

The next article has been made public in Brussels by the European Commission through a press release, on 11 December 2019. In this announcement the representatives of the European Commission presented the new “European Green Deal” necessary to improve the connection of environment and economy.

“The European Commission today presented The European Green Deal – a roadmap for making the EU's economy sustainable by turning climate and

environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas and making the transition just and inclusive for all.” (European Commission, 2019)

The introduction of the European Green Deal was a great act to try and reinforce the position of the EU on the international stage as a leader. The theoretical idea of using climate change as an opportunity was being portrayed as if it was an outstanding opportunity that should have been taken into account as a perfect example to follow.

In the same press release, some words of the President Ursula Von Der Leyen were taken to show how effective the new implementation should be.

“The European Green Deal is our new growth strategy – for a growth that gives back more than it takes away. It shows how to transform our way of living and working, of producing and consuming so that we live healthier and make our businesses innovative. We can all be involved in the transition and we can all benefit from the opportunities. We will help our economy to be a global leader by moving first and moving fast. We are determined to succeed for the sake of this planet and life on it – for Europe's natural heritage, for biodiversity, for our forests and our seas. By showing the rest of the world how to be sustainable and competitive, we can convince other countries to move with us.” (European Commission, 2019)

These words should show once again the will of the EU to lead others and be a firstcomer of environmental innovations. It is important for the institutions and the representatives of the EU that the Green Deal shows improvements in environmental and economic terms. This advantage would be used in the future to exert leadership on other Countries and institutions which would appreciate benefitting from these improvements and therefore accept to be helped and guided by the EU. This theory shows that there is a strong reliance on the use of exemplary leadership to convince other Countries to support the EU in the fight against climate

change and in protecting the environment. Using the economy as a base for the new Green Deal seems to be a great idea that could only prove beneficial to the efforts of the institutions trying to get more followers. The new Green Deal would also be connected to the ambition of becoming the first climate neutral continent by 2050. To reach this objective it would be necessary to fulfill the objectives of the 2030 emission targets first, as explained in the speech.

“The global challenges of climate change and environmental degradation require a global response.

The EU will continue to promote its environmental goals and standards in the UN's Biodiversity and Climate Conventions and reinforce its green diplomacy. The G7, G20, international conventions, and bilateral relationships will be used to persuade others to step up their efforts. The EU will also use trade policy to ensure sustainability and it will build partnerships with its neighbours in the Balkans and Africa to help them with their own transitions.” (European Commission, 2019)

Global change is recognized to be effectively a global problem that could affect everyone in the world sooner or later and with a constantly growing negative efficacy. Therefore, the EU is presenting itself as an IO, which can extensively help in combating this trouble. Using many summits and its powerful diplomacy, the EU counts on improving the general quantity and quality of actions taken by the member States and the neighboring Countries.

In the final part of the public message there is an explanation of the great achievements of the EU when compared to the 1990. It has been announced that the EU has been leading the creation of a new kind of economic system, which helps in the protection of the environment through the creation of a world based on sustainable development. Deploying a new strategy and being innovative in a field like climate change is always considered a risky option, however, managing to overcome problems and imposing a new way of working and exerting leadership,

if possible, should be seen as an amazing feature of the EU and the citizens of the EU look to be having this feeling about it. The last part of the press release shows that the EU is working hard to meet the expectations coming from European citizens, institutions, and in great part also from the scientific knowledge. Once again, the EU relies on the social and scientific pressures to call on further action, therefore, the entrepreneurial and cognitive leadership seem to be mainly used in this context.

“The European Union already has a strong track record in reducing its emissions of greenhouse gases while maintaining economic growth. Emissions in 2018 were 23% lower than in 1990 while the Union's GDP grew by 61% in the same period. But more needs to be done. The EU, given its extensive experience, is leading the way in creating a green and inclusive economy.

The Green Deal Communication sets the path for action in the months and years ahead. The Commission's future work will be guided by the public's demand for action and by undeniable scientific evidence as demonstrated most comprehensively by IPCC, IPBES, Global Resources Outlook and EEA SOER 2019 reports. Our proposals will be evidence-based and underpinned by broad consultation.

An overwhelming majority of Europeans consider that protecting the environment is important (95%). Almost 8 in 10 Europeans (77%) say that protection of the environment can boost economic growth. The results of the Eurobarometer survey concerning environmental attitudes of EU citizens confirm the wide public support for environmental legislation at EU level and EU funding for environmentally friendly activities.” (European Commission, 2019)

On 22 October 2020, the President of the European Commission, Ursula Von Der Leyen, delivered a speech in Brussels in occasion of the closing session of the EU Green Week 2020. The speaker praises the incredible job of all the people and institutions involved. She then underlines the importance of the new actions of the EU in the protection of the environment.

“Climate change and biodiversity loss are happening before our eyes. They amplify each other. The need to act has never been clearer. This is what is driving me as President of the European Commission. That is why we presented the European Green Deal, last December, after just 11 days in office.

The European Green Deal is our vision and roadmap for making Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. In March, we proposed the first ever climate law.

Then came the pandemic. Now, should we stop our course because of the pandemic? Of course not. To the contrary.

This is why we also presented our 'EU biodiversity strategy for 2030' in May. It will scale up our work on this.” (Von Der Leyen U. 2020a)

The recognition of climate change and biodiversity loss as interconnected and worsening the situation together is a first step to introducing the last efforts of the EU. Some actions were based firstly on new scientific evidence suggesting the need to improve the measures to fight for a better environment. I would also like to focus on the presence of the revolutionary European Green Deal, which is mainly used to obtain a road for the future leading to 2050, when the EU is projecting to become the first climate-neutral continent of the world. This ambition can be seen as a way to be a pioneer under this particular aspect. If this decision could bring the EU to an effective improvement of its economy and clearly of its environmental conditions, it seems fair that other Countries could be willing to emulate and catch up with the progresses of the EU. Therefore, being the first to adopt this new kind

of economic system could make the EU a leader, and it has looked to be its own intention for years. Setting the path through 2030 and 2050 is an indicator of the commitment of the EU to follow the idea, which puts the member States of the Union in front of this Green Deal to become an example for others. This theory is also partially confirmed by the last words of the speech that follow in the paragraph under here, where the speaker refers to everyone involved in the process.

“Today, we are calling on all to join our action to halt biodiversity loss.

You are numerous today, coming from all parts of Europe, public and private sectors, small villages and big cities, start-ups, SMEs and multinationals.”
(Von Der Leyen U. 2020a)

The President talks about “our action”, when referring to the EU, as if she would like to stress that the action is led by the EU and she’s suggesting that the others follow it. The leadership of the EU is taken for granted already and that these actions are crucial for the future of the planet. In the next section it is also shown that the EU looks forward to future demonstrations of its leadership.

“We are teaming up. We are providing leadership to help us agree on a new Global Biodiversity Framework in Kunming next year.

Global rules that are clear, measurable that allow us, to hold each other accountable.

Let us act, each of us, with no delay.

You can count on my commitment.” (Von Der Leyen U. 2020a)

The speaker underlines that the main institutions considered here are cooperating and that the EU is providing leadership. It is doing so, and the President of the European Commission is assuring to everyone that she will focus on planning and implementing what will be needed for this operation to have success. There is also a call to act for everyone, leaving no one behind in the end. The reference to the

entrepreneurial leadership based on the ability to create global rules seems predominant in this part of the speech.

On 16 December 2020 the President Ursula Von Der Leyen delivered a new speech at the European Council in Brussels. In this occasion the words of the President are quite singular and show another time, the reaffirmation of the EU as a leader on environmental matters.

“I started by talking about how Europe is moving forward: with reason, humanity and freedom. And nowhere is this clearer when it comes to the future of our planet. The decision by Leaders to back the Commission's proposal for our 2030 emission reduction target of at least 55% was based on science and on reason; and it was based on protecting humanity; and on ensuring freedom for future generations. And with this argument and this agreement we set ourselves a path towards climate neutrality by 2050 and we show true leadership.

And the good news is that we are far from being alone. Just last week we saw 70 world Leaders stand up at the UN Climate Ambition Summit and another 60 of Europe's biggest companies stand behind the 2030 target. And building on this momentum, I count on the support of this House to rapidly conclude negotiations on the European Climate Law. This will be the first ever law that will bind the continent to become climate neutral. But let me be clear, setting the target is the easy part in this difficult endeavour. Delivering on it must start now and it will take a major collective and systemic effort, but it is worth it.” (Von Der Leyen U. 2020b)

This part of the speech shows that the Commission is taking serious measures to prevent the worsening of the environmental conditions of the world. In particular, setting a strong climate proposal is considered by the speaker as a true act of leadership, towards the position of climate neutral continent in 2050. This position

can be perceived to conduct to the steps of a first mover, which could be seen as a pioneer. The EU is also considering the actions of other world leaders and of European businesses as a recognition of its own leadership, or at least a partnership, in which the EU is the organization that takes the first step, showing the way to the others. What's more important to notice in this part, is the reference to a European Climate Law, which will be binding on having the continent to become climate neutral in the future. This is an important feature that makes the EU one of the first organizations deciding to implement such a binding law in its system. It could show once more the advantages deriving from such an idea to the others and convince more Countries in following the path taken. Therefore, the new acts based on science, reason, and being an example for other institutions, leads to the belief that the speaker mainly uses the cognitive and exemplary leadership in this moment.

An important speech produced by a representative of the EU regarding the leadership of the EU in environmental matters is the one delivered at the Global Leaders' Summit hosted on occasion of the Earth Day. On 22 April 2021, in Brussels, the President of the European Commission stated once again that the EU will be a pusher for a greener economy of the world, in particular considering all the steps already taken by the EU and the efficacy shown by its measures to protect the environment and, at the same time, to improve the economy of the member States that compose it. It is important to remember that fighting climate change isn't simply involving the measures that will be taken in 2050, but also the path of laws and improvements set throughout the years, especially for the 2030.

“Europe wants to be the first climate-neutral continent in the world. But to save the climate, we need the world. We need all major economies to take their responsibility and to turn the transition into an opportunity for all. Let us set together a new global benchmark for climate neutrality. Let us work together on a shared commitment and joint action for reducing emissions by

2030. This puts us on a pathway to net-zero emissions by 2050. That is what our planet needs.” (Von Der Leyen U. 2021)

Ursula Von Der Leyen says that it seems necessary to upgrade the efforts of the EU and shift to an inclusion of other Countries and institutions to help preventing disastrous events in the future. The Commission isn't just trying to lead the others but also seeking to create a joint action where everybody must take responsibility and protect the environment as it should. The commitment of this institution reveals that it would like others to follow the indications that are being given to safeguard the life and biodiversity of the planet. Therefore, it is trying to assert leadership, even though it is happening in a softer and more cooperative way than before, relying on the entrepreneurial leadership even more than it did in the past.

One of the most recent speeches on the environment from a European party has been delivered at the European Parliament on 20 October 2021. Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius talked about the 2021 UNFCCC Climate Change Conference COP 26, and he reported in the conclusion of his speech that the EU is continuously working to be the leader of the protection of the environment.

“I have listened carefully to the debate today and I am encouraged by the engagement of the Members of this House. I appreciate your commitment to maintain the European Union's role as a leader in the field of international climate action.

Strong and united European Union messaging will be instrumental to continue to deliver on our leadership during COP26 in Glasgow and beyond.

After Glasgow, our work must continue both domestically and internationally. With our domestic experience, and external policy instruments and dialogues, we are in a position to help our partners to advance

their transition to a low carbon, climate resilient economy.” (Sinkevičius V. 2021)

The speaker says that what he grasped from the debate is the hope for the EU to maintain its role as a leader in environmental policies and cheers positively for this hope. He continues admitting that a strong and united Europe could possibly deliver leadership at the COP26 summit in Glasgow and also go on asserting leadership in the near future. This happened after an explanation of the commitment of the EU to providing leadership internally and externally is given, along with the offer to help any other institution or group asking for a hand in implementing the new measures if needed. This should be seen as a strong claim in reaffirming the leadership of the EU all over the world. The final paragraph of the declaration reports that experience and dialog are what makes the EU a leader, confirming that cognitive and entrepreneurial leadership are widely considered from the Commission.

This concludes the analysis of the speeches created directly by the representatives of the EU. The results mainly show that the EU, in particular from the words of the representatives of the Commission, sees itself as a global leader. This seems to be quite obvious, as the speakers always had an interest in saying that the EU has always been a leader, however, it isn't that granted at all. For example, after the Copenhagen Agreement there is a decrease in the recognition of leadership of this organization. At first sight, after analyzing the declarations it seems also that the types of leadership identified for the research are all recognized in the job of the EU. A great focus, though, is given to the entrepreneurial and cognitive leaderships that seem to be part of almost every speech analyzed. There are many occasions in which the speakers rely on the scientific knowledge and experience of the EU to provide positive points in considering the EU a leader, and the negotiating skills are highly used to express the ability of the organization in obtaining global deals where the EU might be seen as a leader. Mostly after the Copenhagen Agreement it is

possible to see that leadership is somehow denied by the Commission that states that the ambitions of the EU weren't matched by the final negotiations. In this case, there is a reconsideration of the job of the EU and its entrepreneurial leadership. Exemplary leadership is also a base for recognizing European efforts in providing leadership and this type appears in a great number of declarations. The structural leadership doesn't receive much attention instead, it is possible that the Commission sees it as a weak spot for the EU, particularly when compared to other realities, such as the US.

The leadership of the EU can also be based on the words of some more institutions that expressed their trust in the role of the EU with their requests to this IO.

At Poznan, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon challenged the EU to cope with the path posed in front of it to give the right example. The Secretary-General asked the Union to show true leadership and referred explicitly to the negotiations at the EU Council summit. (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 938) Even the UN was relying on the EU as the most important actor in this respect to bring on the fundamental decisions that would be seen as the basis of a new international system based on the protection of the environment first.

Even Pope Francis, on 25 November 2014, asked, during a speech with many themes to the European Parliament, to make the protection of the environment one of its focal points.

“Europe has always been in the vanguard of efforts to promote ecology. Our earth needs constant concern and attention. Each of us has a personal responsibility to care for creation, this precious gift which God has entrusted to us. This means, on the one hand, that nature is at our disposal, to enjoy and

use properly. Yet it also means that we are not its masters. Stewards, but not masters. We need to love and respect nature, but “instead we are often guided by the pride of dominating, possessing, manipulating, exploiting; we do not ‘preserve’ the earth, we do not respect it, we do not consider it as a freely-given gift to look after”. Respect for the environment, however, means more than not destroying it; it also means using it for good purposes. I am thinking above all of the agricultural sector, which provides sustenance and nourishment to our human family. It is intolerable that millions of people around the world are dying of hunger while tons of food are discarded each day from our tables. Respect for nature also calls for recognizing that man himself is a fundamental part of it. Along with an environmental ecology, there is also need of that human ecology which consists in respect for the person, which I have wanted to emphasize in addressing you today.” (Bergoglio F. 2014)

The Pope isn't calling the EU a leader in the protection of the environment. However, the fact that he decided to ask to the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, instead of others, to do more in preventing climate disasters and world's hunger, reflects the strong trust in these organizations to act properly. This simple example shows how people and official parties rely on the EU as a coherent player in the field of climate change and environmental protection.

CONCLUSION

After looking at the declarations of the EU and the secondary sources, it is possible to say that the EU seems to have been willing to become a leader on the international stage for the environment, however, it didn't really manage to become a leader under this aspect. The declarations often state that the role of the EU was crucial almost in every possible moment of the past 30 years, however, other actors received a great share of attention, and they were also very influent on some

occasions. Still, we should recognize the incredible effort in fostering the importance of environmental matters. I would like to stress in particular, that it influenced some of the decisions taken at the international level, in Kyoto, in various international fora and it highlighted the importance of the scientific knowledge of the matter. It did so because it clearly understood the dangerous consequences of a failure in limiting the GHG emissions, and therefore, it tried to pursue a leading role, trying to be followed by other actors. What is possible to understand from the analysis and the scientific research of the other researchers on this matter is that when there was a speech, some aspects were pressuring the ability of the EU to gather followers. In the first place, the skill connected to the need of the EU to speak with one voice at the international level. When it managed to do so, there was a far greater consensus among other Countries and institutions in following the ideas of the EU. Also, the fact that it is composed by so many members gives an idea of what means to be able to convince its own members to cooperate for the environment under specific areas like climate change and the GHG emissions reduction, and consequently make others agree on following the lead of the EU. Another important aspect has surely been the ability to cope with the achievements declared. When the EU managed to complete the aims it called for, it has been widely praised and a possible line of followers came up to reinforce European leadership. Moreover, the organ of the EU that can be seen as mostly interested in keeping up with the expectations related to European leadership seems to be the European Commission, which provided most of the declarations analyzed in which the reference to leadership is concerned. It is also possible to see that the EP and member States are the audience to which the Commission mostly addresses its speeches based on the different types of leadership.

CHAPTER 3

THE EU IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the speeches has proven to be useful to understand how the EU portrays its image on the international context when referring to the job done to protect the environment and, if possible, to become a leader. Even if the speeches are generally positive on the role of the EU, there is a great number of research that can show the weaknesses of this organization. However, if we consider that there are other possible candidates for the role of leader, it would be necessary to understand their position and opinion on the matter. Therefore, the chapter will present, in the next section, a short summary of the research of other authors on the job of the EU and of its institutions in relation with the events that characterized the timeline of the research, in order to understand whether there has been leadership or not. The following section will show a brief analysis of the actions taken by the actors that can be considered as plausible rivals of the EU on the theme of environmental leadership, in response to the previous section. In this case the sections will be related to the US and China. This analysis can help to understand the reasons why the EU can be seen as a leader over the efforts of the other two actors. A conclusion at the end will sum up the key points of this chapter.

EUROPEAN EFFORTS FOR LEADERSHIP

When defining the role of the EU it is important to remember that it started considering the protection of the environment a crucial issue during the 1980-90s.

the Dublin Declaration signed the oldest real intention of the EU to become a leader considered for this research. (Qi, 2011, p. 301)

Some of the main elements that began characterizing the environmental actions of the EU came from the experiences of its member States, which created the basis of some ministries and committees specialized in this field. (Weale, 1999, pp. 38-39) What is interesting to notice is that in most research of the late 1990s there is no particular reference to a possible leadership of the EU in environmental policies over the world. The discussion relates instead to the advancement of the EU as a more concise actor in this respect and the future years somehow showed the ability of the EU to convince all its members to act coherently with a single line to follow, opening the possibility to discuss about leadership.

The recognition of the necessity to pursue a leadership role is explained with the following words, which state that the EU could emerge as a pivotal player in global environmental policy making, due to the refusal of the US to provide leadership in the early 2000s. (Falkner, 2007, p. 507) This situation created the perfect occasion for the EU to begin its path in becoming a leader, with the possibility to set new regulations that could affect the environmental standards for the entire world.

There is a gradual greening strategy for the EU during the 1990s and 2000s, where new acts have been actively pursued, and the leadership role of the EU is constantly announced by the representatives of its own institutions through a growing number of speeches and acts, both inside the European territory and on the international stage. (Falkner, 2007, p. 511) The announcements can be based on the fact that a topic like sustainable development is related to a norm that appears on more than one article in the Treaty of the European Union and its nature seems to make it act in a normative way, which means that it acts through ideas and values, projecting a green identity to the outside. (Falkner, 2007, p. 511) There are some aspects, though, to keep in mind when talking about the leadership of the EU, in particular, the fact that the international standards that were being set, came from the EU itself

and an example is the precautionary principle established on the GMOs. This principle was based on a scientific precaution to protect health and became recognized by many institutions as a crucial topic to discuss about.

Scientific articles begin referring explicitly to the EU as a possible leader from the 2000s because after years of efforts a first improvement of its necessity as a leader could be acknowledged after the Kyoto Protocol. Actually, this IO has been prevalently impressive after the refusal of the Kyoto Protocol from the US and managed to influence the outcome of the negotiations with its leadership based on soft power, diplomacy, acting as an example, persuasion, and argumentation, all of which went along pretty well the idea of the EU as a civilian power. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2008, pp. 36-37) These aspects are also linkable to the entrepreneurial, cognitive, and exemplary leaderships examined before and connect positively with the findings of the previous chapter. Climate change is a sector of particular interest for the EU, and it can claim an international leadership in this field due to its job with the Kyoto Protocol, and the reduction of GHG emissions by 2020. The analysis provided in the previous chapter shows that the concepts used in this paragraph to explain the qualities of the EU are also reflected by the types of leadership that emerged with the speeches of the representatives.

When the US left the negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol, it was mainly the EU that acted to make it survive and it managed to do it. Thus, EU Environment Commissioner, Margot Wallström, claimed at the time that, in her opinion, the international environmental relationship between the EU and the US had changed. (Vogler, 2006, p. 3)

Saving the Kyoto Protocol has given to the climate policy a far greater importance because the absence of the US determines the loss of a heavy weight, which might mean that many States could have decided to follow the steps of the strong and valuable Country leaving the Protocol. The success or failure would have quite importantly affected the international image of the Union. (Vogler, 2006, p. 5) This

is exactly what happened before the adoption of the Copenhagen Agreement, many States declared that they weren't willing to accept a deal too ambitious because in their opinion the EU hadn't done enough. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 267)

During the 2000s, the obstructionism and disengagement of the US during a large number of bargains gave the EU the opportunity to exert leadership, where no other actor could try and show leadership on the aspect of the environmental protection. Actually, the position of the EU gained more importance in the long term, whereas the US became more and more isolated. (Vogler, 2006, p. 9):

There is a confirmation of the idea that the institutional level of the EU spread a common mentality over the participants to the internal negotiations for the environment. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2008, p. 39) Another positive aspect is the key to closing the credibility gap between international promises and domestic implementation, which was injuring the possible leadership of the EU in the early 2000s. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2008, p. 39) There are examples related to the importance of the EU in spreading a new mentality, for example the precautionary principle on GMOs, which was based on a scientific ideology that came from the negotiations in which the EU was one of the main players.

Until 2006 many measures were taken to improve the action of the EU towards the targets of GHG reductions, however, it wasn't enough to save the planet from future disasters. Therefore, from 2007 a stronger wave of measures came to aid in the fight against negative climate developments and this gave further credibility to the EU as a leader for the entire world. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2008, p. 48) This credibility is reinforced also by the climate policy as a means for European integration, by the need of different future energy supplies, and by the international position obtained through the efforts of the EU. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2008, p. 43) However, the possible followers didn't seem to be impressed enough by the job of the EU since the outcome of the negotiations following this period, the Copenhagen negotiations in particular, reflected a more negative situation than expected, in terms of

leadership. (Kilian, Elgström, 2010, p. 267) Still, this period posed a base for the future positive efforts of this organization.

Fighting climate change went on along with many crises, in particular the 2008 one. It has caused many radical changes to the economic strategies of many States. It clearly caused also a change in the environmental policies. (Burns, Tobin, 2016, p. 1485) To understand how the EU responded to this problem, after analyzing the concepts and declarations seen before, it would be necessary to check the actions of this organization and other institutions in response to the crises. There would be an important positive signal if the EU managed to cope with the crises and maintain its promises on the environment.

The financial crisis affected the environmental policy in an extremely negative way as long as the Commission portrayed the EU as a leader for the previous years. This situation led to being almost forced to diminish the activities on this theme, which means lowering its prestige and admitting that environmental policies can't go along with economic policies. (Burns, Tobin, 2016, p. 1486) This should be a signal that shows why the Commission never truly relied on the structural leadership with the speeches analyzed. The economic resources of the EU weren't sufficient to contrast the crisis and carry on the environmental policies. Therefore, the decision to focus on other types of leadership might seem like a smart decision. In addition, most environmental policies require a long term for their full implementation, and the arrival of the crisis broke down and reduced the efficacy of many policies in progress (Burns, Tobin, 2016, p. 1486), which couldn't obviously give their outcomes and show their usefulness in the original way they were created to operate. However, many policies were carried on, even if it meant doing so with a diminished efficacy. This shows the willingness of the EU to keep up with the reputation developed and go on protecting the environment with the possibilities and the resources it could use.

However, meeting the achievement of GHG emission reduction required seemed to be imperative for the EU, as long as the potential followers have to be convinced to follow the lead of this organization, which definitely needs to prove its skills under this aspect. An eventual failure to meet its own goals would certainly have a negative effect on its possibility to exert directional leadership. On the theme, Brazil's environmental minister, Carlos Minc, said that it wouldn't be possible for developing Countries to accept a request to limit the GHG emissions if the actors making the request can't do it themselves. (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 937) Therefore, the ability to meet its own goals can only be considered as a key point for the EU when trying to find support and followers to the leadership it would like to assert globally. It is important to consider also the way in which the EU reaches the emission reductions obligation. An exaggerated use of the instruments to provide flexibility given to the Union like the "bubble", which gives it the opportunity to redistribute the emissions under an 8% scheme of total reduction in the EU, could give the other actors the right to question the credibility of the EU in fulfilling its tasks and also in demanding that the other institutions or Countries followed in implementing new policies that could threaten their economy. (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 937)

After reaching the final internal agreement in Europe at the end of 2008, the various external institutions that had the possibility to follow with a direct and strong involvement the process leading to the final deal, gave their opinion on the work of the EU. NGOs generally criticized the package as a weakened set of actions that could have been far more incisive and announced the abdication of the EU from its leadership role. (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 938) The Chinese negotiator Su Wei was pleased by the deal, even if something more could have been done, in his opinion. The developing Countries in general weren't impressed with the final deal and argued that more could have been done to respect the original plan announced by the EU. The emissary of the US presidency of Barak Obama, Senator John Kerry, was probably the most satisfied negotiator, who praised the job of the

European Countries in finding an agreement that showed leadership. (Parker, Karlsson, 2010, p. 938) The leadership here is being recognized by important actors like the US and China. In this case it is possible to create a link to the exemplary leadership, which shows that the EU managed to overcome the difficulties encountered and provide an example for other players. That could serve as a basis for other Countries to see how different economies and cultures could cooperate to reach a comprehensive decision to help everyone in the important task of reducing GHG emissions, through more instruments if needed.

When the crisis hit in the late 2000s, the Barroso Commission aimed at making sustainable development the key point of the recovery plan to save the EU. It should be noted that the main response to the economic crisis has been austerity, in order to protect the economies of the Countries hit. (Burns, Tobin, 2016, p. 1489) The diminution of resources towards the existing environmental policies seems to have been redirected to the research of alternative solutions to implementing a system based on sustainable development, instead of simply relying on the need to cut the budget financing the environmental aspects, which however, led to a weaker credibility on the international stage regarding the implementation of new policies and a weaker lead obtained during the negotiations.

After the unsuccessful Copenhagen meeting, the EU managed to come back to a leading position with the UN climate conference in Durban, in 2011. (Rayner, Jordan, 2013, p. 76) This position is also reflected in other research, which claim that the EU could influence more positively the Cancun negotiations, because the aims of the EU were lower than the ones in Copenhagen. The original goals of the EU there were far more ambitious than the ones of other negotiating parties, which could impose their mind in a better way. It is important to stress that in Copenhagen many players had their requests, and some important actors were bargaining, like the US and the BASIC Countries (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China). (Groen, Niemann, Oberthür, 2012, p. 178) These players had a great influence over the negotiations and led to a gradual marginalization of the EU, showing that its

entrepreneurial and cognitive leadership weren't effective during this period. Exemplary leadership can't be considered effective as well, because the international players part of the negotiations didn't seem to be looking positively at the steps previously made by the EU, and the reduction of resources for the environment due to the financial crisis only worsened the position of the EU. During the Copenhagen negotiations the EU couldn't use any of the leadership types considered for this research.

The situation in Cancun had quite changed, 1 year after the COP15 negotiations. The EU adopted a more realistic approach and aimed for decisions to implement some elements of Copenhagen. The short-term ambition was lowered in Cancun, and this change was much more appreciated by the other actors, external to the EU, that were part of this negotiating process. In addition, the internal position of the member States became more coherent and unified. Therefore, the goals of the EU were mainly reached at this meeting. One of the main actions in this occasion was the creation of a bridge among the major blocs, and the possibility to shift the general idea towards its own objectives. (Groen, Niemann, Oberthür, 2012, p. 185) What might seem to be the greatest change from the previous meeting is the adaptation of the EU to the context that had been created by the recent events of the world that negatively affected the economies and subsequently the environmental policies. Short and long-term ambitions became more acceptable to all parties and the EU came up with a more unified coalition made of its own members that reflected the quite controversial ability to speak with one voice. Once more, the entrepreneurial leadership characterized the bargaining of the EU positively, opposing the poor performance of the previous year.

In 2016, the EU was the only actor that decided to set international agendas on the emission caused by aviation and that adopted multiple approaches on this issue. Aviation's emissions have grown a lot in the past years, this growth brought an incredible raise in consumption of fuel and, therefore, of emissions. The research on new fuels and a reduction of the emissions led to the introduction, since late

2000s of mechanisms to prevent a new growth of emission for the aviation system. The rest of the world seemed to be unfavorable to the measures of the EU, which were considered to be a system to regulate the international aviation. (Kaleda, 2016, pp. 56-57) The EU, however, meant to show with this first step and the domestic implementation that it was possible to create a new and sustainable aviation, without diminishing the growth of this sector. The past years showed that the EU has also been an organization that considers new options for the protection of the environment in addition to the ones already tackled.

After the main crises that hit the planet and the environmental policies towards its protection, there have been great changes in the recognition of the need of an action that increases the efforts to safeguard the planet. Many actors decided to step in and try to raise the consciousness related to this theme. Not only international institutions worked in this direction, but also people had their own weight in this period. As an example, Greta Thunberg, a young girl, became very famous with her strikes to protect the environment, she inspired many movements directed to the safeguard of the environment, moved many other people to act more consciously on this theme, and her words, with which she truly asks to the main players of the international stage to act and prevent the disastrous consequences of climate change, were mainly directed to the UN Climate Change COP25 and to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. During the last years of the most recent period the EU has tried to improve the efforts directed to the environment and possibly managed to show some sign of leadership, at least this is what seems to have happened with the New Green Deal and the positive feedbacks from the last international meetings.

During the past years, the EU generally managed to keep control of the pace of the internal national environmental policy even if the possibility of joint-decision traps was still quite high. The environmental policy of the EU resulted to be extremely dynamic and productive in the past and until recently, despite the rigidity of some of the institutions. (Deters, 2019, pp. 316-317)

It is important to notice that after the economic crisis, the environmental policy has seen an improvement of the implementation, related to a lower infringement of the minimum requirement set to meet the standards at the member State level. (Melidis, Russel, 2020, p. 206) Therefore, it seems that the crisis didn't have a tremendous negative impact in this respect. If some policies have been cancelled or reduced, some have been carried on with the resources that were available, and the diminished infringements are an effective way to see the efforts of this actor.

One of the most recent research states that the EU has been exerting leadership for the past 30 years, in a context, which can be seen as highly evolving. In a short period of time many new challenges can be found during the path to protect the global environment, even some related to secondary aspects. Most of the new challenges come from the scientific findings, and the EU generally managed to follow consistently the new ideas by pursuing ambitious policy targets, even if it didn't manage to obtain the full achievements hoped. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2021, p. 1101) This concept can be connected to the cognitive leadership, because the EU always seemed to be greatly relying on scientific principles and this type of leadership generally seems to be one of the focal points of European action.

It is interesting that the fact that the targets of the Kyoto Protocol, which was strongly supported by the EU, were reached by all Countries with the only exception of Canada. In addition, the EU could generally reach the 20% emission reduction target. This shows the ability to reach the objectives declared. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2021, p. 1102) This aspect shows that even if there isn't a defined role for the EU on the international stage, most parties of the Kyoto Protocol followed the line posed by the treaty. Therefore, the EU managed to influence the behavior of the majority of the actors joining the project, showing more entrepreneurial leadership.

For the protection of the environment in the future, the EU launched the European Green Deal in 2019 to increase the efforts regarding the 2030 and 2050 timeline

limits. The new program also needs to go along with the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Some climate policies, especially on the internal side of the EU, have become a source of inspiration for many other Countries and this helped in enhancing the international credibility of the EU. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2021, p. 1105) This goes along with the idea of the exemplary leadership, showing that the EU can be an example of environmental protection and advancement.

The ability to adapt to the external conditions of the EU has also increased its leadership role and the alliances with other institutions and Countries, in Africa and the rest of the world, with developing and less developed Countries. (Oberthür, Dupont, 2021, p. 1107) All of this is placing the first steps of an important future for this organization, which is bound to have a crucial role in the years coming in front of us, to safeguard the planet. A strong alliance and a serious cooperation might be what is needed to obtain a future protected by destruction of the environment and depletion of natural resources.

Before concluding this part of the chapter, it would be interesting to look at some of the most objective and direct data about the possible leadership of the EU come from research of 2011. The study conducted by focusing on the perception of environmental leadership from many actors after the Kyoto era shows that there are interesting opinions on the role of the EU. The question on this particular aspect was asked during important conferences, to experts in this sector. (Karlsson, Parker, Hjerpe, Linnér, 2011, p. 91) The findings of the research give an objective and a great boost to the definition of the possible leadership of the EU.

As an example, in December 2008, the research conducted during the COP14 showed that the EU was the actor most commonly recognized as a leader, by at least 50% of respondents. The only rivalry could come from China, which received the second majority of votes, however, there is a great distance from the number of the EU. The data show that the EU can't be announced to be the only and absolute climate leader, however, it managed with its actions and declarations to be more

convincing than any other actor at the time. (Karlsson, Parker, Hjerpe, Linnér, 2011, p. 96) This figure is related to the period coming right after the financial crisis that weakened almost every Country of the world. This is a proof of the good job of the EU after the dismissal of some policies relating to the environment due to the crisis. If many experts of this sector recognized the level of effort put by the EU, this should be a positive signal for the recognition of its role.

It is also interesting to stress that geographical belonging matters when analyzing the answers of the respondents. In general, to exercise leadership an actor needs to be acknowledged as an effective leader from all over the world. The recognition of the role of the EU varies depending on the belonging of the respondents. Three quarters of the Europeans saw their own institutions as leaders, whereas the other external respondents all shared a lower confidence in the EU. The same pattern goes for the others. The differences become even clearer under a regional perspective, which shows the reliance on different actors and their influence over a certain territory. (Karlsson, Parker, Hjerpe, Linnér, 2011, p. 97)

The answers based on the role of the respondents in the environmental negotiations show that the EU is considered to be by almost every expert, a leader in every climate policy field. The only official role that doesn't perceive the EU as a real single leader is the negotiators, which relied on China slightly more. (Karlsson, Parker, Hjerpe, Linnér, 2011, p. 99)

There are also differences in the perception of leadership based on specific issues of the environment and climate change. In some cases, the leadership is shared among more members and in general there is no single leader for the majority of issues. The data shows quite clearly that there is no single leadership, and in many aspects, it is generally shared or not recognized at all. (Karlsson, Parker, Hjerpe, Linnér, 2011, pp. 101-102)

A successive research based on the COP 14-15-16 tries to continue in improving the efficacy of the findings of the preceding survey while analyzing the

environmental leadership at the time. (Karlsson, Parker, Hjerpe, Linnér, 2012, p. 46) The findings are very similar to the preceding ones and help reinforcing the concepts already taken into account. The research seems to be completely objective and shows the figure obtained in the most rational way. The findings confirm that the EU is considered to be a possible leader and give it credit as a major player of the negotiation process.

This section is helpful to understand what role is given to the EU by the scientific community and to reinforce the findings of the second chapter of the thesis. The authors analyzed generally confirm that the environmental leadership of the EU is based on the types of leadership previously identified, with a particular focus on entrepreneurial and cognitive leaderships being the most recognized. Moreover, the negative period related to the end of the 2000s is confirmed as well by this analysis.

EU'S RIVALS FOR LEADERSHIP

In the period considered for the research, there are many groups and Countries that have been taken into account as possible leaders instead of the EU by the researchers. Among them, the only rivals that have received a high level of attention from the scientific community are considered to be the US and China. Data, research, and opinions give a considerable weight to these players, which have proven to be crucial for the negotiations on the matter. However, their actions can't give them a leadership status more than it could be given to the EU. Instead, they have appeared to be trying to undermine the work of the EU, with the US showing very different opinions about how to protect the environment on some occasions. For example, the US was at the Kyoto negotiations but didn't accept to ratify the final version of the protocol. There are some reasons for this change of mind that will be examined in the chapter. China was improving the efforts to protect the

environment in the period taken into account, with a different approach confronted with the ones of the other Countries. The rivals of the EU have undoubtedly been important in shaping the policies of the past years; however, their inconsistent behavior can't make them proper leaders.

The analysis of the action of the actors, which could be rival to the EU might give a better understanding of the dynamics involved in the past years and help us understand if there have been moments in which any of them did show a greater interest in exerting leadership on the theme of environmental protection. The kind of leadership that could come from the research in this chapter can be confronted with the efforts of the EU and show if the situation leads to the possibility of giving an important role to the actors, both in a positive and in a negative way. There are high expectations of a great international weight related to the economic power of the two players considered for this part of the chapter, however, the actions and interests put into the policies and plans carried out to improve the quality of life and protect the environment should lead to a higher consideration for the possible follower and determine whether to become influenced by the major players or not. This would link their leadership mostly to the structural type and this is a first difference with the EU.

The first thing to notice is that the EU had two major rivals in the years following the Kyoto Protocol and the Copenhagen Agreement, the US and China. The US saw different approaches to the environment, mostly based on the President of the US in charge and the relation between him and the American Senate. There have been many moments in which the ideas of one of these two actors of the American scene collided and prevented the adoption of further actions directed to the safeguard of the environment, domestically and internationally. China began adjusting its climate policy in a way similar to the other Countries and institutions in the 2000s and it managed, at the end of the 2010s, to make a great improvement in its own environmental policy.

THE US

The actor I would like to briefly analyze first is the US, probably the main possible rival of the EU. The US is an actor that played a major role during the 1970-1980s in environmental matters. The situation changed with the late 1990s and the Kyoto Protocol. This depended on the public opinion and the willingness of the American institutions that all together highly cared for the environment or for the economy and security.

At the end of the 1970s the President of the US was Jimmy Carter. He was the first one who raised the concern about climate change and global warming in America with one of the first studies of the global environment. The research showed the connection of the human activities and the rise of GHG emissions and, therefore, the rise of temperature of the world. (Daynes, Sussman, 2010, pp. 2-3) This first aspect gives an important idea of cognitive leadership being used by the US, with a serious reliance on scientific evidence.

The following President, Ronald Reagan, didn't show any particular interest in this aspect and no principal action was taken under his mandate. The next main step was taken by George H. W. Bush in 1990, when his Clean Air Act Amendments became a new instrument of the American policy to protect the environment. When Bill Clinton got elected in 1992, he tried to address global warming and climate change, however, the Senate and the representatives of the fossil fuel industry gave little or no support for his efforts. (Daynes, Sussman, 2010, pp. 3-4)

This can be considered as one of the greatest moments for this Country, when the predominance of the US as a protector of the environment was at one of its highest peaks, and a new system could have come to life. However, the following years see a decline in the efforts of the US to protect the environment and a progressive isolation.

Short before the negotiations that led to the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol, in 1997, the US Senate decided to prevent the adoption of any international agreement that could undermine its stability of jobs, in particular against the advancement of China, stating that the US wasn't willing to sign any new protocol that created exaggerated differences in the limitations of GHG emissions between developed and developing Countries. (Roberts, 2011, p. 781)

The ideas of the American Senate show a great fear for the US related to the economic advancement of China and a low interest directed to the negative effects of pollution and climate change produced mainly by the developed Countries. This is a completely different approach from the one seen during the 1970s, when the scientific research was a priority. In this case the cognitive leadership is completely abandoned in favor of a protection of the economic interests, possibly turning the main type of leadership used into the structural one.

What happened to change the situation and bring the US to leave the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol is the different opinion of the Senate of the US and the rest of the world. President Clinton tried to support the new treaty in Kyoto as well, however, the Senate of the USA wasn't willing to accept an agreement, which was binding in a greater reduction of GHG for developed Countries (including the US) and wasn't as effective in the reduction for developing Countries. What follows is the progressive abandoning of the US of most international and domestic commitment to the protection of the environment. After the election of George W. Bush to the position of President of the US, one of the first and most impactful decisions was leaving the Kyoto Protocol, arguing that such an agreement would be negative for the economy and jobs of the American State and citizens. The outcome of the consequent decisions of the presidency was the effective isolation of the US in the international context of the environmental protection against climate change and global warming. (Daynes, Sussman, 2010, p. 4)

What's important to notice is that from 2000 to 2008, it is hard to state that there has been a possibility to exert any kind of leadership at all for the US. There was a complete refusal of any basic agreement on the international context, no strong measure pursued domestically, and no intention to lead other Countries or institutions by giving an example or by helping with the imponent economic resources of the USA. The only idea of leadership given during this timeline is to persuade the developing Countries to accept the same reductions imposed to the developed ones, which at the time were polluting far more and such a condition was generally considered unfair. It is possible to say that what's worse, many institutions of the US didn't want to recognize the danger posed by ignoring climate change and the GHG emission, considering the mere economic aspect to be more important. During this period no leadership can be recognized to the US.

This situation lasted for 8 years, when the new President, Barak Obama, got elected. He tried to promote a new policy domestically. Internationally, Obama decided to attend the meetings leading to Copenhagen, however, little positive results were obtained in the end, due to the developing vs developed divide. (Daynes, Sussman, 2010, pp. 4-5) The arrival of the newly elected President Barak Obama after the 2008 elections in the USA gave a new hope for the American environmentalist supporters. The new President was strongly in favor of a pro-environmental policy and of an international action to prevent the accidents, which were leading to the worsening conditions of the environment all over the world. He seems to be the American actor of the past years that cared more than any other for the environment, therefore, his experience has to receive a higher level of attention.

The environmental policy of Barak Obama was aimed at convincing the constituency and the Senate in beginning to operate. It was necessary for him to put the situation of the environment in a way that could lead others to accept his ideas. This is what he had mainly done when delivering speeches on the environment in the first 17 months of his presidency, he tried to link the importance of the environment with other themes. The outcome wasn't unluckily the one expected by

the President. The “secondary themes” such as economy, jobs, and security became more important than the environment itself, which was considered by the citizens of the US less important in the end. Even in the period right after the election, in 2008, a poll discovered that less than 1% of respondents answered that environment and global warming were the most important problems that the new President and the Congress should have dealt with the following year. (Bricker, 2012, p. 159) This situation shows that there was a high expectancy for the institutions to focus on economic matters and a different approach would have been a negative move in political terms. The citizens of the US were demanding to concentrate on different aspects and the President in particular couldn’t decide on his own to operate differently. This situation led to a difficult path for President Obama that seemed to be willing to show true leadership, possibly under every aspect of the types considered.

President Obama really wanted climate policy to become predominant in his mandate, however, the topic wasn’t a great concern for too many Americans at that moment. What’s more, the introduction of measures to reduce the GHG emissions was widely seen as a threat to economy of the US. The link created with the economy and security didn’t work effectively. Backgrounding the environmental aspect only foreshadowed its importance. (Bricker, 2012, p. 160) When he announced in 2009 that he wanted to stimulate growth and compete in the global economy, there were many who began considering the environmental implications of a new policy as secondary objectives, whereas the economy and jobs that would be created obtained a major role in situations like these. One of the clearest examples comes from the development of new technologies related to clean energy. The motivations to support this field were generally related to prosperity in economic terms and job growth, which are mainly benefits unassociated with any environmental impact. Still, the connection of the themes just mentioned was seen as necessary to convince the American constituency of the importance of an effort in improving the technologies to produce energy. (Bricker, 2012, p. 163) The

problem with this particular tactic has been the fact that most Americans decided to stick with the economic and pragmatic side of the new policies, leaving the mere environmental part aside. This situation created another incredible block for the President that wished to do more for the environment.

The main problem for the new President was the opposition of the Senate to his pro-environmental policies. One of the first examples can be seen at the Copenhagen Climate Conference of 2009, where Obama announced that he was willing to obtain an ambitious outcome regarding the new reduction of emissions. However, he realized quite soon that his statement and almost any other possible request and international treaty would have received little support from the Senate of the Congress of the US, and therefore, he couldn't exert leadership. (Daynes, Sussman, 2010, p. 9)

At the international level this led to little intervention from the US in the early 2010s, while domestically the President had a really hard time in creating any new regulation on GHG reduction and global warming. He mainly had to accept the decisions of the Congress and could only operate in a limited number of occasions. (Daynes, Sussman, 2010, p. 12) This aspect reflects the same situation experienced by the President when trying to deal with its constituency. The citizens of the US focused on the economic matters and security, almost preventing the direct adoption of policies directed to the safeguard of the environment. The Senate here fulfills the same role and acts like the citizens, limiting the ideas of Obama in this case.

Along with economic justifications, national security benefits were exploited as a means to induce the people and institutions of the USA to accept new actions in favor of the prevention of climate change and global warming. The main linkage created for this issue is the oil dependence, oil that was generally coming from hostile regimes. A transition to a greener economy would be seen as a way to weaken the regimes that were threatening the US in the early 2010s. this was the main reason argued by the President to improve the efforts on the environmental

conditions of the US. (Bricker, 2012, pp. 164-165) This seemed to be another way to foreshadow the environmental aspects, in favor of a fight against the regimes considered enemies of the US. The idea of linking climate change with other issues resulted in a weaker perception of the environmental threats. The EU, on the other hand, managed to keep the environment at a higher level during the negotiations, speeches, and actions. Even though some of these aspects have been criticized, the EU carried out many positive actions during the years considered here and showed a little more coherence with the actors that compose it internally.

It is important to stress, however, that it isn't only a matter of how the President, or the Senate addressed the environmental policies, the different way in which the American citizens were addressed depended also on their behavior and response. When Obama used the terms related to climate change, he obtained a barely enthusiastic response in America. He never used the phrase "global warming" in the same situations. Economic and national security concerns were instead seen as a major problem to be tackled and gained much more attention. (Bricker, 2012, p. 166)

It is very interesting to see that global climate change was one of the main diplomatic concerns for the Bush administration, during the first 2 years of his mandate. However, his behavior created a strong division between the other States that cooperated to protect the environment, and the US, which decided instead to work alone and consider on its own what were the most fit steps to take. The absence of the US is clearly reported in more research where it is clear that the US weighted so much. When it refused to cooperate and provide leadership, it weakened the efforts of all the players that tried to improve the situation of the environment with negotiations and actions. On the other side, if the US works in favor of a stronger environmental protection, it can help to address the global problems linked to the same theme and develop a stronger joint action for everyone. (Daynes, Sussman, 2010, p. 19) This is a distinction that became clearer with the election of one President or another and the relationship among the President

himself, the Senate, and the citizens of the US. These concepts can clearly be considered in light of the types of leadership. The structural leadership remains undisputed, the economic and environmental weight of such a Country makes it crucial in any case. However, it is with the adoption of a positive and active attitude towards the negotiations that it is possible to see the potential of the US as an environmental leader that could rely on all the types of leadership.

Unluckily, the President Barak Obama couldn't deliver his promises of the electoral campaign on climate change mainly due to the opposition of the Senate and the fossil fuel industries in the first 2 years of his mandate. Only some businesses and institutions decided on their own to support the ideas of the President and managed to come up with new environmental-friendly activities. One of the most important examples is California, which began working on the protection of the environment through subnational channels. (Daynes, Sussman, 2010, p. 25)

Another fundamental aspect to consider is the public opinion, which does have a strong influence on the decisions taken at the political level. In the US for example public opinion polls conducted in 2009-2010 showed a sharp decrease in interest in global warming in the US. In 2001 Only 1 out of 5 knew that Bush had rejected the Kyoto Protocol, however almost 1 out of 2 disagreed with this decision after knowing about it. There was a general little knowledge at that time for the dangers of global warming. However, in 2010 the situation was almost the same, where for example 48% of respondents answered that the effects of global warming had been exaggerated when asked on the matter. To make things worse, in 2009 57% of US citizens were against a plan to contribute financially to assist developing Countries in the reduction of their GHG emissions. (Daynes, Sussman, 2010, pp. 29-30) This is clearly the majority of respondents and should show how the US weren't willing to care for the environmental matters under many aspects and for many parts of the constituency.

The negative situation for the US began changing with one of the turning points of the negotiations on the environment, around 2015. With regards to the Paris Agreement, President Barak Obama declared that it was a turning point for the world and that it was mainly the US, who managed to strike the deal by using its leadership in environmental matters, during his mandates as president. Some days later he added that the leadership of the US was fundamental in obtaining the deal and a similar deal wouldn't have happened without the US. Even if these words sound as a negation of the role of the EU in the negotiations and the preceding years, the real purpose of the announcement was to give a new energy to the global climate negotiations and convince other Countries to join the steps taken to improve the efforts globally in the protection of the environment. (Parker, Karlsson, 2018, p. 520) This concept somehow praises the efforts of the EU in maintaining the attention on this topic high for the past years and shows that the job of the US provided a certain level of leadership, particularly the entrepreneurial one, after years of efforts of the President.

The situation changed once again with the election of the new President in 2016, Donald Trump. He decided to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, and he is a great negator of the effects of climate change. (Parker, Karlsson, 2018, p. 536) This resulted in another strong stop for the leadership of the US on the international stage.

The current President of the US is Joe Biden and seems to be favorable to a positive new intervention of the US for the environment. He participated in the last international meeting on climate change in Glasgow and also contributed to improve the efforts to protect the environment.

The US shows a great ability in negotiating and using all types of leadership when it is willing to do so. However, the inconsistency of the behavior, based on positive attitudes towards negotiations like the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement and

the subsequent refusal of both, is a tremendous negative aspect that negatively influences its recognition as a leader.

CHINA

China is one of the actors that is recently gaining more and more importance in the international context. It also became an economic rival of the USA, which were considered the strongest economy of the world by far just a pair of decades ago. China's development has been different from the one of many other major players because of its more authoritarian approach, quite different by the largely democratic behavior of Western developed States. This authoritarian behavior is reflected in most policies of the authorities, which include environmental policies.

The first true recognition of environmental problems of China came from the decollectivization and privatization era, which, after 1978, drove the Country to a period of intensification of environmental degradation. This new situation required the intervention of the central State to provide environmental management. (Muldavin, 2000, pp. 244)

Environmental policies were introduced to prevent a worsening state of the conditions that the Country found for itself. However, the policies had to be conducted by the constituency itself, meaning that people and entrepreneurs could decide whether to accept this challenge or not. Their competition one with another and their own agendas were counterproductive for this system. (Muldavin, 2000, p. 245)

Up until the 2000 the right policy of the State to address the continued destruction of natural resources in China hadn't been found. This was related also to the social dynamics of China, where an unstoppable social transformation and stratification couldn't easily be handled. (Muldavin, 2000, p. 245) This kept China away from a possible leadership for the years preceding the 2000s. The Country seems to have

never been ready to be able to handle the environmental matters as long as the life of the constituency and the economy weren't sustainable enough to focus on other aspects.

After the 2000, Chinese leaders created a system, where at local levels, responsible for the implementation, the leading cadres began rotating and changing after 5 or less years, linking the job of the local functionaries to a short time horizon. This system created interest for the different approach considered. (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, p. 361) This might be considered as a possible exemplary leadership, in the case this system worked well. During the late 2000s the environmental policy of China was rapidly advancing, and the improvements could easily be drawn if confronted with the past. However, the central leaders of Beijing claimed that their commitment to fighting climate change was incredibly effective, while the local leaders really worked to interpret and carry out the policies originating from the central decisional level. (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, p. 360) This is where the problem begins to disrupt the steps taken from China. Local leaders work in the same office for not more than 3-5 years, this means that their job is related to a short time horizon, where they can obtain results that can be considered a success and be rewarded for their achievements. This is what happened mainly in the early 2010s. (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, p. 360) The situation that was created in China was different from the one of the western Countries and led to a less effective internal recognition of environmental problems and a poorly acceptable management of these problems.

The choice to rotate periodically the local officials was intended to enhance the monitoring and control of the officials and their job by the central authorities. (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, p. 361) Local leaders were in general left to decide with lots of flexibility, this feature looked to be essential in a Country like China, which is so vast and with different realities. However, this flexibility brings also negative aspects. Local leaders might prefer to comply with the ideas of the central leaders and renounce to the most effective actions to protect the environment of their area. This means, in addition, that local leaders prefer to identify their ideology with their

higher administrative level than with their community. (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, pp. 365-366) It's bad to see that the people who could greatly improve the environmental protection in China mainly decided to use their power to follow plans that weren't necessary to save the natural resources of China. This situation has clearly led to a weakened Chinese action and consequently to a far lower leadership showed in confront to the EU and the US, up until the late 2000s. Not only didn't this system become effective, but it also diminished the types of leadership that could be advantageous for China. Structural leadership was harmed by the unadapt allocation of resources coming from both the central States and local leaders, science and experience weren't properly selected to improve the efforts on environmental protection lowering the level of cognitive leadership, and exemplary leadership couldn't be exerted without positive results to convince other actors of the right choices made by China.

The concept is confirmed by the negative trend originating from the results of a research conducted in Guangzhou in China in the years 2000 and 2006. There is a confirmation of the behavior of the local leaders that aren't suited for their role as their work lasts for 5 or less years. Moreover, they prefer to follow the lines of their superiors and simply accept the instructions received, without knowing if the actions taken can effectively be completed or not. (Zhan, Wing-Hung, Tang, 2014, pp. 1029-1030)

This system was hard to make coincide with any environmental policy, because most of them are characterized by a high cost to be implemented and the first positive results can be seen after many years, which clearly doesn't work at all with the mechanism required by the Chinese government. (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, p. 368)

The cadre rotation system has both pros and cons, which will be considered in this section. A frequent rotation is positive to reduce the bureaucratic fragmentation that could reduce the efficacy of the implementation of new policies. With many changes at the directional level there must be a simple standard system to reduce

the obstacles that could stop the process of advancing the protection of the environment. (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, p. 369) Another advantage of this rotation of jobs is the renewed innovative implementation of methods. (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, p. 370) The advantages seem to be important, as a standard operating system and a new approach with different ideas could be some of the aspects that were missing in the planning processes of the western institutions.

However, there are also negative aspects for this method of cadre turnover. The time pressure is always pending on the responsible of the projects occurring and the possible lack of local knowledge for the area where they work and their personal contacts with others both at the same level, above, and below, makes it quite problematic for many of them to be effective in crafting any possible initiative or implementation plan. (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, p. 372) There are more examples related to the plantation of many trees to reach the annual achievements required (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, p. 373) or the construction of a sewage treatment plant in many towns (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, p. 368), giving a clear and effective sign of commitment in the short time, while the economic restructuring of cities and systems has been delayed because of the difficulty in creating it, gathering the necessary resources, and obtaining the positive final results in the long term, even if this choice would have objectively been the most appropriate. (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, p. 373)

The plans of the Chinese leadership in the early 2010s were foreseeing a restructuring of local economies towards a more diversified, greener industrial structure. This kind of process requires generally a lot of time to conclude, and the process can meet many obstacles during the implementation of any part of it. In particular, the investments made on a certain new technology requires time and can become obsolete at a future moment, putting in a bad light the work of the leader, who decided to implement that specific technology. (Eaton, Kostka, 2012, p. 368) The situation in which the local leaders could be responsible for a partial failure of any implementation of a new policy is what caused the adoption of many policies

that weren't fit for a specific city or area. The selfishness of the local leaders kept China under poor environmental progress and prevented a serious involvement in the recognition of a possible leadership to exert on its own until the late 2000s.

What gave it much more importance during various negotiations is the fact that China is also part of the BASIC Countries, which became a major force during the late 2000s due to the similar interests showed. This coalition managed to greatly influence the Copenhagen Agreement. (Qi, 2011, p. 314) This gave China a great recognition on the international stage as a possible leader, in particular, connecting the creation of this coalition with the entrepreneurial leadership, which resulted quite effective during the Copenhagen negotiations. However, the interest of this group of Countries in leading the environmental actions of the world seems to have been reduced with time.

The Chinese intervention saw an improvement with the plan based on a 5-year timeline that began in 2010 and that brought to a revision of some central decisions. This caused a rise in the efficacy of the environmental policies in China related to the advancement of the urbanization and a rising need of more energy. However, the positive results were based mainly on the total figure of the emissions of companies, whereas some areas of the industry struggled with the improvements. (Wang, 2016, p. 764) The improvements can still be seen under a positive light as long as China seems to be focused on reducing the GHG emission for the next years and become a carbon neutral Country. This improvement can be connected with a reinforcement of the structural leadership of China.

China seems to be a Country with a strong potential for leadership, in a similar way to the US. It might be possible to state that the types of leadership on which they could rely are the same and with a matching efficacy. However, the different approaches used towards the environment make them differ on many levels, like implementation, recognition of environmental problems, and negotiation.

CONCLUSION

These were the situations in the EU, the US, and China from the late 1990s to the late 2010s, which was the basis timeline taken into account for the research on the climate policy of the EU. The main things to notice here are the different approaches taken by the actors and the different problems that affected each of them. It is interesting to notice that there are different moments when each of them managed to step up to the threat of environmental problems and each of them had different problems to cope with. For what regarding leadership, each of them showed strengths and weaknesses. The EU could be seen as an actor working to obtain leadership mostly based on the work of the Commission that can obtain the consensus of other institutions inside the organization. The types of leadership employed greatly vary, with a great focus on the use of entrepreneurial and cognitive leaderships. It saw, however, moments of uncertainty with the crises that hit the world during the late 2000s. The US is an important Country with the ability to influence a number of international negotiations both positively and negatively depending on the acceptance of American institutions, whose main feature seems to be structural leadership. China is the actor that mostly saw a misuse of its resources to exert structural leadership, and this brought to a diminished recognition of the other types of leadership. During the late 2010s, however, it managed to improve its efforts and obtain a greater deal of importance.

CONCLUSIONS

Environmental leadership is a concept that is quite hard to define and conducting research on this theme might lead to different final results, partially due to a different interpretation of the concepts involved in such a broad and not universally defined and recognized attribute. Several authors actually decide to leave a certain degree of interpretation to this idea of leadership.

The initial aim of this research was an analysis focused on understanding the role of the EU on the international stage for the matters regarding the environment, using as a basis for the research the declarations made during the last decades by the representatives of this organization. The recognition of leadership is an issue that received a high degree of attention among the experts. During this research the analysis of the declarations was mainly based on the recognition of the use of the word “leadership” and its meaning in the context of each speech considered. This idea led to the connection in most cases to the types of leadership that could derive from the analysis of this term and help to better understand and conceptualize the situations in which the speeches can be differently analyzed.

There are many speeches of the European representatives, mainly the Commission, that state that the EU has been fundamental in a series of ways and on many occasions. It is important to remember that most declarations widely recognized a high degree of leadership for the EU. However, there were some occasions on which this leadership was seen to be diminished. This diminution is something that happened mainly in period of crises, and the recognition of a lowered leadership has generally been admitted in future speeches, when there would be the possibility to use other statements and news to partially justify an eventual mistake in the policies previously adopted and to soften the negativity of the bargaining unmatched by the ambitions.

Therefore, the research confirms that the EU is generally perceived as a leader through the speeches released by the Commission in the past decades and the timeline considered during the research, though with varying degrees of intensity and sometimes with a rejection of previously accepted leadership, as in the case of the Copenhagen Agreement. All the types of leadership are recognized during the analysis of the speeches, particularly the entrepreneurial and cognitive leaderships are the result of the declarations analyzed, and the definition of leadership used in this research is acceptable to define the job of the EU. It mainly used its soft power to convince other actors to follow a direction favorable for the EU, which after years of efforts resulted in the adoption of the Paris Agreement. Still, it sometimes failed at providing leadership on some levels of the internal and external stages. Inside the EU it was mostly the Commission that acted to exert leadership, whereas the EP and member States didn't do as much as the Commission or even prevented the exertion of leadership. The external actors followed the lead of the EU mainly when it showed its ability to operate as a single actor with the least number of internal divisions.

The first chapter helped to understand how the scientific community tried to create a framework where to operate when referring to leadership. The previous analysis of different authors is really interesting and gives a first idea of what leadership is. The division of the leadership in different types proved to be an effective way of dealing with the environmental leadership and coping with the problem of a missing clear definition. This has been extremely helpful for the analysis of the speeches in the following chapter.

The second chapter can be summarized with the analysis of the declarations made by the representatives of the EU. At first sight, the speeches simply rely on praising the efficacy of the European action and on the willingness of the speakers to convince the audience of the need of stronger or new interventions by the EU. However, further analysis reveals that the Commission of the EU is the institution that mainly worked on creating the possibility to exert leadership.

The third chapter is an analysis of the actions pursued by the EU and its major rivals, the US and China. This chapter reveals that the three actors considered here have all been at the forefront of fighting the environmental problems and had the possibility or the willingness to exert leadership. However, the EU was the only actor that could maintain a line on its intentions to become a leader through the job of the Commission. The US showed far too many moments of uncertainty, based on the institutions that governed during the period considered for the research, mainly the American Senate. China had to struggle with internal difficulties encountered while trying to find the proper solution to its own environmental problems and seemed to be too focused on that side to be able to exert leadership internationally. In this moment these actors are all improving their efforts to protect the environment and fight climate change and it isn't simple to state whether one actor is exerting leadership or not.

The results of the research show that in the EU it is mainly the Commission that keeps on requiring the other institutions to provide leadership through speeches. Recently the EU has activated the European Green Deal to improve the efforts on the protection of the environment and possibly to exert leadership.

This research put a first step in further analysis that can use as a basis what has been done here. The analysis of the speeches focused on understanding the role of the EU only referring to European leadership, however it could be possible to increase the results by doing a research based on the analysis of speeches on other actors that might show different or similar results when confronted with this thesis.

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