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## Understanding “security of supply”

### Panel: Nordic approach to societal security and resilience

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#### Topic of research

This paper examines the meaning of the concept of “security of supply,” for whom and for how long. The compounding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and US-China rivalry has led to many countries taking independent investigations of the supply of resources that are vital to a society’s crisis preparedness and national defence. As well, these investigations are often based on national security assessments of individual sectors, such as agriculture, medicine, energy, or critical minerals.

#### Research question

The paper investigate what is meant by “security of supply” for major European governments and institutions such as the European Union (EU). It thus investigates their approaches to addressing how to secure and maintain supply chains to the industries that support national security and defence. It examines to what degree it is possible for such supply chains to be securitised or nationalised. Consequently, due to the global nature of supply chains, it investigates whether and how European approaches differ from the United States and Indo-Pacific.

#### Previous research

The majority of research investigating “security of supply” questions have been governmental, think-tank and industry reports or scholarly articles in specialised journals. Such research often takes a sectoral approach and draws specific implications. This paper fills a gap in the literature by examining the post-pandemic dynamics in supply chains and analysing the geopolitical implications of the differing approaches to countries seeking to secure supplies for their own defensive purposes.

#### Findings and implications

The securitisation – and desire to nationalise parts of the supply chain – is at odds with the interconnected nature of global supply chains and the public management of the open market to meet demands. Most countries are not coordinating their responses to “secure supplies,” including the major European Union economies or G20 economies including the United States, Japan and Australia. This suggests that there is a wide interpretation of the “security of supply” concept by country and by industry sector. This thus has practical implications for understanding who is responsible for the security of supply – industries, governments, or international organisations. It also has further implications for the market by limiting the openness of the market in accessing supplies.