

# Commentaries

New Series

## HOW GREENLAND CAN BECOME AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EUROPE

Nicolò Russo Perez\*

In the debate on Europe's strategic future, Greenland is emerging as a crucial territory, capable of profoundly impacting the continent's geopolitical, economic, and technological balance. Long considered a remote and marginal region, the Arctic island today represents a crossroads of global interests thanks to its extraordinary wealth of natural resources and a geographical position that places it at the center of the dynamics between Europe, North America, and the Arctic. In this context, greater European involvement in Greenland could significantly strengthen the Union's strategic and technological autonomy, while allowing the re-establishment of a more balanced dialogue with the United States and limiting the growing influence of competitors such as Russia and China.

Greenland possesses significant deposits of critical minerals and rare earths, resources essential for advanced economies. Lithium, nickel, cobalt, graphite, and rare earths are the basis of key 21st-century technologies: batteries for electric vehicles, energy storage systems, wind turbines, solar panels, semiconductors, and advanced electronics. Europe is currently heavily dependent on external suppliers, with mining and refining chains heavily concentrated in a few countries, particularly China. This dependence represents a structural vulnerability that undermines Europe's ability to pursue an autonomous green and digital transition. In this context, Greenland offers Europe the opportunity to diversify supply sources and build more resilient value chains.

In addition to its mineral resources, the island boasts significant energy potential. Besides to potential offshore hydrocarbon reserves, Greenland has enormous hydroelectric potential, facilitated by its geographic conformation and abundance of water resources. If developed according to rigorous environmental sustainability criteria, these resources could contribute to European energy security during a period of profound transformation of production and energy systems.

Greenland's geographical location is another determining factor. Situated between Europe and North America, the island occupies a strategic point in the North Atlantic and along emerging Arctic routes. The progressive melting of the ice is making maritime corridors such as the Northwest Passage – a sort of "Panama Canal of the North" – increasingly accessible, with potentially disruptive effects on global trade flows. In this scenario, Greenland could become a major logistics hub, impacting European competitiveness and the security of supply chains.

From a geopolitical and military perspective, the Arctic has once again become a region of strong strategic competition. Russia has strengthened its military and infrastructure presence, while China is positioning itself as a quasi-Arctic power, investing in research, infrastructure, and economic agreements.

COMMENTARY  
NO.023NS/2026



\*Director Fondazione CSF

The opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent the CSF Foundation



Fondazione CSF

In this context, Europe risks remaining marginalized unless it develops its own coherent strategy. A greater commitment in Greenland would strengthen Europe's presence in a region crucial for the control of communications, satellite systems, and maritime routes.

In the near future, the transatlantic bond and the restoration of a climate of cooperation with the United States should be a central element of this strategy. Washington maintains a historic presence in Greenland, especially in the areas of defense and security. A more structured involvement by Europe would rebalance the transatlantic relationship, strengthening the strategic dialogue and reducing the risk of unilateral dependence on US priorities.

The experience of other parts of the world, particularly Africa, offers a significant lesson. In many contexts, the reduction of European presence has favored the entry of external actors such as China and Russia, who have exerted a growing influence through infrastructure investments, energy agreements, and military cooperation. Leaving Greenland without adequate European support could lead to similar dynamics, with long-term effects on the continent's decision-making autonomy.

However, any European strategy must be based on respect for local communities and the Arctic ecosystem. Greenland is largely inhabited by Inuit communities, who have specific cultural, social, and economic rights. A credible European approach must promote equitable partnerships, technology transfer, training, and local development, avoiding predatory extractive models.

In conclusion, Greenland represents a strategic lever of primary importance for Europe's future. Its natural resources and its geographical position can contribute decisively to Europe's strategic and technological autonomy, while strengthening the resumption of dialogue with the United States and containing the influence of global competitors. The choice for Europe is not whether Greenland will become central to the geopolitical balance, but whether it will be able to be a protagonist in this process or suffer the consequences.

HOW GREENLAND  
CAN BECOME  
AN OPPORTUNITY  
FOR EUROPE

The opinions expressed here  
do not necessarily represent  
the CSF Foundation



Fondazione CSF