

THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Tatjana Gerginova^{1a}

¹ University „Sv. Kliment Ohridski” Bitola, Faculty of Security Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia, tatjana.gerginova@uklo.edu.mk

Received: 22th July 2024

Accepted: 06th August 2024

Professional paper

Abstract: *The concept of sustainable development envisions a world in which there is economic progress, increased well-being and better environmental protection. The truth of the concept is the belief that social goals, economic and environmental objectives should be complementary and independent throughout the development process. Within the paper, the author will determine the activities of the European Union in building sustainable development – a new approach in policy-making that enables mutual strengthening of the economic, social and environmental policies of the EU. In the final part, the author gives some concluding observations. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without a "sustainable" state. A basic prerequisite for making in a country and society in the direction of sustainable development is the understanding and acceptance of the concept and principles of sustainable development: Creating sustainable communities capable of managing and using resources; Full commitment to membership in the European Union at the national level; To develop awareness, understanding and commitment to Sustainable development; To promote the natural and cultural heritage. In preparing the content of the paper, the author will apply the general scientific methods: the descriptive method, the normative method, the comparative method and the content analysis method as a special scientific method.*

Key words: *Principles for building sustainable development, Agenda 2030*

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is a continuous process that includes improving the integration of economic, social and environmental aspects. Sustainable development is a continuous process, which requires constant adaption, monitoring and improvement.

Sustainable development is development that encompasses economic, social, cultural and political progress or a process in which society must simultaneously face economic, social and environmental challenges.

^a ORCID: [0009-0007-3669-0209](https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3669-0209)

Sustainable development is economic development that is socially responsible and fair, acceptable to the environment and that relies on the basic postulates of civil society.

The World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainable development as: Development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (See more: <https://www.moepp.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Nacionalna-Strategija-za-Odrzljiv-Razvoj-vo-RM-NSSD-Del-1.pdf>).

The definition further states: "Essentially, sustainable development is a process of change in which the use of resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technical development and institutional change are in harmony and increase both present and future potentials in order to meet human needs and aspirations". Sustainable development includes three interdependent and intertwined dimensions:

Economic dimension (economic resources, development and growth);

- Environmental dimension (natural resources, protection and sustainable use of nature and prevention and fight against pollution); and Social dimension (social resources, solidarity and fight against poverty).
- Sustainable development is a continuous process that includes improving the integration of economic, social and environmental aspects. Sustainable development is a continuous process, which requires constant adaption, monitoring and improvement.
- Sustainable development means improving the quality of life within the capacity of existing systems. - Definition from 1991 by World Wildlife Found, a leading organization for the protection and conservation of nature.

The definition according to which sustainable development is inclusive development is also known: economic, social, cultural and political progress; equal rights for all and the best quality of life for each individual rejection of any economic, social, and political discrimination; pollution control and waste minimization (Gerginova, 2023).

It is stated that sustainable development is social progress that meets the needs of all, effectively preserves the environment, rationally consumes natural resources and maintains a high and stable level of economic growth and employment. Sustainable development is said to mean equal access to resources for every generation.

Sustainable development offers humanity quality development, development in which human and natural values are balanced, development that is a model for a just and advanced world. It implies balancing economic, social and environmental goals and integrating them whenever possible through the creation of mutually supportive policies and practices and finding compromises when integration of the various goals is not possible.

Important the basic condition and goal of any state policy is the survival of the state while the condition for the survival of the state is its national security. It essentially represents a framework of the security policy that has the task of building a methodology for establishing a complementary relationship between the mechanisms and means by which national security is built and sustainable development of national security is achieved.

2. THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

It is safe to say that the concept of sustainable development was born at the Rio Conference. In Rio, the foundations were laid for a new systemic model of relations between development, society and environmental protection, which increased the number of relations of parameters

that combine in the concept of sustainable development. Those parameters represent important dimensions of the overall strategy for the global transition towards sustainable development.

The Treaties that constitute the European Union and that determine its general policy contain provisions that explicitly refer to sustainable development as a principle, as an obligation, as a goal and as a right.

Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union stipulates that the goal of the Union is to "promote economic and social progress and a high level of employment as well as to achieve balanced and sustainable development". The European Council on June 16, 2001 in Gothenburg, adopted the Strategy for Sustainable development of the European Union (SDS, EC 2001a), with the title "Sustainable Europe for a better world". It is composed of two main parts: the first proposes goals and measures to deal with numerous unsustainable trends, while the second calls for a new approach to policy-making that will enable mutual strengthening of the EU's economic, social and environmental policies (According to European Security Strategy – A Secure Europe in a Better World, Internet, 11/06/2004, http://www.iue.eu.int/cms3_fo/showpage.asp?id=391&lang=en).

The strategy calls for a new approach and changes in policy making and is the Union's first serious attempt to use an integrated and holistic approach to governance. On June 9, 2006, the Council of the EU adopted a renewed Strategy for the Sustainable development of the European Union, whose general goal is to "identify and develop actions that will enable the European Union to achieve a constant improvement in the quality of life of both current and future citizens", generations by creating sustainable communities capable of efficiently managing and using resources.

The European Council in December 2009 confirmed that "Sustainable development remains a fundamental goal of the European Union within the framework of the Lisbon Treaty".

The European Parliament in Strasbourg, May 2001, determined that "Sustainable development is ensuring economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection. This is the core of the European model of society that we want to strengthen and preserve for the next generations.

Economic, social and environmental goals are not contradictory, they are complementary... A strategy for sustainable development is essential in ensuring a balanced, fair and sustainable society in Europe. We must modernize this social model so that it will work for future generations. It is believed that the European Union is well positioned to take the lead in driving sustainable development globally (Matlievska, 2011).

During this period, the European Union is one of the world's largest donors of development aid, the world's 1 largest trading partner and the largest source of direct private investments. The European integration model is based on conducting mutually supportive strategies for stable economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

The Sustainable Development Strategy and the Lisbon Strategy have the same goal; namely to improve the well-being and living conditions of current and future generations in a sustainable manner. In Lisbon in March 2000, a Summit was held at which a strategy was adopted with the aim of making Europe the most competitive economy in the world by 2010. The Summit called for a new method of open coordination to promote sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. In March 2001, at the European Council held in Stockholm, sustainable development policy was added to economic and social policy as a third area for coordination through the Lisbon process.

Both strategies are mutually supportive, although they focus on different actions and have different time frames. In the Preface of the Strategy for Sustainable development, authored by Romano Prodi, it is said, among other things: "This means that sustainable development, is at the top of the agenda of the European Union" (Romano Prodi, 2001).

In the Strategy, in Article 23, the European Council invites the member states to develop national strategies for sustainable development in order to improve the coordination of policies at the national level.

On page 22 of the strategy it is stated: "The candidate countries should be actively involved in the implementation of this Strategy". In addition to this is the speech of Romano Prodi, who determines that "expansion and sustainable development are two twin keys for the future of Europe".

In terms of monitoring the progress made in implementing the strategy, the European Council held in Stockholm decided – for all dimensions of sustainable development, the European Commission submits a Report every year to the European Council, at the spring meetings, based on developed indicators. EU sustainable development Indicators (around 120) are in fact supplementary indicators for monitoring the Lisbon Strategy and can be found at: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/sustainabledevelopment>).

Jose Manuel Barroso, former president of the European Commission, stated on February 9, 2005: "The challenges our planet is facing today are global. Europe takes its responsibility. If we are to preserve the delicate balance between economic, social and environmental issues necessary for a sustainable society, we must act now".

The Draft Declaration on the Leading Principles for Sustainable development states: "In accordance with these principles and following the request from the Spring European Council, this year the Commission will present a proposal for a new, more comprehensive and ambitious Strategy for Sustainable development. It will contain long-term orientations, clear objectives and effective monitoring mechanisms and will make better use of synergies between complementary activities and policies. The internal and external dimensions of sustainability will be fully integrated in the new strategy".

On June 9, 2006, the Council of the EU adopted a renewed Strategy for the Sustainable development of the European Union, whose general goal is to "identify and develop actions that will enable the European Union to achieve a constant improvement in the quality of life of both current and future citizens", generations by creating sustainable communities capable of efficiently managing and using resources.

The European Council in December 2009. confirmed that "Sustainable Development remains a fundamental goal of the European Union within the framework of the Lisbon Treaty".

At the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, member states laid the foundations for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 accompanying Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Negotiators recognized the power of science to understand and drive the relationships between social, environmental and economic development goals and therefore called for a report to strengthen the science-policy interface.

In 2016, member states decided that the report should be produced once every four years, to inform the General Assembly's quadrennial SDG review discussions. The report should be written by a group of 15 experts representing different backgrounds, scientific disciplines and institutions, ensuring geographical and gender balance.

The 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report, *The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*, was the first report prepared by an Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General. The 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report, *"Times of Crisis, Times of Change: Science for Accelerating Transformations to Sustainable Development"*, is the second (See: <https://sdgs.un.org/gsdr/gsdr2023>).

The European strategy for sustainable growth and jobs, known as "Europe 2020", appeared at the height of the biggest economic crisis in recent decades. It places strategy, innovation and green growth at the center of the draft competitiveness plan and proposals to strengthen the monitoring of national reform programs (See: https://www.sobranie.mk/april-d514fb3f-a501-4bbc-8745-48aa63079051-ns_article-strategija-evropa-2020-16-04-10.nsp).

Europe 2020 replaces the Lisbon Agenda of 2000, according to which Europe's success is possible if the Union acts together, through a strategy that will ensure a more efficient way out of the economic crisis, as well as ensuring a sustainable and inclusive economy that will deliver a high level of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

Europe 2020 sets out the vision of the European social and market economy for the 21st century. The strategy in the foreground sets the three priorities for achieving:

Strong growth through developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation;

Sustainable growth by promoting more efficient resources, a greener and more competitive economy and inclusive growth through an economy with a high level of employment and delivery of social and territorial cohesion.

It was determined that the progress of the priorities should be measured through the success and fulfillment of certain measures.

The European Commission proposed 75% employment of European citizens between the ages of 20 and 64, investing 3% of European GDP in research and development, as well as continuing to work intensively on meeting the goals of the climate and energy strategy "20/20/20". Opening new jobs, as well as increasing the mobility of the working-age population and students, is the main goal of the Strategy.

In the last five years, there have been profound changes at the national and international level, in many different ways: economic, geopolitical, demographic, technological, environmental, sociological, etc.

The European Union and national societies have been transformed by powerful trends: (See: https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/sites/default/files/SD%20EUROPE%202020%20STRATEGY_EN_160316.pdf).

- Climate change and resource constraints requiring a deep energy transition, industrial transformation and the emergence of a circular economy;

- A new phase in the digital revolution, leading to new opportunities for growth in Europe, requiring a long-term solution to overcome the digital divide and the challenges of data security, and at the same time grasping the potential of this new revolution in terms of jobs creation;

- Geographical reorganization with global networks and the emergence of megacities, and further development of sustainable transportation systems and energy infrastructure;

- Widening regional disparities - within countries even more so than between them - necessitate a real EU cohesion policy as an investment tool for the benefit of EU citizens;

- Deep social changes, with ageing, immigration and gender rebalancing but also new differences between generations, requiring new approaches in education and social policy;
- Citizens' alienation from political institutions and a growing democratic gap between the EU and its citizens, resulting in the rise of extremism and radicalization on both ends of the political spectrum.

These trends cannot be ignored - on the contrary, the potential they offer should be fully exploited. These trends should help the European Union to achieve its goals for sustainable growth, competitiveness, sustainable development, quality jobs and social inclusion.

The goal is for the European Union to create a better framework in which all member states will take advantage of this paradigm shift and move to a new growth model focused on quality jobs. Today, the member states are implementing the following strategic priorities:

- Fostering energy transition
- Promoting the circular economy
- Developing solutions for a digital and progressive society
- Promoting innovation in sectors based on R&D, cultural and creative industries
- Strengthening social investment and fighting social inequality, in lifelong learning, healthcare, gender equality, youth participation, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion.

3. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND AGENDA 2030

At the Sustainable Development Summit, which took place in New York from September 25-27, 2015, the Sustainable Development Agenda entitled "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", was adopted (See: https://www.seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-Security/Policy-Brief-2030-Agenda_.pdf).

This agenda, adopted by 193 member states of the United Nations in September 2015, consists of a Declaration, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as 169 targets and 232 indicators. See <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda> for more details.

The agenda envisions a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and distress, where all life can thrive; a world without fear and violence; a world with fair and universal access to quality education at all levels, to health care and social care, where physical, mental and social well-being is ensured; World where food is sufficient, safe, available; A world where human habitats are safe, resilient and sustainable and where there is universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy. A fair, just, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met.

The agenda sets out a world in which every country enjoys sustainable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth. A world in which consumption and production patterns and the use of all natural resources are sustainable. One in which democracy, good governance and the rule of law, at national and international levels, are essential for sustainable development, including sustainable and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty and hunger. A world where humanity lives in harmony with nature and where wildlife and other living species are protected.

The 2030 Agenda integrates all three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), and this represents a major shift from a more fragmented parallel process approach to a comprehensive and universal agenda for population, planet and prosperity in general, based on peace, inclusiveness, strong and committed governance and global partnership. The agenda establishes 17 sustainable development goals that are interconnected, interdependent.

According to the 2020 Agenda, in order to achieve sustainable development, peace and security are needed; and peace and security will be at risk without the existence of sustainable development (See: https://www.seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-Security/Policy-Brief-2030-Agenda_.pdf). World leaders at the SDG Summit in September 2019 called for a Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development and pledged to mobilize financing, improve national implementation and strengthen institutions to achieve the goals by the 2030 target date.

The UN Secretary-General has called on all sectors of society to mobilize for a decade of action at three levels: global action to provide greater leadership, more resources and smarter solutions to the Sustainable Development Goals; local action that embeds the necessary transitions in the policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities; and action by people, including youth, civil society, the media, the private sector, trade unions, academia and other stakeholders, to generate an unstoppable movement that presses for the necessary transformations.

At the core of the decade 2020-2030 is the need for action to tackle growing poverty, empower women and girls and address the climate emergency. Annual SDG reports provide an overview of the world's implementation efforts so far, highlighting areas of progress and where more action needs to be taken. They are prepared by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs with input from international and regional organizations and the agency system, experts from civil society and academia, funds and programs of the United Nations.

On September 18-19, 2023, the Sustainable Development Summit (SDG) was held at the UN headquarters in New York. This Summit marked the beginning of a new phase of accelerated progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals with high-level political leadership for transformative and accelerated action by 2030.

The aim of organizing this summit is to provide answers to the impact of the multiple and intertwined crises facing the world and is expected to reignite a sense of hope, optimism and enthusiasm for the 2030 Agenda. The summit is realized through six interactive dialogues around the following topics: ending poverty and hunger, tackling inequalities, empowering women and girls, encouraging sustainable economic growth, transformation and promoting sustainable consumption and production delivering a revitalized global partnership building, effective, responsible and inclusive institutions to achieve sustainable development and protect our planet and combat climate change.

An independent group of scientists appointed by the Secretary-General of the UN, issued a report that found that the world today is meeting only two of the seventeen goals. The report says humanity must dramatically rethink its approach if it is to see any progress. It has been established that international action is needed to achieve ecologically sustainable and inclusive economic growth. It is necessary to rearrange the international financial architecture and national policies. A policy is needed through which countries can better control their fiscal and financial resources towards the goals of sustainable development.

4. CONCLUSION

International documents on sustainable development call for a sustainable and capable state, which: will express and strive for the basic goals of sustainable development and will develop a strategic plan to achieve them. Will implement effective legislation for those goals and realize them through modern methods of management and administration and will establish mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and periodically check their effectiveness.

A basic prerequisite for making changes in a country and society in the direction of sustainable development is the understanding and acceptance of the concept and principles of sustainable development: the creation of sustainable communities capable of efficiently managing and using resources:

- To develop awareness, understanding and commitment to sustainable development;
- Full commitment to membership in the European Union at the national level;
- To promote the natural and cultural heritage;
- High unemployment rate the need to increase the employment rate;
- Need for comprehensive organizational development and institutional strengthening in all spheres of public life, including policy making, preparation of legal and regulatory framework, strategic planning, administration, monitoring and enforcement.

At the core of the Concept of Sustainable Development is the belief that social, economic and environmental goals should complement each other and be interdependent throughout the development process.

In the end, we can state that sustainable development should be treated as an issue based on the integration of economic and social development in the context of high-quality environmental management.

The 2030 Agenda is universal and calls for action by all countries. The agenda sets out partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society. The Sustainable Development Goals can only be realized with a strong commitment to global partnership and cooperation. These goals are revitalization of the global partnership for sustainable development.

REFERENCES

European Security Strategy – A Secure Europe in a Better World, Internet, 11/06/2004, http://www.iue.eu.int/cms3_fo/showpage.asp?id=391&lang=en.

Gerginova, Tatjana. (2023). Global security (Basic textbook), University “St.Kliment Ohridski” – Bitola, Faculty of Security, Skopje.

Matlievska, M. Margarita. (2011). "Sustainable Development, New Global Paradigm", Monograph, Publisher ZN Print, Skopje

Romano Prodi, Foreword. (2001). "A Sustainable Europa for a Better World; European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development" EU Commission,

<https://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/sustainabledevelopment>

<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

<https://sdgs.un.org/gedr/gedr2023>

<https://www.moepp.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Nacionalna-Strategija-za-Odrziv-Razvoj-vo-RM-NSSD-Del-1.pdf>

https://www.seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-Security/Policy-Brief-2030-Agenda_.pdf

https://www.seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-Security/Policy-Brief-2030-Agenda_.pdf.

https://www.sobranie.mk/april-d514fb3f-a501-4bbc-8745-48aa63079051-ns_article-strategija-evropa-2020-16-04-10.nspj).

https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/sites/default/files/SD%20EUROPE%202020%20STRATEGY_EN_160316.pdf