

THE 2030 AGENDA. THE WAY TO GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

Lecturer Mihaela Cristina PAUL, PhD.
„Titu Maiorescu” University of Bucharest, Romania
av.mihaelapaul@yahoo.com

Abstract:

In September 2015, on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations in New York, new global sustainable development objectives were adopted. These new objectives have been introduced in the 2030 Agenda, which is intended to be an action plan for people, the planet and prosperity.

All countries and interested parties will implement the 2030 Agenda, acting on a collaborative partnership.

Keywords: *environmental law, sustainable development, human rights, environmental policies.*

International and regional cooperation for environmental protection

There is no easy and fast way to sustainable development. The transition to sustainable development requires collective efforts on the part of policy makers, companies, but also citizens.

Pollution prevention and environmental protection require cooperation between states and the adoption of common rules in this regard. [1]

The European Union has a key role to play in international environmental negotiations. In the fight against pollution and the stabilization of factors with a negative impact on the environment, the states of the world work hard to solve environmental problems.

An important component of the current concept of sustainable development, the environmental protection strategy must be considered today in the formula accepted by all governments of the world, which is dedicated to maintaining the ecological balance globally, regionally and locally. [2]

International cooperation is based on the reason for developing and protecting the environment in a sustainable way.

The main instrument of bilateral, regional and global cooperation of states is international law. The cooperation of the states aims to identify forms and ways that contribute to the prevention of pollution and the protection of the environment.

A component of the concept of sustainable development is the "environmental protection strategy", which focuses on maintaining the ecological balance globally, regionally or locally.

The environmental protection strategy can be defined as a set of action plans drawn up sequentially, sectorally (on various issues), which are coordinated – both in development and in implementation – in a unitary, responsible manner, in order to ensure the growth of individual/collective well-being and prosperity and aiming at sustainable economic development (correct management of resources, a saving of raw materials, materials and energy, a more efficient conservation of the natural and anthropic heritage), so as to ensure an appropriate quality of life for future generations."

The ecological integration of European states within the European Union contributes to the cooperation of the states of the world through the legislation of the European Union, an absolute novelty at the international level.

The common goal of environmental protection at both international and European level is served by numerous laws that apply to the environment.

Following the cooperation and collaboration for the protection of the environment, international, regional and sub-regional organizations and institutions with attributions in the field were created.

Concern for the environment, both for international and regional states, began only in the early 1970s, following aggressive pollution, which took place in the Nordic countries.

The first UN Conference on the Environment (Stockholm, 1972) led to the occupation of states for the environment. States have concluded that adequate institutional support is needed for the development and adoption of legal rules to assist international environmental cooperation.

The environmental statement of the states was achieved through a network of international bodies and organizations of an intergovernmental nature, but also through specialized institutions.

Among the interstate organizations with a global vocation [3] who have concerns for the protection and conservation of the environment we have:

- a. The United Nations General Assembly. It is the UN structure with the most activities in the field of creation and development of international environmental law.
- b. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) – coordinating role at the UN on environmental protection and conservation. UNEP is trying to co-opt other institutions and bodies in the fight against environmental protection.
- c. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) – UN agency created in 1945 with a major role in improving food standards and living standards of peoples, but also with a role in conserving the natural resources of the planet.
- d. The Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMO), established in 1948 and aims to promote cooperation between states to achieve safe and efficient navigation.
- e. The World Health Organization (WHO), established in 1946, based in Geneva, aims to promote international cooperation to ensure an adequate standard of living and health for mankind.
- f. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), established in 1946 in London, seeks cooperation between nations in the field of education and culture, ensures universal respect for justice, human rights law and fundamental freedoms.
- g. The International Labor Organization (ILO)
- h. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
- i. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

As there has been institutional support at European level for the development and adoption of legal rules on environmental law, the cooperation of all European states has helped to set the objectives of environmental policy.

The legal basis for EU environmental policy is Articles 174-176 of the EC Treaty, to which Articles 6 and 95 are added.

Article 174 ensures a high level of environmental protection, taking into account situations in different regions of the Union. Article 175 identifies the appropriate legislative procedures for environmental protection and sets out the decisions to be taken in the field of environmental policy. [4]

Article 176 allows Member States to adopt stricter standards. Article 6 promotes sustainable development as a cross-cutting EU policy and emphasizes the need to integrate environmental protection requirements into the definition and implementation of European sectoral policies.

The EC Treaty lays down concrete obligations on European bodies with regard to the protection and sustainable management of the environment. [5]

The European bodies responsible for ensuring the achievement of environmental objectives, both at legislative and implementation level, are:

a. The Economic Commission for Europe (EEC), set up in 1947 to raise the level of continental economic activity as well as international trade.

b. The European Commission (EC) – considered a true ministry of the environment. Exercises responsibilities in this field through the Directorate-General for the Environment. The EC initiates regulations in this field and ensures their implementation at Member State level, in order to protect and conserve the environment. [6]

c. The European Environment Agency (EEA), established in 1995, with a role in ensuring environmental cooperation between EU countries.

d. The Council of Europe carries out environmental tasks related to nature conservation, biodiversity, organizes European networks of protected areas and carries out environmental education actions.

e. The European Parliament, set up in 1950 within the ECSC, is involved in the co-decision process and in EU environmental policy. The European Parliament formulates Community legislation on the environment.

Numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also work in the field of environmental protection and sustainable conservation:

a. Greenpeace (1971), the first international organization for environmental protection. Greenpeace is running a permanent campaign to implement resolutions on environmental protection and conservation.

b. The main objective of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is to promote the development and protection of the environment.

c. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has an important role in nature conservation and in the ecological restoration of the natural environment.

d. The International Green Cross – has responsibilities in promoting accounting actions for the protection and conservation of natural environmental resources.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A historic document was adopted at the 2015 UN General Assembly in New York – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This agenda aims at an action plan for people, planet and prosperity. This plan is being implemented by all countries and all interested parties, who will have a collaborative partnership.

The 2030 Agenda aims, through its 17 objectives and 169 targets, to ensure a better future for the whole world. Structured on the three pillars of sustainable development – the 2030 agenda was also adopted by Romania.

The goals of the Agenda are based on the Millennium Development Goals and aim to ensure respect for human rights for all, the achievement of gender equality and the emancipation of all women and girls.

The objectives and targets will guide the actions taken over the next 9 years in areas of crucial importance to humanity and the planet.

The EU Council conclusions, adopted in June 2017, "A sustainable future for Europe: the EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" are the policy paper adopted by EU Member States on implementing the 2030 Agenda.

The period in which we live is marked by the process of globalization, by the aggravation of environmental problems. To meet the challenges of the 21st century, we need sustainable development based on the principles and spirit of the 2030 Agenda.

Sustainable development represents, in the Romanian context, the desire to achieve a balance between man and his burning desire becoming accomplished. [7]

The role of the state in the context of sustainable development is to help achieve this balance, not only for the present population, but also for future generations.

By implementing the 2030 Agenda, we want a world without poverty, hunger, disease and deprivation where people thrive; we want a world of universal respect for human rights, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination; we want a world in which people live in harmony with nature and in which wildlife and other living species are protected.

Global health threats, frequent natural disasters, depletion of natural resources and the effects of environmental degradation, climate change are challenges of our age, and their negative impact undermines the ability of countries to achieve sustainable development.

The survival of many societies, but also of the biological systems that support the planet are in great danger.

However, remarkable progress has been made in addressing many development issues.

The goals of the 2030 Agenda far exceed the Millennium Development Goals. In addition to existing priorities (poverty, health, etc.), the Agenda also sets out a wide range of economic, social and environmental objectives.[8]

The objectives of the Agenda entered into force on 1 January 2016, each country must strive to implement the agenda, as each country faces specific challenges for achieving sustainable development.

Romania, together with 192 other states, has assumed the establishment of the national framework for maintaining the 2030 Agenda.

The global action plan is fully supported by Romania until 2030. This plan aims to strengthen a climate of security and freedom, in which "no one will be left behind." [9]

As already mentioned, the Agenda is structured on three pillars: economic, social and environmental.[10]

Within social equity, developing nations must be able to meet their basic needs in terms of employment, food, energy supply, etc.

Economic growth must be balanced in all countries.

In the field of the environment, there is a need to preserve and improve the available resource base by gradually changing the way technologies must be developed and used.

The 2030 Agenda calls for the involvement of all stakeholders, by democratizing the decision-making process on sustainable development. It takes the younger generations to create sustainable development.

Sustainable Development Goals

1. *Eradicating poverty in all its forms.* Romania is among the countries that register a high share of people suffering from poverty. By 2030, the aim is to eradicate extreme poverty, halve the number of citizens living in relative poverty and strengthen the national emergency response system.

2. *Eradicating hunger, ensuring food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture.* The targets for 2030 are elaborated with the goal of eradicating malnutrition and maintaining the obesity rate are 10%, completing the agricultural cadastre, etc.

3. *Ensuring a healthy life.* By 2030, Romania wants to ensure universal access to information, education and counseling services for adopting a healthy lifestyle. We want the complete digitization of the health system, the increase of vaccine coverage to the minimum level recommended by the WHO for each vaccine.

4. *Guaranteeing a quality education.* Access to education and participation are essential for the functioning of a sustainable society. By 2030, the drop-out rate must be reduced, and education must focus on skills.

5. *Achieving gender equality.* By 2030, the aim is to eliminate all forms of violence against women and ensure equal opportunities for leadership.

6. *Ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water for all.* The goal by 2030 is to increase the efficiency of water use in industrial, commercial and agricultural activities and ensure a sustainable process of drinking water, etc.

7. *Ensuring everyone's access to energy in a safe, sustainable and modern way.* By 2030, it is intended to expand transmission and distribution networks for electricity and natural gas in order to ensure consumers' access to secure energy sources at reasonable prices.

8. *Promoting sustained, open and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and ensuring decent jobs for all* – achieving higher levels of productivity through diversification, technological modernization and innovation.

9. *Building resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialization and encouraging innovation*
10. *Reducing inequalities within and between countries* – raising Romania's level to the EU average, in terms of sustainable development indicators
11. *Developing cities and human settlements to be safe, resilient and sustainable*
12. *Ensuring sustainable consumption and production modules* – recycling as much as possible, separate collection of hazardous waste, implementation of sustainable green public procurement practices, in line with European policies.
13. *Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impact.* – improving education, awareness and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.
14. *Conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*
15. *Protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable forest management, combating desertification, halting and repairing soil degradation and halting biodiversity loss*
16. *Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all and the creation of efficient institutions at all levels.*
17. *Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.*

In June 2021, the EU Council endorsed the reaffirmation of the EU's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Covid-19 pandemic threatens the progress made towards achieving the SDGs, but communication and awareness-raising campaigns on the 2030 Agenda must continue, in order to increase the shared responsibility of citizens, the private sector and of other interested parties.

Conclusions

The implementation of the SDGs implies a shared responsibility, which requires action at national, sub-national and local level. The European Commission calls for the introduction of a chapter on environmental sustainability in country reports and a specific

annex reporting on each Member State's progress on state performance on the SDGs. Some objectives have been met more quickly than others, so steps need to be taken to address areas where further efforts are needed.

The revision of the June 2021 Agenda aimed to adapt the set of indicators on the SDGs at EU level to the Commission's Green Pact.

A strong environmental dimension is needed to ensure the implementation of the European Green Pact.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a shared responsibility, which requires a society-wide approach, through the continued and strong involvement of all interested parties.

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