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Sustainable Development in the European Union and World Economy-Main Selected Aspects

Abstract

The aim of the paper is to present key theoretical and empirical issues of sustainable development and environmental protection issues from the global and European perspective, with special reference to the implication of this concept for Central and Eastern European members of the EU.

Main aspects are discussed in the paper from the EU and global perspective, with special reference to: the global partnership for sustainable development; fighting poverty and promoting social development; sustainable management of natural and environmental resources; trading in greenhouse gas emission allowances; main global and European challenges; goals and challenges facing the European Union member states as stemming from major strategic European Union renewed documents promoting sustainable development; especially promoting consumption and production that is sustainable and environmentally–friendly and green labeling system; a detailed look at "new" environmental policies; with special reference to sustainable transportation; a strategy for the sustainable use of natural resources; preventive strategy (preventing the creation of wastes) and waste recycling; sustainable and competitive tourism.

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1. The Basic Concept of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development may be said to be present when its basis is stable and permanent economic growth in environmentally–friendly sectors and when, thanks to it, there is a reduction in unemployment through the absorption of free labor resources.

Sustainable development has long been one of the overarching objectives of European Union policy. European Union leaders launched the first European Union sustainable development strategy in 2001, updating it in 2006 to tackle shortcomings and take new challenges into account[1]. Developed over decades to address a wide range of issues, the European Union has some of the highest environment standards in the world[2].

Recently, the European Commission has proposed a new economic strategy for Europe—"Europe 2020"—that includes three key growth drivers to be implemented through concrete actions at European Union and national levels:

- *Smart growth* (fostering knowledge, research and development, innovation, education, and a digital society),
- *Sustainable growth* (making production more resource efficient while boosting research and development as well as competitiveness), and
- *Inclusive growth* (raising participation in the labor market, the acquisition of skills, and the fight against poverty)[3].

It is especially after the financial crisis that a strategy comprehensively addressing long–term issues and leading the economy of every country to stable, balanced, and sustainable growth is needed much more than ever before. New sources of growth will have to be supported by investments in infrastructure, innovation, and education to facilitate productivity growth, while ensuring sustainable use of resources in a greener economy, within a context of open markets.

Another strong requirement is addressed to higher education—teaching the young generation and adults the rules of good governance for achieving sustainable development goals. Achieving economic and social stability as a global public good requires better governance. This is especially true of developing and transitional economies. Common principles and standards on

[1] http://europa.eu/pol/env/index_en.htm.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "Europe 2020: A strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth," Communication from the Commission, COM(2010) 2020, Brussels, March 3, 2010.

propriety, integrity, and transparency governing the conduct of international business and finance help promote a healthy and sustainable economic system.

The social dimension of growth is also crucial to this effort through the promotion of employment opportunities, the creation and updating of skills, and the protection of the weakest by way of appropriate social safety nets and income support.

Also necessary is a strengthening of action aimed against corruption, which poses serious problems to the stability and security of societies.

The impact of the economic crisis on labor markets can undermine social stability. For this reason, good governance must be linked to employment and social policies that reduce unemployment, enable a quick re–entry into the labor market, and prevent social exclusion. It is necessary to reduce the impact of the crisis on employment and maximize the potential for job growth in accordance with the promotion of active labor market policies that reduce unemployment, enhance the development of skills, match jobs to labor market needs, maintain income support for the unemployed, and sustain existing employment, including through partial unemployment schemes combined with training provisions.

The emergency response to the economic crisis should not overlook the opportunity to facilitate a global green recovery putting economies on a path towards more sustainable and resilient growth. Fiscal stimulus packages are increasingly investing in measures encouraging the creation of green jobs and low–carbon, energy–efficient, and sustainable growth. These include energy efficiency measures, investment in public transportation infrastructure, incentives for recycling and for fuel–efficient vehicles, research into alternative sources of energy, support for renewable energy technologies, as well as enhanced CO^2 reduction.

Stable and secure energy availability is indispensable for social and economic development. It is essential in order to ensure global energy security and energy access in developing countries.

Yet another important factor for future development is keeping markets open and free, and rejecting protectionism in any form. In difficult times, it is necessary to avoid the past mistakes of protectionist policies, especially given the strong decline in world trade following the economic crisis. The aim is to enhance international trade in goods and services, and to abolish some of the barriers to technologies and investment goods stimulating the increase of cleaner production. What is needed is a maximizing of efforts and steps to promote and facilitate trade and investment as well as refraining from raising new barriers to investment or to trade in goods and services, and imposing new exports restrictions. Innovation and knowledge are key factors in supporting recovery and putting the economy on a more sustainable growth path. This is needed to

accelerate innovation in relation to long–term challenges as well as to encourage the development of new industries, companies, and services that will prove decisive in creating new sources of growth.

2. Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The European Union established a Strategy for Sustainable Development for the first time in May of 2001. It was for the purpose of supporting this strategy that the Council of Europe confirmed the need for an external dimension to sustainable development and the input of the European Union into global sustainable development in Gothenburg. This was laid out in the position represented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development that was held in Johannesburg in 2002. The main questions raised were health, education, and the environment. Market forces work to foster growth in inequality and exclusion, as well as the destruction of the environment. Thus, globalization must go hand–in–hand with actions lessening unfavorable effects, especially in the area of trade, finance, environmental management, decreasing the spheres of poverty and crime, and the development of common rules for these areas that may be monitored more efficiently, as well as a striving for global management, including through the promotion of the more efficient management of co–dependencies[4].

The United States and Japan have a comparative advantage in biotechnology and nanotechnology patenting as well as in the relevant scientific fields, while the European Union is the world leader in environment–related technologies and services, with special reference to recycling. Recycling, proper and effective waste management, renewable energy, sustainable construction, and bio–based products—innovative use of renewable raw materials—are among the six main lead markets of the European Union. Japan is second to the European Union in all three environmental technology fields[5].

A resource–efficient Europe means support for the shift towards a resource–efficient and low–carbon economy. Europe should stick to its 2020

[4] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions of February 21, 2002, entitled "Towards a Global Partnership for Sustainable Development" [COM(2002) 82 final – Not published in Official Journal]; also compare with S. Baker, *Sustainable Development*, Routledge–Taylor&Francis Group, London and New York, 2006, pp. 51–65.

[5] OECD Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard 16 2007 – ISBN 978–92–64–03788–5 – copyright OECD 2007, pp. 9–16.

targets in terms of energy production, efficiency, and consumption. This would result in €60 billion less in oil and gas imports by 2020. An industrial policy for green growth—a "green revolution" promoting environmentally–friendly technologies for the European Union's innovative industries—seems to be of greatest importance in helping the European Union's industrial base in being competitive in the post–crisis world, promoting entrepreneurship, and developing new skills. In its turn, this would create millions of new jobs, especially "green jobs" in the environmentally–friendly sectors of the European and non–European economies.

The objective of developing environmentally–friendly economies in the developing countries as well as in transitional economies is the most important challenge facing the world economy in the nearest future. This objective can be achieved by close cooperation between the developed and developing countries as well as through solidarity in the processes of international assistance providing environmentally–friendly, more efficient, and cleaner technologies oriented towards Low Carbon Growth. Job creation in environmentally–friendly services in developing countries is "a shortcut path" that helps avoid some of the negative consequences of traditional ("dirtier") economic development while providing possibilities for the creation of millions of new "green" jobs in the future[6].

Incorporating aspects of sustainable development into international trade within the framework of the WTO for the purpose of:

- Strengthening the integration of developing countries with the world economy,
- Assisting developing countries in achieving greater benefits from the global trade system,
- Modifying the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) so that it incorporates sustainable development,
- Incorporating sustainable development into bilateral and regional agreements,
- Reducing the unclear operations of the international financial system and applying more efficient regulations to it,
- Encouraging European business to be socially responsible, and

[6] Wysokińska Z., "Making the Transition to a Green Economy: Fair and Equitable–Positive Examples of the Former European Transition Economies for Developing and Low Income Countries" (June 23, 2011), contribution to the UNCTAD Symposium of June 22–24, 2011 – Making Trade and Finance Work for People and the Planet, "Managing a Just Transition: The Green Economy and Green Jobs Agenda in Low–Income Countries" session.

- Promoting collaboration between the WTO and environmental organizations.

Fighting Poverty and Promoting Social Development

The target is the reduction of extreme poverty throughout the world by the year 2015 (applying to people living on $1.00 or less per day). Stress has been consistently placed on quality, quantity, and the impact and development of collaboration within the framework of the concept of sustainable development.

Development policy is aimed at:

- Decreasing the scale of poverty,
- Guaranteeing that European Union policy is aimed at fighting hunger,
- Integrating the distribution of water with policies aimed at health care and education,
- An orientation aimed at no discrimination in terms of sex in European Union policies,
- Greater investment in health care, education, training, and fighting disease, and
- Promoting studies oriented at sustainable development.

Sustainable Management of Natural and Environmental Resources

The objective in this area is the reversal of a trend and losses in environmental resources by the year 2015 as well as the development of medium–term targets for sectors including water, land, soil, energy, and biodiversity.

The following initiatives were specifically undertaken during the Johannesburg Summit:

- Promotion of water resource sustainable development,
- Collaboration in the field of energy and development,
- Promotion of international environmental agreements,
- Supplementing the Global Environment Facility,
- Undertaking an action plan fighting illegal logging,
- Investments in sustainable forms of transportation,
- Promotion of sustainable fishing,
- Environmental catastrophe prevention management, and
- Expansion of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) program to encompass developing countries.

The European Commission proposed the creation of a Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund (GEEREF) in order to mobilize private investment in projects promoting increased energy efficiency and increasing the share of renewable energy in developing countries as well as countries undergoing systemic transformation[7]. Its purpose will be support for projects aimed at sustainable development, with special consideration for environmental protection, climate change, and improvements in air quality, taking into account social and economic benefits in business areas, income growth, and the creation of new jobs. Its objective is also a role in stabilizing energy supplies to the poorest countries of the world[8].

The GEEREF initiative is an integral part of the Green Book – *A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy*[9].

Moreover, the following was agreed upon:

- Improving cohesion among the economic, social, and environmental aspects of primary European Union policies and targeting them at achievement of the goals of sustainable development,
- Signing of the UN Protocol on the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking of Firearms,
- Rules for action against the negative effects of emigration, and
- Introduction of better legal regulations on all levels in order to strengthen the efficiency of global economic, social, and environmental management, where this proposal pertains to the strengthening of public institutions and a citizens' society in developing countries, guaranteeing basic work standards, promulgating decisions that lead to better global management, and accelerating the fight against the discrimination of women[10].

The financing of sustainable development in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals as agreed by the UN in its Millennium Declaration involves eight tasks:

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[7] Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament of October 6, 2006, entitled "Mobilizing Public and Private Finance towards Global Access to Climate–Friendly, Affordable, and Secure Energy Services: The Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund" [COM(2006) 583 final – Not published in the Official Journal].

[8] http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/sustainable_development/l27063_en.htm

[9] http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/tackling_climate_change/l27062_en.htm.

[10] Joint Declaration by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament, and the Commission on the development policy of the European Union, entitled "The European Consensus" [Official Journal C 46/01 of February 24, 2006].

- Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger,
- Achievement of universal primary education,
- Promotion of gender equality and the empowering of women,
- Reducing child mortality rates,
- Improving maternal health,
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases,
- Ensuring environmental sustainability in environmental resource management, and
- Building a global partnership for development[11].

The increasing of financing within the framework of official aid to 0.7% of the Gross National Income (GNI) has been proposed in order to implement this program, where such development aid by all countries of the European Union shall amount to at least 0.33% of the GNI as of the year 2006. Also taken was the decision to reduce the debts of the most indebted countries as well as participation in the debate on the potential of countries offering global public goods.

The effects of actions taken are presented in "The Millennium Development Goals Report – 2009"[12]. Although they are not yet satisfactory, they do indicate certain progress in achieving goals set for the year 2015. The greatest achievement relating to the reduction in poverty is that the number of people living for less than $1.25 per day has decreased from 1.8 billion to 1.4 billion over the period from 1990 to 2005. According to the Report, prior to the financial crisis, a total of 55–90 million people in the world were touched by extreme poverty in the year 2009[13]. With respect to children's primary education in developing countries, it has been estimated that in 2007 a total of 88% of children received an education at this level, which means an increase with respect to 83% in the year 2000. The mortality rate for children below five years of age has also fallen from 12.6 million in 1990 to nine million in 2007. This problem particularly touches the regions of Sub–Saharan Africa and South Asia[14].

[11] http://www.unic.un.org.pl/cele.php

[12] "The Millennium Development Goals Report – 2009,"
http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_Report_2009_ENG.pdf.

[13] Ibid., p. 4.

[14] Op. cit., pp. 4–5.

Trading in Greenhouse Gas Emission Allowances

The European Union was the first in the world to create a system for trading in emission allowances. This system assists the European Union in implementing obligations as undertaken within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol with respect to the emission of carbon dioxide and other gasses known as greenhouse gasses by eight percent (as compared with the year 1990) over the years 2008–2012. It is within the framework of this system that the governments of European Union countries determine and assign limits to companies of the industrial and energy sectors on allowances to emit carbon dioxide. Companies that do not utilize all of their allowances may sell their remaining allowances to other companies that chose this path to evade high penalties for exceeding allowable levels. Resources derived from the sale of the allowances may be designated for investments in technology that is more environmentally–friendly. National governments leave the companies a free hand. Each company decides on its own what solution is best for it. It is the ultimate goal—restricting emissions—that is of prime importance. This system is to encompass other sectors of industry in the future, including the aviation industry, which is currently the fastest growing source of CO^2 emissions.

Restrictions shall also encompass allowable levels of gas emissions for motor vehicles. Stricter building standards shall be introduced in order to prevent heat loss through walls and windows, thus reducing CO^2 emissions. The European Union has been successful over recent years in developing a comprehensive environmental protection system encompassing various matters ranging from noise through waste, from the protection of rare species through the introduction of limits in the area of air pollution, and from water standards for swimming areas through actions in the event of environmental catastrophes.

Environmental standards are seen as a form of incentive to apply more environmentally–friendly solutions. They are also intended to foster the development of products whose design uses environmentally–friendly materials and that take into account the potential for recycling following the end of their useful life[15].

From the Kyoto Protocol to the Copenhagen Conference

The United States was the only country that refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. It was within the framework of this agreement that thirty–seven industrialized countries, including the whole of the European Union, obligated themselves to decrease the emission of greenhouse gasses by five

[15] http://europa.eu/pol/env/index_pl.htm; also compare http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/tackling_climate_change/index_en.htm

percent, on average, between 1990 and 2012. According to the Center for Global Development, the United States was the world's largest emitter of CO^2 in 1997. Recently, the ignoble role of leader in such emissions has been taken over by China. The Kyoto Protocol is due to become extinct in 2012 and the goal of the summit in Copenhagen was to have been the finding of a way to continue the process of reducing CO^2 emissions.

Effects to Date in the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Although true that the emission of greenhouse gasses from the area of the European Union has grown over the 2000–2004 period, the tendency over recent years has been much more encouraging. The European Union is on the road to achieve the target as identified in the Kyoto Protocol.

However, if policies aimed at fighting climate change are not quickly introduced on a world level, world greenhouse gas emissions in 2010 shall be at least 60% greater than in 1990. Although the share of energy from renewable sources in gross national energy use is growing at a faster rate as of 2002, it is still far from the goal earmarked for 2010, which is at a level of 12%.

Main Global and European Challenges

The main problem in the battle to reduce CO^2 emissions is a lack of money. Poorer countries—led by China—claim that they cannot afford to decrease CO^2 emissions and demand that the industrialized countries lower their levels of greenhouse gas emissions first. Wealthy countries, with the United States in the forefront, indicate that CO^2 emissions in China and India can grow dramatically and it is those countries that, to a great extent, will bear the responsibility for growth in emissions in the future. The European Union is facing a similar conflict of interest. The main problem in Europe is the question of who is to fund the planned €15 billion per year in financial assistance in support of developing countries in their quest for alternative, environmentally–friendly energy sources. The poorer European Union countries, under the leadership of Poland, insist that wealthier countries such as Great Britain, France, and Germany pay more, while the less affluent countries, mainly from Central and Eastern Europe, less.

The Climate Summit in Copenhagen ended with relatively insignificant outcomes. The parties did reach a political agreement in questions of the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but they did not undertake any noteworthy obligations. True, they agreed that the increase in atmospheric temperature should be stabilized at a level of 2°C by the year 2005. But they did not set this

threshold as a fixed target, nor did they define any intermediate goals in achieving it[16].

3. Goals and Challenges Facing the European Union Member States as Stemming from Major Strategic European Union Documents Promoting Sustainable Development

The European Union's Sustainable Development Strategy

Sustainable development is an overriding long–term goal of the European Union. Both the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development that was developed in the year 2001 and its rejuvenated version from the year 2006 identify directions of long–term views of sustainable development, where components such as economic development, social cohesion, and environmental protection go hand–in–hand and mutually supplement each other.

A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development

"A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development" is the newest strategic document relating to sustainable development in the European Union that was drafted in the first half of 2001 by the European Commission and ratified in May of 2001[17].

The strategy consists of four sections. The first part is entitled "Towards a Sustainable Europe" and contains a definition of sustainable development as well as general information on the subject. The title of the second part is "Making Sustainable Development Happen: Achieving Our Ambitions" and it contains a description of actions to be taken in connection with the achievement of sustainable development in the countries of the European Union and beyond it. The third part—"Setting Long–Term Objectives and Targets: Identifying Priorities for Action"—provides guidelines for establishing goals and priority areas. "Implementing the Strategy and Reviewing Progress: Steps after Gothenburg," the fourth part of the strategy, contains indicators to measure

[16] http://www.twojaeuropa.pl/1204/szczyt-klimatyczny-w-kopenhadze

[17] "A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development," more on the topic of its objectives and priorities in Z. Wysokińska, J. Witkowska, *Integracja Europejska. Dostosowania w Polsce w dziedzinie polityk* [European integration: Adaptation in Poland in the area of policies], PWE, Warsaw, 2004, the chapter entitled "Polityka ochrony środowiska" [Environmental protection policy].

progress in implementing the strategy as well as methods of operation of the leading bodies of the European Union.

In its first part, the strategy document calls attention to the fact that the achievement of sustainable development is not only a European goal, but one whose character is global.

The following problem areas have been identified on the road to achieving sustainable development[18].

- Emissions of greenhouse gases resulting from human activity that are responsible for global warming,
- Poverty, which has a destructive impact on human health and life,
- Ageing of the population, which threatens a slowdown in the rate of economic growth,
- Bio–diversity losses in Europe caused by soil pollution and excessive amounts of wastes, and
- Intensification in transportation, which mainly pollutes urban areas.

In its second part, "Making Sustainable Development Happen: Achieving Our Ambitions," the strategy document provides guidelines showing how to achieve sustainable development.

The European Commission has determined that achieving sustainable development necessitates many changes in the process of implementing and developing policies on the European Union level as well as on that of the European Union member states.

Sustainable development should become a main goal of all sectors and policies, which shall lead to better cohesion policy.

The Commission proposes the following actions within the framework of improving cohesion policy[19]:

- All policies must have sustainable development as their core concern,
- Promotion of sustainable management through the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy within the European Union as well as on an international arena, and protection of marine ecosystems,
- Use of more environmentally–friendly modes of transportation within the framework of the Common Transport Policy, as well as tackling rising levels of road congestion and pollution caused by transportation, and

[18] "A Sustainable Europe for a Better World…," op. cit, p. 4.

[19] Ibid., p. 6.

- Cohesion Policies targeting the least developed regions and those with the most acute structural problems.

A successive phase in achieving sustainable development in the European Union involves investments in technology and scientific research. This is because, in the view of the Commission, a good economic situation (economic prosperity) is dependent on knowledge and technological development to a very great extent. Promoting innovation and new technologies in the future may bring *about very positive effects, including lower use of natural resources, a reduction* in pollution, and a decrease in the number of factors threatening human health and safety[20].

The public sector, whose task is to support technological change on the path to achieving sustainable development, should concentrate on assistance for research aimed at safe and pro–environmental technology, for the application of better solutions, and for the stimulation of quicker, newer, and cleaner technologies. In this area the Commission specified several tasks to be completed, including[21]:

- Full application of the potential of future Community Framework Programs for Research to better support sustainable development,
- Consideration by European Union member states of better ways to use public procurement to increase environmentally–friendly products,
- Encouragement for the private sector to incorporate environmental factors in the sector's purchasing specifications,
- Encouragement for the industrial sector to identify major obstacles to the development of this sector that hamper the significantly wider use of new technologies in sectors such as energy, transportation, and communications, and
- Contribution by the Community by the year 2008 for Global Monitoring of Environment and Security (GMES).

[20] Ibid., p. 7.

[21] Ibid., pp. 7–8.

The next step on the road to achieving sustainable development in the European Union is the improving of communications among the population, the business sphere, and people developing policies.

According to the Commission, this improvement may take place thanks to more open policies, not only on the part of the state, but also the business sector, with respect to society. Many major corporations manage their policies in a manner bringing benefits to only a small group of people, without taking into account the interests of the bulk of the population[22].

In the view of the Commission, too many people consider policies to be alien and technocratic. It is for this reason that the process of their creation and implementation should be more open. This is primarily a matter of making the individual aware of the fact that he or she can, through personal effort, introduce changes into policies and have an impact on their shaping. As an example the Commission points to the creation of what are known as "Local Agenda 21s" that promote sustainable development on a local level and allow for the better understanding of its objectives[23].

A very important role in improving dialogue between the population and the authorities includes an efficient educational system that, in the eyes of the public, increases the sense of individual and collective responsibility for the environment and encourages changes in behavior models.

The third section of the strategy includes something of a summary of the two preceding parts in the form of the identification of priority areas for action as well as the establishing of long–term goals.

According to the Commission, long–term goals primarily involve an approach to policies that guarantee cohesiveness, and where actions undertaken within their framework should be based on principles presented in the previous section.

In this part the Commission also established several tasks and measures intended to manage two out of six questions that create the greatest challenge to sustainable development in Europe—fighting poverty and problems relating to an aging population.

The Community Commission considers the following among objectives that it must achieve within the long–term perspective[24]:

[22] Ibid., p. 8.

[23] Ibid., p. 8.

[24] A Sustainable Europe for a Better World …, op. cit., pp. 10–13.

- Limiting climate change and increasing the use of clean energy, including:
  - Limiting the emission of greenhouse gasses by European Union countries as well as by other highly–developed countries,
- Decreasing threats to public health, including:
  - Healthier and safer food,
  - Ensuring that chemicals are only produced and used in ways that do not pose significant threats to human health and the environment,
  - Tackling issues related to infectious diseases and resistance to antibiotics,
- Managing natural resources more responsibly, including:
  - Protecting and restoring habitats and natural systems,
  - Halting the loss of biodiversity by the year 2010,
  - Introducing fishery systems that are sustainable and protect healthy marine ecosystems, both in the European Union and globally,
- Improving the transportation system and land–use management, including:
  - Shifting from road (motor vehicle) to rail transportation,
  - Promoting more balanced regional development by reducing disparities in economic activity.

Several indicators shall be applied to measure implementation. They are based on international conventions, programs, or European Union policies.

The fourth part of the European strategy is aimed at changes in methods of work in the process of developing Community laws and policies that, in the view of the Commission, are too narrow and too concentrated on a sector–based approach.

Also forwarded was a proposal for the European Parliament to create a Sustainable Development Committee that would be broadly involved in the implementation of principles of sustainable development in sector policies.

4. Objectives of the Renewed Lisbon Strategy: The Main European Union Document in the Area of Sustainable Development

The Council of Europe summit of March of 2005 approved the “New Beginning of the Lisbon Strategy,” a document on common action aimed at

economic and employment growth, which modified the Lisbon Strategy of 2001[25]. The following were proposed as priority actions on the part of the European Union and its member states:

- Making Europe a more attractive place for making investments and taking up employment,
- Developing knowledge and innovation as locomotives for sustainable development, and
- Creating a greater number of permanent jobs.

These priorities were transferred to the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG) for the years 2007–2013.

The Renewed Sustainable Development Strategy: The Main Challenge

The renewed Strategy for Sustainable Development was developed by the Council of Europe in June of 2006. It integrates economic, social, and environmental aspects and identifies seven priority action areas:

- Climate change and clean energy,
- Sustainable transportation,
- Sustainable production and consumption,
- Maintaining existing natural resources and their rational management,
- Public health,
- Social cohesion, demography, and migration, and
- Global poverty and the challenges of sustainable development[26].

[25] Over this period, the Lisbon Strategy assumes the building of a European economy that is based on:

• *Knowledge*, which involves the development of an information society, research and innovation, and the molding of relevant qualifications and skills,

• *Implementation of principles of sustainable development and environmental protection*, including the maintenance of human resources, using renewable energy sources as a basis, and limiting unfavorable climate changes in connection with warming,

• *Liberalization and integration of network industry markets* (power engineering, telecommunications and postal services, transportation, and the fuel sector) as well as the financial services market,

• *Development of entrepreneurship* based on deregulation, the elimination of administrative barriers and bureaucratic obstacles, better access to capital and technology, and the creation of uniform rules for competition among companies active on the unified European market, and

• *Job growth and a change in the social model* as well as meeting challenges related to the aging of the population (growth in professional activity, growth in labor market flexibility, improved education, modernization of the social security system, limiting hardship, poverty, and social exclusion).

[26] http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/welcome/index_en.htm.

Priorities of the new European Union environmental policy, based on the above listed documents formulated as of the year 2006, are concentrated on four main areas:

- Actions aimed at preventing unfavorable climate changes,
- Protection of biodiversity,
- Limiting the impact of pollution on health, and
- Better utilization of natural resources.

Also postulated is the taking into account of sustainable development and environmental protection in other sector policies of the European Union, primarily including transportation (proposals for new CO^2 emission standards for motor vehicles as well as with respect to fuel quality), agriculture, tourism, cohesion, development, health care, industry, scientific research, and trading policies. The Commission also prepared an action plan on sustainable consumption and production as well as new versions of the Eco–Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and the Ecolabel Scheme[27].

5. Promoting Consumption and Production that Is Sustainable and Environmentally–Friendly: An Action Plan for Industry

The objective of the European Commission is support for an integrated approach to propagating sustainable consumption and production as well as sustainable industrial policy within the European Union and on the international arena. This means a striving to improve products through a systemic approach to procurement and an improvement in communications with consumers thanks to more cohesive and simplified labeling principles. This approach particularly applies to products whose adverse impact on the environment can be significantly decreased in each phase of their life cycles. Undertaken actions are intended to assist consumers in making better choices through more cohesive and simplified ways of labeling products[28].

Ecodesign is a new concept aimed at reducing energy consumption by electrical equipment in used the household, where information on energy use by

[27] http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/sustainable_development/index_en.htm.

[28] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy Action Plan, Brussels, July 16, 2007, COM(2008) 397 final.

the product must be visible so the customer has knowledge of it prior to purchasing the product.

The harmonization of national measures relating to energy consumption information as well as relating to the content of other basic raw materials in household appliances is intended to provide the consumer with choice based on energy efficiency (energy consumption labeling)[29].

Green Labeling System

Euro–labeling serves to mark many products and services. Thanks to the Community's Eco–Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), everyone can find out if the collaborating supplier or client meets standards in the realm of environmental protection[30].

The **Program for Clean and Competitive SMEs**[31] is a scheme aimed at assisting SMEs in adapting to environmental regulations as well as in improving those regulations for better management, including instruments supporting environmental management, financial support for companies, and the assistance of local experts[32].

The European Commission is planning the development of environmental management for companies—the Environmental Monitoring and Auditing Scheme (EMAS). To this end it is planning the implementation of tools such as EMAS–Easy, a program intended to help in implementing EMAS. Also important is the eradication of administrative barriers—red tape—as well as the development of incentives for registering SMEs[33].

[29] Ibid.

[30] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0401:FIN:pl:PDF.

[31] http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/sustainable_development/l28197_en.hm

[32] Compare with ACT – Communication of October 8, 2007 from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, entitled: "Small, Clean and Competitive: A Program to Help Small and Medium–Sized Enterprises Comply with Environmental Legislation."

[33] More on this topic may be found at http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/business/doing-business-responsibly/taking-sustainability-further/index_pl.htm.

6. A Detailed Look at "New"[34] Environmental Policies (as of 2007)

In the year 2007[35] the European Commission undertook new steps with respect to environmental protection policy, especially as aimed at what is known as the "climate package," taking into account changes in the energy sector based on non–renewable energy carriers, mainly mining resources (primarily coal) and an increased share of renewable energy in Europe. It is in this realm that the Commission published a document defining new principles governing public assistance in connection with environmental protection that defines requirements for greater guarantees assuring a higher level of environmental protection than would have been achieved without such help. The positive outcome of such help must be greater than the negative effects connected with interference in competition, bearing in mind the "polluter pays principle" (PPP)[36]. Most provisions as found in the Sixth Framework Program in other areas relating to environmental protection were maintained. The main priority directions for which legislation has been prepared apply to seven thematic areas—air, protection against pollution and recycling, the marine environment, soil, pesticides, natural resources, and the urban environment. The Industrial Emissions Directive[37] is also subject to implementation. Also introduced was the directive relating to environmental liability[38] in line with which the basis for liability for damage to the natural environment encumbers the polluting entity, which is obligated to remedy the situation, as were two regulations:

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[34] The previous policy with respect to environmental protection in the European Union, its objectives, principles, and instruments, are described in detail in Z. Wysokińska and J. Witkowska, *Integracja Europejska. Rozwój rynków* [European integration: The development of markets], PWN, Warsaw, 2002 as well as in Z. Wysokińska and J. Witkowska, *Integracja Europejska. Dostosowania w Polsce w dziedzinie polityk* [European integration: Policy adaptation in Poland], PWE, Warsaw, 2004, and compare with M. N. Jovanowic, *The Economics of European Integration, Limits and Prospects*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, U.K., Northampton, Massachusetts, U.S.A.,2005, pp. 792–807.

[35] Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament of July 2, 2008, entitled "2007 Environment Policy Review" [COM(2008) 409 final – Not published in the Official Journal].

[36] Community Guidelines of April 1, 2008 on State Aid for Environmental Protection [Official Journal C 82 of 1.4.2008]; http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/general_ provisions/ev0003_en.htm.

[37] Directive 2008/1/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of January 15, 2008 concerning Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control, http://europa.eu/legislation_ summaries/environment/air_pollution/l28045_en.htm.

[38] Directive 2004/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of April 21, 2004 on Environmental Liability with Regard to the Prevention and Remedying of Environmental Damage; http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/general_provisions/l28120_ en.htm.

- The first involves supervision over transborder movement with respect to wastes hazardous to the natural environment and their elimination, which signifies the incorporation into European Union legislation of the provisions of the Basel Convention[39] that came into force in 1994[40], and
- The second involves the modernizing of legislation governing the management of chemicals—Regulatory Framework for the Management of Chemicals (REACH)—and the creation of a uniform system for registration, assessment, and evaluation of chemicals so as to guarantee human health, environmental protection, the need to maintain competiveness, and the strengthening of innovation in the European chemical industry (prepared by the European Chemicals Agency)[41].

LIFE+, a new financial component for the years 2007–2013, was created in order to develop and modernize legal regulations governing European Union environmental protection policy. It is primarily intended to introduce sustainable development and environmental protection to other European Union policies in its member states as well as in the EFTA area, countries that are members of the European Environmental Agency, European Union candidate countries, and certain third party countries, especially the Western Balkans—countries that are a part of the Stabilization and Association Process. Funds may be assigned to both public and private institutions. The program encompasses three thematic components: Nature and Biodiversity, Environment Policy and Governance, and Information and Communication[42].

During the March 8–9, 2007 summit of the Council of Europe, an Action Plan integrating the Community's climate and energy policies, aimed at restricting average global warming to no more than 2°C above the level pre–dating the period of industrialization as well as decreasing the threat through price increases and limited access to oil and gas, was approved. This signifies:

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[39] Council Decision 93/98/EEC of February 1, 1993 on the Conclusion, on Behalf of the Community, of the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (Basel Convention), http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/waste_management/l28043_en.htm.

[40] Compare with Community Regulations: Council Regulation (EEC) No. 259/93 of February 1, 1993 on the Supervision and Control of Shipments of Waste Within, Into and Out of the European Community, and Regulation (EC) No. 1013/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of June 14, 2006 on Shipments of Waste, http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/waste_management/l11022_en.htm.

[41] http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/institutions_bodies_and_agencies/l21282_en.htm.

[42] Regulation (EC) No. 614/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of May 23, 2007 concerning the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE+); http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/general_provisions/l28021_en.htm.

- Decreasing the emission of greenhouse gasses by the year 2020 by at least 20% as compared with 1990,
- Rationalization of energy use and, as a consequence, restricting its use by 20%,
- Increasing the share of energy produced from renewable energy sources (RES) up to 20% of the total average energy use in the European Union in 2020, and
- Achievement of at least a 10% biofuel share in the sale of transportation fuels in 2020[43].

Sustainable Transportation

Noise and air pollution caused by transportation are serious problems within the territory of the whole of the European Union. They also have significant health effects.

The European Union is obligated to achieve a target of acquiring 10% of the energy for satisfying the fuel demands of the transportation sector through renewable energy sources (including biofuels, electricity from renewable sources, and hydrogen) by 2020 within the framework of the climate–energy package.

This target is tied with the introduction of binding criteria in the area of sustainable development with respect to biofuels in the directive on energy from renewable sources and the directive on fuel quality[44].

The Green Transportation Package

The goal of this package is making the transportation sector more environmentally–friendly and bringing about the internalization of external costs as well as limiting rail–based noise.

Also forwarded was a proposition for collecting fees for the use of certain types of infrastructure by freight vehicles.

An executive order defining obligatory limits on CO^2 emissions for new passenger cars was passed in April of 2009.

[43] The final decision in this matter was taken in December of 2008, compare with http://europa.eu/pol/env/index_pl.htm.

[44] Compare also M. Loennroth, "The Environment in the European Social Model," in Global Europe, Social Europe, edited by A. Giddens, P. Diamonds, and R, Liddle, Polity Press, Cambridge, Malden, 2006, pp. 217–218.

The Main Provisions of the Green Transportation Package

- Approval of the directive on promoting environmentally clean and energy–saving road transportation vehicles,
- Undertaking an action plan to implement intelligent transportation systems in Europe,
- Undertaking new action following approval of the Green Book on urban mobility,
- Reaching an understanding on including aviation in the Community system of trading in emission allowances as of 2012,
- Approval of the package on marine safety and the strategy for the development of marine transportation by 2018, and
- Approval of a new directive on marking tires, executive orders on limits to noise caused by the rolling of tires, standards in the area of rolling resistance, and decision relating to the application of systems for monitoring tire pressure[45].

A Strategy for the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

The objective of this strategy is the reduction of the negative impact on the environment of the exhausting of natural resources that makes impossible greater economic growth and employment in line with the goals of the Lisbon Strategy.

The use of natural resources that particularly pollute the environment should be replaced by alternative possibilities and energy sources.

Such actions should be complementary to the integrated product policy as well as with the application of environmentally–friendly technology[46].

[45] More on this topic in the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, entitled "Greening Transport," Brussels, July 8, 2008, COM(2008) 433 final, and http://ec.europa.eu/transport/greening/doc/citizen/2008_07_greening_package_ citizen_summary_pl.pdf.

[46] Communication from the Commission of October 1, 2003, entitled "Towards a Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources" [COM(2003) 572 – Not published in the Official Journal]. The European Union sets out the main principles for formulating a European strategy aimed at reducing the environmental impact of resource use, taking as its basis the state of these resources and building on existing policies, http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/sustainable_development/l28167_ en.htm.

Preventive Strategy (Preventing the Creation of Wastes) and Waste Recycling

Targeting legislation and action to foster prevention intended to curb the negative impact of pollution on the environment as well as effective recycling[47].

Sustainable and Competitive Tourism

Europe is the most attractive tourist destination in the world and tourism plays an extremely important role in economic development and the creation of jobs.

The high attractiveness of Europe and the development of tourism are strongly coupled with its impact on the natural environment and on local communities.

It is for this reason that it is important to promote a holistic approach tied not only with the economic development of the tourism sector, but also with environmental protection, social cohesiveness, and the promotion of culture in European tourist destinations.

Challenges Facing the Development of Tourism in Europe

- Guaranteeing the safety of tourists and local communities,
- Protection of the natural environment and cultural resources at tourist destinations,
- Minimizing use of resources and decreasing pollution at tourist destinations,
- Looking after the interests and well–being of local communities,
- Reduction in season–related demand,
- Attention to the impact of transportation related to tourism on the local environment,
- Attention to the development of tourism accessible to everyone and an absence of discrimination in this field, and
- Improvement in the quality of work in tourism[48].

[47] More broadly in the Commission Communication of May 27, 2003, entitled "Towards a Thematic Strategy on the Prevention and Recycling of Waste" [COM (2003)301 – Official Journal C 76, March 25, 2004], http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/other/l28151 _en.htm.

[48] Communication from the Commission of October 19, 2007, entitled "Agenda for a Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism" [COM(2007) 621 final – Not published in the Official Journal] http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/sustainable_development/l10132_en.htm.

7. Member States of Central and Eastern Europe: Growth in Expenditures on Protection of the Natural Environment

Most of the new member states from the Central and Eastern European region increased their outlay on environmental protection significantly following entry into the European Union. This particularly applies to an increased share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in public spending (compare with Table No. 2) as well as on environmental investments in the industrial sector (compare with Table No. 1).

Leaders in this process have been countries such as Bulgaria, Poland, and Slovenia. However, growth in expenditure on environmental protection and environmental investments have also been noted in the Baltic States, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Romania (compare Tables No. 1 and No. 2).

This bears witness to a particularly intensive utilization of European Union structural funds designated for pro–environmental projects and improved environmental awareness among citizens and companies in those countries.

Table 1. Environmental Investment by Industry (in % of GDP)

	2004	**2006**	**2008**	**2009**
CEE Member States				
Bulgaria	**0.48**	**0.83**	**0.57**	
Estonia	**0.14**	**0.40**	**0.46**	
Lithuania	**0.12**	**0.14**	**0.25**	
Latvia	**0.06**	**0.11**	**0.25**	
Poland	**0.22**	**0.28**	**0.33**	**0.38**
Czech Republic	0.28	0.32	0.29	0.30
Romania	0.39	0.31	0.31	
Slovakia	0.44	0.47	0.34	0.31
Slovenia	**0.29**	**0.36**	**0.34**	
Hungary	0.21	0.15	0.13	
Selected West European Countries				
Germany	0.07	0.07	0.08	
Sweden	0.14	0.11	0.11	
France	0.06	0.06	0.08	
Portugal	0.17	0.22	0.17	

Source: *Eurostat* and national statistics.

Table 2. Environmental Expenditure by the Public Sector (in % of GDP)

	2004	2006	2008	2009
CEE Member States				
Bulgaria	**0.34**	**0.37**	**0.39**	**0.52**
Estonia	0.20	0.16	0.16	0.16
Lithuania	0.32	0.49	0.65	
Latvia	0.06	0.11	0.08	
Poland	**0.30**	**0.47**	**0.41**	**0.48**
Czech Republic		0.53	0.37	0.44
Romania	0.22	0.54	0.57	
Slovakia	0.28	0.26	0.25	0.27
Slovenia	**0.95**	**0.71**	**0.71**	
Hungary	0.69	0.69	0.25	
Selected West European countries				
Germany	0.66	0.62	0.62	
Denmark	0.77	0.62	0.62	
France	0.54	0.56	0.62	
Norway	0.62	0.56	0.59	0.65

Source: *Eurostat* and national statistics.

8. Final Remarks

The systematic implementation of a strategy for sustainable development and an improvement in the state of the natural environment necessitates the introduction of a lucid vision of good governance on all levels of central, regional, and local administration. The concept of *good governance* for sustainable development is increasingly being coupled with not only environmental protection and corporate social responsibility, but also with **public health practice for the betterment of the health of the population.** Moreover, the concept of *good governance* is based on multidisciplinary competencies as well as on ethical principles to assure the responsible and effective translation of knowledge into public health research, policy, education, and practice.

Good governance strives towards universality in its support of democracy, basic human rights, and participatory forms of government. This support is based on a conviction that diversity can only be truly manifested through the mechanisms of democratic institutions that enable people to freely express their views and participate in political processes. Good governance

entails a vast set of democratic processes and institutions at every level of society—from the local council to regional, national, and international institutions—that allow the voices of the people to be heard, conflicting interests to be peacefully resolved, and the forging of consensus towards greater social progress.

Good governance is also based on the conviction that a system that places sovereignty in the hands of the people is more likely to invest in its people, **channeling public resources to education, health care, and social services for the elderly and vulnerable members of society**. Without such investments, poverty cannot be eliminated and sustainable development can never be achieved.

Upholding the rule of law as well as bringing security and predictability to social, political, and economic affairs, is a cornerstone of good governance. Legal reform efforts to enhance the fair and efficient administration of justice in protecting property rights and, increasingly, political and civil rights of citizens are now being undertaken in growing numbers of developing countries and transition economies. This is vital in order to encourage multi–stakeholder partnerships aimed at increasing the welfare of the people at the local level and to enhance governance institutions in order to attract foreign investment in an increasingly globalized economy. The role of good governance in creating an environment conducive to domestic savings and investment will be equally important. National development should not depend solely on the vagaries of international capital flows, but rather on the inherent wealth, industry, and creativity that each nation possesses.

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Streszczenie

ZRÓWNOWAŻONY ROZWÓJ W UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ I W GOSPODARCWE ŚWIATOWEJ – GŁÓWNE WYBRANE ASPEKTY

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie kluczowych zagadnień teoretycznych i empirycznych zrównoważonego rozwoju i ochrony środowiska z perspektywy światowej i europejskiej, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem wpływu tej koncepcji na rozwój nowych krajów członkowskich UE położonych w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej. Główne aspekty zostały omówione z unijnej i globalnej perspektywy, zwłaszcza takich jak: globalne partnerstwo na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju, walka z ubóstwem i wspieranie rozwoju społecznego, zrównoważone zarządzanie zasobami naturalnymi i środowiskowymi, handel przydziałami na emisję gazów cieplarnianych.

Analizie poddane zostały również wyzwania stojące przed państwami Unii Europejskiej, wynikające z nowych strategicznych dokumentów Unii Europejskiej, mających na celu promowanie zrównoważonego rozwoju, w tym w dziedzinie zrównoważonej produkcji konsumpcji, przyjaznego dla środowiska naturalnego "zielonego" systemu etykietowania, nowych celów i wyzwań w odniesieniu do polityki ochrony środowiska, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem zrównoważonego transportu, strategii zrównoważonego wykorzystania zasobów naturalnych, zapobiegania powstawaniu szkodliwych odpadów i promocji recyklingu oraz rozwoju zrównoważonej i konkurencyjnej turystyki.