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The European Union as an example of the rational use of the concept of sustainable development of society

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The European Union (EU) is a giant on the political map of the world, which combines many states, people, laws, principles, and values. It can be called one of the economic leaders of the planet, a model of strong politics and broad democracy. The EU is spreading new driving ideas that improve many different areas of life.

The introduction and implementation of the concept of sustainable development can be considered as one of the most important achievements that has a positive effect on the modern and future development of society. At the moment, all over the world, countries, integration unions and the world community have faced many problems that negatively affect the development of society and may even be a threat to future generations. The problem of sustainable development can be considered as the main problem of humanity at the beginning of the 21st century. Today, the EU demonstrates the successful results of implementation this concept into real life, despite the fact that the issue of sustainable development has turned to the background for most countries of the world due to the deterioration of economic indicators

during the global financial and economic crisis. Therefore, the dominant ideology of the development of civilization in the 21st century should be the concept of sustainable development, which the EU has already successfully implemented.

“Sustainable development is a development of the society that meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, — was said on a report by the UN Commission under the leadership of Gro Harlem Brundtland in 1987. The concept of sustainable development includes unification of the three main components, in particular, economic, social and environmental.

The economic component involves the optimal use of limited resources and the use of ecological nature, energy and material saving technologies, including the extraction and processing of raw materials, the creation of environmentally acceptable products, minimization, recycling and disposal of waste. That’s why there are many examples that demonstrate the realization of the economic component of the concept of sustainable development in European countries. Energy-saving solar power plants, which are common in all the EU countries, will help to minimize emissions from thermal power plants and to prevent damage from nuclear power plants. That’s why the UK has recently built the largest solar power plant in Europe. In Italy, solar panels are installed on the roofs of trains, and in Germany, the state covers 70% of the cost of installing solar panels in private homes. Recycling is also an important economic component of the concept of sustainable development. Therefore, the EU countries are actively building garbage recycling plants, and the leader among them is Germany, where, since 1991 garbage sorting has become the daily ritual of every resident. By the way, it is possible to get money for the delivery of glass containers for the purpose of its reuse — in this way the government of Germany motivates people to take the problem of waste recycling more seriously. Also, in the EU countries, waste, such as plastic, is actively used in laying heavy-duty roads for pedestrians. Recently, the EU adopted a strategic waste recycling plan, according to which by 2030 all packaging material on the EU market will have to be recycled. In particular, it is planned to create points of collection of plastic waste from the sea in all European ports for the implementation of this strategy. Thus, it can be said that the EU government is actively implementing energy-saving systems, reducing the amount of waste by its recycling and the use of exhaustive natural resources.

The social component of the concept of sustainable development is an integral part of the general idea of sustainable development because it spreads the idea of human harmony in society and aims at preserving the stability of social and cultural systems, including reducing the number of destructive conflicts between people. Therefore, this component includes the main goals, such as poverty and hunger reduction, good health and well-being, high-quality education, gender and

racial equality, peace, and justice, which are also the main goals of the UN. In order to reduce poverty, the European government creates a lot of social programs to provide low-income people. According to the research, social payments in the EU countries on average compensate for the risk of poverty by a third. They are especially effective in the Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and the Scandinavian countries, where poverty is reduced by over 50% due to such payments. In most European countries, it was possible to reduce the level of poverty due to the wide development of the sphere of production and services and the maximum involvement of the working-age population in the labor process. Although the problem of hunger in the EU countries is not very broadened, the government is trying to reduce the causes of the problem by distributing food from supermarkets and restaurants that were not used during the day to those people who need it. Good health is the key to a strong nation, and in this case, it is the key to a progressive future. That's why a lot of attention is paid to the health of the population. According to some sources, Germany, the UK, Spain, and Austria can be called the countries with the highest level of development of medicine, as shown by the average life expectancy of men aged from 79 to 81 and women aged from 83 to 86. Education is also part of the social component because it creates the stock of knowledge of modern youth, which will be the foundation for building the world of the future, and this is the meaning of the idea of sustainable development. Education at the universities of the EU is considered to be one of the best in the world, as higher education institutions prepare the best specialists, and universities in the UK, Germany, France, Poland are exploring the current problems and the problems of the future, which are the causes of the problem of sustainable development, especially global warming. Universities in the EU also have different exchange programs for students from different countries. These programs focus on the study of sustainable development, including economic and environmental components, and help spread the idea to other countries. Since racial and gender equality are part of the social component of the idea of sustainable development, it is easy to note the minimal manifestations of these phenomena in the EU countries too. In Europe, women and men are equal in the rights for a long time and women can be politicians, to work as truck drivers and not to have any gender restrictions; people with other racial characteristics are equal in the rights with the indigenous people of the countries of European integration. Also, in the EU countries, a large demonstration of democracy and freedom of speech can be seen, which is the one of the goals of the social component of sustainable development. All these aspects show the readiness to follow certain goals for having a better future, which can be considered the implementation of this concept.

The last and the most important component of sustainable development is ecological because the life of future generations depends on the environment and our attitude to it today.

Nowadays, climate change, deforestation, air pollution, and water are global problems. Therefore, the whole world should pay a lot of attention to this issue, not only the EU. That's why today, most residents of the EU consciously refuse to buy and operate cars on fuel and convert them to environmentally friendly electric cars, which not only save users funds but also do not harm the atmosphere. The government of these countries is encouraging the abandonment of cars with internal combustion engines by freeing potential buyers from property tax and incentives in the form of free parking for owners of electric cars. And after 10-20 years, the EU plans to ban the sale of cars with internal combustion engines. Already today, you can hear that the EU government is trying to reduce the extraction of minerals, which pollutes the atmosphere and damages the waters, soils, and landscapes. For example, France has banned the production of shale gas on its territory, Germany has introduced a moratorium on the use of hydro-technology, and the European Parliament is trying to impose a total ban on its use throughout the territory of EU now. Also, the countries of the EU are members of the Kyoto Protocol, which predicts the implementation of commitments to reduce emissions of harmful gases into the atmosphere.

BP Energy Outlook 2035, a publication that calculates the amount of energy consumed by the most progressive states of the world and the unions of certain states, has predicted extraction and consumption of various types of energy by these countries by various scientific methods by 2035. This exploration finds out that the EU ranks first in reducing the use of oil, natural gas, coal, and electricity produced by nuclear, hydro, wind and solar power plants among all countries of the world. By 2035, this number will be reduced by three units, measured in quadrillions of British thermal units, while other studying countries, except the United States, will significantly increase this production. Also, the EU government is worried about the quality of water that is constantly being polluted by various industrial enterprises. Therefore, in 2012 was adopted an important strategic document "European Water Conservation Program", which considered the following aspects: land use and the ecological state of the EU waters, the chemical status and pollution of the EU waters, the efficiency of water use and vulnerability of the EU waters. That's why it can be concluded that the EU government is implementing a lot of reforms to reject or rationalize the factors that worsen the ecological state of the planet in order to preserve nature for us and our descendants.

Focusing on the positive aspects of using the theory of sustainable development in the countries of European integration, the negative aspects of this process can not be ignored. First of all, it refers to the demographic crisis of Europe and the phenomenon of "aging of the nation", because if all the conditions of the concept of sustainable development are fulfilled, there is an increase in the standard of living of the population, which provokes an unwillingness to leave

behind posterity. This phenomenon is already clearly observed in Europe because it is the world leader in the aging of the nation. I think, this indicator should not characterize the idea of sustainable development as a negative phenomenon, because it concerns our future and the future of the next generations within the planet that we leave after our living — this is the essence of this concept.

However, I believe that this problem can be solved. Because of the improvement of the living standard of people on the planet, young people are even more absorbed in their work by routine, a saturation of technology and information, so there is no time to rest from the burden. Therefore, the youth recreational tourism will have a positive influence on the solution of this problem and it will help to find new acquaintances and learn something new for themselves, rest from the fast pace of development of society and will help to find time to relax and rethink the meaning of existence. I believe that tourism, especially youth, should also be part of the concept of sustainable development in the future, because tourism provokes the exchange of information among young people from different countries, which is a very positive factor in promoting the idea of sustainable development, taking into account that modern youth is a mover and the future of our society. Perhaps tourism can help young people to cope with the challenges of the future world, one of which is the demographic crisis.

The concept of sustainable development should become the main ideology of the development of civilization in the 21st century since the irrational use of resources, poverty, hunger, various forms of discrimination, catastrophic climate change, environmental degradation have become a threat to the existence of a society. Many countries are still not ready to admit that these problems are a threat to future generations, and this is one of the most important issues nowadays. There are problems that should encourage us to find new methods for solving the necessary issues that will help to avoid these problems in the future. Today, the EU solves the most problems for a smart, sustainable and comprehensive growth, demonstrating the best dynamics in reducing minerals production the whole by increasing the share of clean solar and wind power plants and investing in alternative forms of energy extraction and construction of affordable electric cars. The EU government is actively fighting poverty and hunger, promoting peace and justice by combating racial and gender inequalities and making tremendous successes in medicine and education; The EU is an example of rational use of the theory of sustainable development of society, and it hopes that other countries will also join this very necessary theory. It should be remembered that we are only temporary guests on the Earth, and it is necessary to leave behind only such things that will hurt neither the planet nor the next generations.