

## **THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL**

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### **Abstract:**

In the context of globalization and demographic change, states are currently more vulnerable to non-military, asymmetric, hybrid and cyber threats and threats from non-state actors. Russia's war on Ukraine, Hamas's military attack on Israel indicate the likelihood of armed aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state in modern global conditions.

In the introductory part of the paper, the author analyzes the notion of national security as the ability of states, taking into account global changes and development, to protect their own identity, survival and interests. Furthermore, the author analyzes the need to achieve Sustainable Development at the global level. In the final part of the paper, the author states that Investing in the common future with its closest neighbors is fundamental for the long-term political stability of the European Union itself. Therefore, the enlargement of the European Union is based on development programs aimed at achieving political stability, secure economic conditions, social cohesion and environmental sustainability.

The content will be created based on the analysis of foreign literature and using electronic content. 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.

*Keywords:* national security, building resilience, sustainable development

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### **1. Introduction**

The global security environment is unpredictable. Security challenges, risks and threats continue to evolve, intertwine and increasingly become asymmetric, hybrid and cyber threats are becoming a frequent narrative of modern warfare. No country can handle them alone. Therefore in dealing with these challenges, countries must cooperate with each other in finding a common collective response. In terms of national and regional security, the main challenges are primarily of an economic and political nature, from organized crime, the activities of hostile foreign intelligence services, terrorism and violent extremism and radicalism, illegal migration, cyber-attacks and information security, as well as the impact of climate change and natural disasters. Within this spectrum of challenges, the best way to further improve and strengthen security in the region is to develop appropriate capacities and capabilities and the full Euro-Atlantic integration of all Balkan countries that share that aspiration.

Regional cooperation and good neighborly relations have a positive impact on security in the region. The states in the region are aware that cooperation and good neighborliness are a prerequisite for building mutual trust, integrating into European and Euro-Atlantic structures and improving regional security, stability and economic growth.

The strengthened cooperation in the field of defense between the countries in the region contributes to the improvement and strengthening of mutual relations and building measures

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of trust. There is a belief that with the full integration of the aspirant countries into the Euro-Atlantic structures, the benefits and values of the vision of the creators of NATO and the European Union, that is a free, democratic and peaceful Europe, will be felt.

## **2. Definitions of sustainable development**

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 adaptation, monitoring and improvement.

When we talk about Sustainable Development, it is very important that each national state realizes territoriality as the right of exceptional political authority over a certain geographical space (internal sovereignty) and autonomy – it means that no external factor – such as another state – has authority within on the defined borders of states (external sovereignty).

The security of state sovereignty implies political independence, independence of states. The state authority and the state are sovereign, when they are not subordinated or subordinated to any higher authority inside the state or outside it, that is, when they have the legal opportunity to determine the framework of their competence and interventions by their own decision and to apply all necessary measures to protect it.

Social security – the social community undertakes activities aimed at achieving the well-being of citizens, i.e. physical well-being, moral and intellectual development, guarantee funds, which are sufficient to meet life's needs at any stage of life, but also funds that will protect citizens and the social community from all major risks (social insecurity).

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.

Economic security – As economic threats to national security, we can single out: economic insecurity; poverty; hunger; depression; economic diplomacy, threats of unemployment, job insecurity; poor working conditions in the workplace, income inequality, poorly developed social security network.

Economic and energy security implies the protection of economic and energy potentials from physical threats with the absence of dangers that can threaten economic and energy stability and independence.

Environmental security is an integral component of the security of the individual, society, the state and the international community and signifies: safety of the environment (protection of the environment) – its protection, maintenance and improvement, i.e. its protection from threats from phenomena of natural, human or technical-technological origin (risks and threats to the environment) and the safety of people, states, international communities and the planet, i.e. the threat to their safety from the degraded environment (ecological risks and threats).<sup>1</sup>

Two very important terms are: the security of the state and the security of the society. The basic criterion for their differentiation is the sovereignty of the state against the identity of the society. In the being of both phenomena is existence or survival; the state that loses its sovereignty ceases to be a state and the society that loses its identity ceases to exist as a sovereign entity.

When we talk about Sustainable Development, it is very important to define the term "national security" as the ability of the national state to provide general conditions for the smooth political. Economic, social and cultural development of society and the well-being of

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<sup>1</sup> Gerginova, Tatjana., (2023). Global security (Basic textbook), University "St.Kliment Ohridski" – Bitola, Faculty of Security, Skopje.

its citizens. Apart from the political and military factors, the economic, social and environmental factors are equally important for the realization of national security.<sup>2</sup>

Hewedy, Amin defines national security as "the activity of national states with which in accordance with their social possibilities in the present and the future, taking into account global changes and development, they protect their own identity, survival and interests."<sup>3</sup>

According to prof. Dr. Tatjana Gerginova, National security means a state of protection, of free, stable and certain functioning and development of a state (country), i.e. a state in which there are no serious threats and dangers to the survival of a state, its independence, territorial integrity and constitutional-legal order, as well as for the life, rights and freedoms of its citizens and a healthy environment (state of non-threat and safety) (Gerginova 2015).

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.

### **3. Sustainable development – Activities of the European Union**

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 process of joint action in the field of external security in the formal legal sense has been completed with the adoption of the European Security Strategy. The European Security Strategy was adopted at the meeting of the European Council in Brussels on December 12, 2003 and its full title is "European Security Strategy – A Secure Europe in a better world" or "Sustainable Europe for a Better World".<sup>4</sup>

This document identifies the global challenges and key threats to the security of the European continent, defines the strategic goals that would successfully respond to the threats, and evaluates the political consequences that Europe may have, if these goals are achieved.

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 – a new approach policy-making that will enable the mutual strengthening of the European Union's economic, social and environmental policies. The strategy expresses a clear determination of the member states to build an international order that will be based on "effective multilateralism", that is, on building a strong international community, international institutions and international law. Preventive action – which allows to prevent the occurrence of certain problem and threats, whereby the European Union should act preventively and provide assistance where necessary, in order to remedy the security problems. Future operations and missions that the Union would carry out, imply the use of civilian, non-military capacities (political, humanitarian, economic).

Stable security environment – means the existence of peaceful and a stable neighborhood (a ring of stable states around the European Union) which is necessary for achieving the security of the Union and its further smooth development.

Maintaining transatlantic partnership and cooperation with the United States. United States is necessary, but it also needs to be based on an efficient and balanced partnership. It also implies maintaining cooperation with NATO due to the concluded Berlin plus agreement;

<sup>2</sup> See: Georgieva, Lydia. (1999), Peacemaking, Studio Ada, Skopje, Europa 92, Kočani.

<sup>3</sup> Hewed. A. Militarization and Security in the Middle East, Printer Publishers, London, 1989, p.16.

<sup>4</sup> *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](http://www.iue.eu.int/cms3_fo/showpage.asp?id=391&lang=en).

which promotes the cooperation of the European Union with NATO and allowed the access of the Union to the capacities and assets of the Alliance. Final determination of the list of key security threats after the European Union.

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.

#### **4. European Union Security Strategy from 2016 and 2020**

On June 28, 2016, it was adopted a new Global Strategy of the EU<sup>5</sup> in the field of foreign and security policy. Also in December 2016, an Implementation Plan was adopted, which actually presents a proposal for the implementation of the EU's Global Strategy in the field of security and defense.

In the introduction to the strategy it is determined that today we need a strong Europe, because the region has become unstable and unsafe. In economic terms, the countries of the European Union are counted in the G3 countries. The countries of the European Union are the most important trading partner and the first foreign investors in almost every country in the world. However, the potentials of the European Union are not yet fully used. Most EU citizens understand that it is necessary to collectively take responsibility for the EU's role in the world. The strategy fosters the EU's strategic autonomy. It is necessary to promote the common interests of EU citizens, as well as common European principles and values. The EU's foreign and security policy must be tackled with global pressures and local dynamics. The European Union will continue to deepen trans-Atlantic ties and partnership with NATO, but at the same time it will connect with new actors and explore new forms. Also, the strategy will promote reformed global governance, one that can meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The EU's strategy identifies terrorism today, hybrid threats, economic instability, climate change and energy insecurity that endanger the security of citizens and the territory. An appropriate degree of ambition and strategic autonomy are important for maintaining the ability of Europe to promote peace and security within and outside its borders. It is therefore necessary to strengthen efforts in the area of defense, high-tech security, the fight against terrorism, energy and strategic communications.

The EU is committed to the global order based on international law, which ensures human rights, sustainable development and lasting access to global resources. This commitment will become an aspiration in order to transform the existing system, not just to preserve it. The EU will advocate a strong United Nations as a pillar of a multilateral order based on rules, and developing a global coordinated response in cooperation with international and regional organizations, states and non-governmental actors. The EU aims to achieve priorities in a way by activating networks, economic impact and by all means available and coherently. In order to achieve the goals, it is necessary for the Union to invest in a credible, reactive and related Union.<sup>6</sup>

It is in the EU's interest to promote common values such as peace, security, prosperity, democracy and world order. They represent the core interests on which EU external action relies. At the same time, the basic European values are an integral part of the European interest.<sup>7</sup>

*Peace and security* – The European Union promotes peace and the achievement of security in its own territories. This means that EU citizens, in cooperation with their partners, must have

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<sup>5</sup> See more about this: "*Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe*", A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, 2016, p. 15, 16.

<sup>6</sup> See more about this: "*Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe*", A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, 2016, p. 10, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 14, 15.

the necessary skills necessary to defend and fulfill their commitments in terms of giving mutual assistance and solidarity, which is contained in the founding agreements.

*Prosperity* - The EU has accelerated the progress of European citizens. This involves promoting economic growth, jobs, equity and a safe and healthy environment. The success of the Union is a condition for Europe to become stronger. Trade exchange and investments will support EU prosperity to a greater extent: a successful union depends on the strong internal market and the open international economic system. In the interest of the EU are open and balanced markets, shaping economic and environmental rules as well as sustainable access to global goods, as well as the free flow of information and global value chains supported by free and secure internet.

*Democracy* -The European Union encourages the resilience of its democracy and will be at the level of values that have contributed to its creation and development. This includes respect for and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the rule of law. This further includes justice, solidarity, equality, non-discrimination, pluralism and respect for diversity. Consistent respect of the values of the internal plan will determine both the credibility of the EU and the impact of the external plan. In order to preserve the quality of democracy, the EU should respect national, European and international law in all areas, from migration and asylum, to energy, the fight against terrorism and trafficking.

Principles governing EU foreign policy - The EU will be guided by clear principles. They are equally based on a realistic assessment of the strategic environment as well as the idealistic ambition to make the world a better place to live. Principal pragmatism will lead the EU's foreign policy in the coming years.

*Unity* - The EU is guided by clear principles. The EU's goal is to build unity - across institutions, states and peoples. By unifying the EU Member States, it will be more unlike a Member State acting alone or in a way that is not coordinated. There is no conflict of national and European interests. For the purpose of realizing the interests, it is necessary for EU member states to act together and together. Only the combined influence of a sincere union can have the potential to bring security, prosperity and democracy to its citizens and make a positive movement in the world.

On July 24, 2020, the European Commission established a new European Union Security Strategy for the period from 2020 to 2025. The strategy outlines the main actions, tools and measures to ensure European security, both in the physical and digital worlds and across all parts of society.<sup>8</sup>

The second priority recognizes the problem of rapidly evolving threats and the need for the European Union to adapt to it in order to suppress them. A need has been identified at the level of the European Union to build tools, infrastructure and an environment in which national authorities work effectively together to deal with common challenges and global threats.

There is a need to improve capacities in digital investigations, but also to suppress hybrid threats (cybercrime) whose purpose is to disrupt social cohesion and trust in institutions.

The third priority concerns the fight against terrorism and organized crime. The fourth priority concerns the construction of a strong security ecosystem, which implies cooperation and exchange of information, strong external borders, strengthening research capacities and advancing skills and raising awareness of security issues.

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<sup>8</sup> Gerginova, Tatjana., "NATIONAL SECURITY AND RESISTANCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA IN A MODERN GLOBAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT" – The paper was published in Proceedings of the 13th International Scientific Conference organized by the Faculty of Security, Skopje and the German Foundation Friedrich Ebert Stiftung – Skopje, 2022

## 5. The European Strategy for Sustainable Growth and Jobs - "EUROPE 2020"

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.<sup>9</sup>

Europe 2020 replaces the Lisbon Agenda of 2000, according to which Europe' 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

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:<sup>10</sup>

- 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

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<sup>9</sup> [https://www.sobranie.mk/april-d514fb3f-a501-4bbc-8745-48aa63079051-ns\\_article-strategija-evropa-2020-16-04-10.nspix](https://www.sobranie.mk/april-d514fb3f-a501-4bbc-8745-48aa63079051-ns_article-strategija-evropa-2020-16-04-10.nspix).

<sup>10</sup>(See: [https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/sites/default/files/SD%20EUROPE%202020%20STRATEGY\\_EN\\_160316.pdf](https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/sites/default/files/SD%20EUROPE%202020%20STRATEGY_EN_160316.pdf)).

-Strengthening social investment and fighting social inequality, in lifelong learning, healthcare, gender equality, youth participation, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion.

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.<sup>11</sup>

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.

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.

## **6. Conclusion**

The contemporary global security environment is characterized as unpredictable. Rapid, complex and dynamic social, political, economic and technological developments, associated with changes in the balance of power have a great impact on the security challenges, risks and threats we face. The concept of security now includes not only threats to the national security of states, but also an increased threat to the citizens living in them. States will continue to face traditional military threats in the future, but are more susceptible to non-military, asymmetric, hybrid, cyber threats, threats from non-state actors and the influence of the Internet and social media.

Cyberspace has a significant impact on the security of people and nations. While global access, information sharing and the use of the Internet for business and social purposes have enormous benefits, they also represent a contemporary threat given the increased vulnerability of our societies to cyber-attacks.

Technological developments have allowed wider access to modern dual-use technology, which can be used to threaten security and stability.

In the final part of the paper, the author states that Investing in the common future with its closest neighbors is fundamental for the long-term political stability of the European Union itself. Therefore, the enlargement of the European Union is based on development programs aimed at achieving political stability, secure economic conditions, social cohesion and environmental sustainability.

Following the geopolitical patterns, it is expected that in the future the world will preserve hybrid threats. Hybrid threats are dangers to the safety, stability and security of the country, as well as to the safety of critics. They cause economic losses, difficulties in the work of public

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<sup>11</sup> See: [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)

administration, problems in critical infrastructure and loss of trust of citizens in state institutions.

Hybrid threats are an innovation based on the use of new technologies and modified concepts. The digital age and globalization have increased the power of these methods, increasing the speed, intensity and scale of their operation.

Today, hybrid threats are a danger to fragile democracies in the Balkan countries, as well as to the most powerful countries in the world that have specific programs and excellent results in dealing with them. Nowadays, hybrid threats pose a challenge to both smaller states and the more developed EU member states, as well as the United States of America, which is leading the fight against this type of modern security threat.

Building national resilience is the primary responsibility of member states. Many Member States face common hybrid threats that can be more effectively addressed at EU level. A significant step in the defense against hybrid threats is the improvement and increase of international cooperation at the global level, especially with EU member states, as well as with neighboring states. The European Union recognizes hybrid threats as security challenges in the Global Strategy for Foreign Policy and Security adopted in 2016. In the same period, the European Union also adopts the Common Framework for Suppressing Hybrid Threats, which lists 22 measures for recognizing hybrid threats, Organizing response to hybrid threats, crisis prevention and crisis response, recovery and strengthening of cooperation with NATO (from cyber attacks on critical information systems, through disruption of critical services, such as energy supply or financial services, to undermine public trust in government institutions or exploiting social vulnerabilities).

An EU Hybrid Fusion Cell within the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) of the European External Action Service (EEAS) will offer a single focus for the analysis of external aspects of hybrid threats. The Fusion Cell will receive, analyze and share classified and open source information from different stakeholders within the EEAS, the Commission and Member States specifically relating to indicators and warnings concerning hybrid threats. The Cell would enhance awareness and provide inputs to security risk assessment processes which support policy-making at national and EU levels.

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