

ENHANCING EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE FACE OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Purpose. The paper aims to search for scientific approaches to strengthen the multilateral European partnership, through a comprehensive analysis and definition of strategic boundaries, in order to improve the effectiveness of cooperation of each actor by strengthening its capacities development in the face of global conflicts and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG–17 “Partnership for the Goals”).

Methods. Analysis of statistical information provided by OECD and European Commission on the flows of EU official development assistance and EU import from developing countries.

Results. The EU maintained its status as the foremost global contributor to Official Development Assistance (ODA). When adjusted for inflation, its current level of financial support closely mirrors that provided by the EU fifteen years ago. However, notable strides were made in 2022, with a substantial increase in contributions to approximately USD 100.4 billion, marking a 20% rise compared to 2021. Furthermore, spanning from 2007 to 2022, the EU experienced a significant surge in imports from developing countries, more than doubling from EUR 617 billion to EUR 1,508 billion. Over this period, imports from developing nations exhibited an average annual growth rate of 6.1%.

Conclusions. At the heart of the European Union lies the principle of partnership, which serves as a guiding force not only within the EU but also in its efforts to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) both domestically and internationally. When it comes to monitoring progress on SDG 17 within the EU framework, particular attention is given to three critical areas: global partnership, financial governance, and technology accessibility. The EU’s achievements in global partnership during last five years are uneven. Although imports from developing countries have increased, funding allocated to these nations has declined. Additionally, the EU still lags behind on reaching its official development assistance target. However, general progress has been observed, particularly since the start of the Russian military campaign against Ukraine.

Key words: Global environment, economic development, European partnership, digital transformation, sustainable development, global conflicts, financial assistance, international trade, investment.

JEL Classification: F 29, F 40, F 42.

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Introduction. Promoting synergies of the European partnership for the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the United Nations until 2030 is crucial in the face of current and future global challenges and threats. The world crises, COVID-19 and wars on the European continent in the last 5 years have confirmed the usefulness and value of the European partnership for less developed states. The synergy of the best European experience, its financial and technical resources have actually become a key element in stimulating economic growth and rebuilding or supporting each country’s defence capabilities towards achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals. Maintaining this paradigm between all stakeholders working together to improve the quality and security of people’s lives, taking into account the principles of a rational economic, social responsibility and environmental conservation, reinforces the extreme relevance of this study in today’s context. The greenness of the European partnership also lies in the fact that experience, knowledge and current practices in the field of sustainable development are offered. The existing experience of the European partnership also shows unresolved issues that require efforts to finalise and implement. These are the establishment of close co-operation between the private and public sectors, the building of a quality legislative framework, the

existence of a highly qualified public authority and a solid understanding of the European partnership procedure based on sustainable development and strong institutional co-operation. The outlined principles require continuous monitoring and the implementation of sound scientific research.

The search for scientific approaches to strengthen the multilateral European partnership, through a comprehensive analysis and definition of strategic boundaries, in order to improve the effectiveness of cooperation of each actor by strengthening its capacities is the aim of this research.

Literature review. In the context of increasing global threats, there is a strengthening of the role of the European Partnership to support less developed states and to implement the concept of sustainable development on the European continent.

After broad and inclusive consultations that took place in 2019, the Joint Communiqué “Eastern Partnership Policy Beyond 2020: Strengthening Resilience – An Eastern Partnership Benefiting All” was adopted in March 2020 and the EU Council Conclusion on the Eastern Partnership Policy Beyond 2020 was adopted in May. The Joint Communiqué defined 5 long-term goals: 1) together for a sustainable, resilient and integrated economy; 2) together for responsible institutions, rule of law and security; 3) together for environmental and climate sustainability; 4) together for sustainable digital transformation; 5) together for sustainable, just and inclusive societies (Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions, 2020).

The concept of sustainable development shows the close interconnection of environmental, economic and social problems of mankind, and that their solution is possible only through integration, taking into account the co-operation and co-ordination of efforts of the countries of Europe and the world (Ruda, Mazurik 2021).

Marianovych (2017) is convinced that a capable and effective mechanism to stimulate economic growth of the country within the concept of sustainable development is public-private partnership. The state needs to attract the expertise, financial and technical resources of the private sector.

The study by Oharenko et al. (2021) concluded that the diversification of sources and forms of project financing, use and support from the state influences and accelerates the development of innovation infrastructure in the country (clusters, business incubators, etc.), as well as the interaction between different participants of the sustainable innovation process (the state, regions, large enterprises, small and medium-sized businesses, society).

The review of foreign experience in the organization of social dialogue convincingly demonstrates a fairly high level of its effectiveness in the countries of the European Union, which contributes to achieving a balance of interests of the main economic actors, increasing their social responsibility. For Ukraine it is advisable to introduce the European practice of the so-called broad approach to the organization of social dialogue, providing for the expansion of its subjects by representatives of territorial entities, environmental, women's, youth, cultural and other public organizations (Lopushniak et al., 2021).

The most pressing human problems mentioned in the SDGs are the effects of climate change and loss of biodiversity, as well as problems with access to water and forest resources. Vorontsova et al., (2022) concluded that there are insufficient environmental investment resources to bridge the gap in achieving environmentally oriented SDGs in 31 European countries (26 EU member states, 3 EFTA countries and Ukraine as a candidate for EU accession).

Plastun et al., (2023) highlights the need for targeted policies and partnerships to mobilise resources to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 3.

Sylenko (2020) notes that the legislator needs to pay special attention to the norms of public international law, as well as the standards of the European Union, as the vector of its further political and economic development Ukraine has chosen the European Community, where the standards of living and norms of social partnership regulation are somewhat higher than in our country.

Blazheva (2014) focuses on the dynamic changes in the agricultural sector regarding the priority of the “new” European agricultural policy – “Stimulating knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas”, namely: stimulating innovation and knowledge base in rural areas; strengthening the links between agriculture, food production, forestry and research and innovation, which is in line with the principles of sustainable development.

Makarenko (2022) analyses key European benchmarks in the field of sustainability reporting. A two-tier system of sustainability reporting benchmarks is presented, which at the operational level is based on the EU directives on non-financial disclosure and sustainability reporting, and at the methodological level on the European Sustainability Reporting Standards and other generally accepted standards.

One of the most important tasks for the development of national economies of both European countries and Ukraine is to stimulate and ensure sustainable economic growth. The impact of financial instruments and innovations on the development of the business environment of the national economy of Ukraine compared to European countries to create a successful and effective business environment in Ukraine for foreign investment has been determined (Khalatur et al., 2019).

The analysis of scientific papers shows that scientific research is relevant and is conducted to achieve global sustainable development goals.

Thus, the European Partnership (SDG-17) is the basis for the implementation of 17 Global Goals, to which 169 targets correspond, to put the European community on the trajectory of sustainable and resilient development.

The doctrine. Sustainable development implies sustainable economic growth of society, which does not harm the environment and is coordinated with the social development of society. For the first time, the term “sustainable development” was used at the official level in 1972 at the meeting of the First World Conference on the Environment in Sweden, and only in 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro was it used to denote the name of a new concept of human development. G. Brundtland in his report “Our Common Future” defined sustainable development “as a form of progress for social and economic development that enhances the resource-based rather than degrades it” and noted that it “requires a more equitable distribution of wealth than currently prevails within and among nations, and it aims at the eradication of global mass poverty, keeping options open for the future” (Brundtland, 1987).

In 2015, UN member states presented a new vision for the development of world society for the next 15 years. The main aspects of the new concept of world development are reflected in Agenda 2030, which is based on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Agenda, 2015). The new Global Goals identify key priorities and directions for efforts to combat poverty, inequality and injustice.

The concept of sustainable development has formed the basis of the EU economic development strategy, and the SDGs are considered part of European fundamental values. EU countries have adopted several documents that provide for the implementation of the SDGs by the European community. In particular, the integration of the SDGs into the structure of common European policy was announced in the document “Next steps for a sustainable European future: European action for sustainability” (2016). Starting from 2017, the EU annually monitors the implementation of the SDGs by member countries. In 2019, the document “Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030” was presented, which analysed the challenges facing the EU and characterized the competitive advantages that can be obtained by implementing the SDGs.

In addition, in 2017, the European Consensus on Development was approved, which presents the common vision of the EU countries on issues of further development and defines the mechanism of their cooperation. An important step in achieving the SDGs is the implementation of the EU strategy “Global Gateway”, which aims to “support its partner countries in boosting smart, clean and secure links in digital, energy and transport sectors, and to strengthen health, education and research systems” (Heldt, 2023).

The creation of partnerships between governments, the private sector, and civil society is a necessary condition for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals because, in the implementation of this goal, more developed countries can help developing countries. In this way, financial support from the EU can become a guarantee of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. This will create opportunities for investment in infrastructure, transport, social services, clean energy and information and communication technologies. Under such conditions, developing countries have a chance to switch to more efficient and ecological production (Kuryliak, Lishchynskyy, Lyzun, Komar, 2017). According to the New European Consensus on Development, the EU undertakes to allocate a significant part of aid to least developed countries and low-income countries. Thus, this aid is planned at the level of 0.15–0.20% of GNI in the short term with a further increase of this indicator to 0.20% by 2030 (Monitoring report, 2023).

One of the instruments of EU financial aid for LDCs is the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+), which contributes to the provision of financing from the private sector and the support

of duty free and quota free market access to LDCs, which is provided for in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (Ghosal, 2016). In addition, the application of the “Generalized Scheme of Preferences” enables developing countries to pay significantly less duty, and in some cases, not to pay it at all when exporting to EU countries. In particular, the “Everything but Arms” agreement provides duty-free and quota-free access for all LDC products. The EU provides developing countries with assistance in developing trade infrastructure and strengthening their production potential (Gradeva, Martínez-Zarzoso, 2016).

Achieving the 17th SDG “The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development” plays an important role in the development of the EU, because the partnership is the basis of the EU creation. European countries are focusing their efforts on global partnership, financial management and access to technology. This goal is based on macroeconomic stability, fair rules for the regulation and development of trade, and access to the assets of science and technology, including information and communication technologies using the Internet (Monitoring report, 2023).

To develop an effective partnership, EU countries must also develop their economies based on sustainable development. Therefore, the primary task of the EU is to ensure the macroeconomic stability of the union and create industries that are more ecological and do not cause serious damage to the environment (Lyzun, 2017). One of the directions of this goal is the introduction of environmental taxes, which will also provide opportunities to reduce taxes in other areas.

In modern conditions, the development of digital technologies is the key to the successful development of the economy. However, there are still many countries in the world that do not have high-speed Internet connections, which creates social and economic problems, and makes it difficult to make bank transfers, communicate, share information, and more. Promoting the development of digital technologies is one of the six priorities of the EU Commission for 2019-2024. Cooperation and partnership in the development of information and communication technologies is aimed at ensuring that digital transformation helps people and businesses achieve the goal of a climate-neutral Europe by 2050.

In addition, some many threats and challenges prevent the achievement of sustainable development goals. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, global conflicts and wars hold back international cooperation and coordination, increasing the importance of joint activation of actions to provide countries with financing and technologies to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. In order to implement the set tasks, it is necessary to accumulate the efforts of all spheres of society, in particular, a business must play an extremely important role in this process.

Empirical results. To realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), collaborations should be fostered among governments, the private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders. More affluent economies like the EU have the capacity to aid developing nations in executing the 2030 Agenda by leveraging both domestic and international public and private resources.

The European Union provides financial support to developing countries through various channels. These channels encompass official development assistance (ODA), which includes public grants or concessional loans aimed at fostering economic development and welfare; other official flows (OOFs), referring to public funds that may not primarily target development or have a grant element below 25%; private flows, such as direct investment, bonds, export credits, and multilateral flows; grants from non-governmental organizations sourced from funds dedicated to development assistance and disaster relief; and officially supported export credits.

In terms of the overall amount of financial assistance from the EU to developing nations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that the combined public and private financing from the EU to these countries reached EUR 111.3 billion in 2021 (Monitoring report, 2023). Adjusting for inflation, this figure is roughly equivalent to the level of financial assistance provided by the EU fifteen years prior. However, it represents a notable decrease compared to the amounts provided between 2014 and 2019, with some periods showing substantial reductions. Nevertheless, according to the OECD preliminary data, notable progress was observed in 2022. The total ODA from the EU states increased by 20 percent in 2022 compared to 2021 (OECD, 2024). The assistance to Ukraine due to war state was probably among the crucial determinants of such progress alongside other conflicts (OECD, 2023).

The concept of donor countries allocating 0.7% of their gross national income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been a longstanding international objective for fifty years. The EU has committed to reaching this 0.7% target by 2030, as outlined in the New European Consensus on

Development. Member States that joined the EU after 2002 have pledged to allocate 0.33% of their GNI to ODA. In 2021, the EU collectively allocated 0.49% of its GNI to ODA, a slight decrease from 0.50% in 2020 (Monitoring report, 2023). The peak observed in 2020 was part of a global trend, driven by heightened ODA efforts worldwide amid the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in 2022, the ODA to GNI ratio reached unprecedented growth and, according to preliminary data, exceeded 0.56% of the EU GNI (OECD, 2024).

Only four EU countries – Luxembourg, Sweden, Germany, and Denmark—reached the 0.7% target in 2021, indicating the need for additional efforts to ensure the collective EU target is met by 2030. In 2022, despite general average progress (see Fig. 1), only three EU countries met the 0.7% target (the Denmark ratio was slightly reduced in 2022).

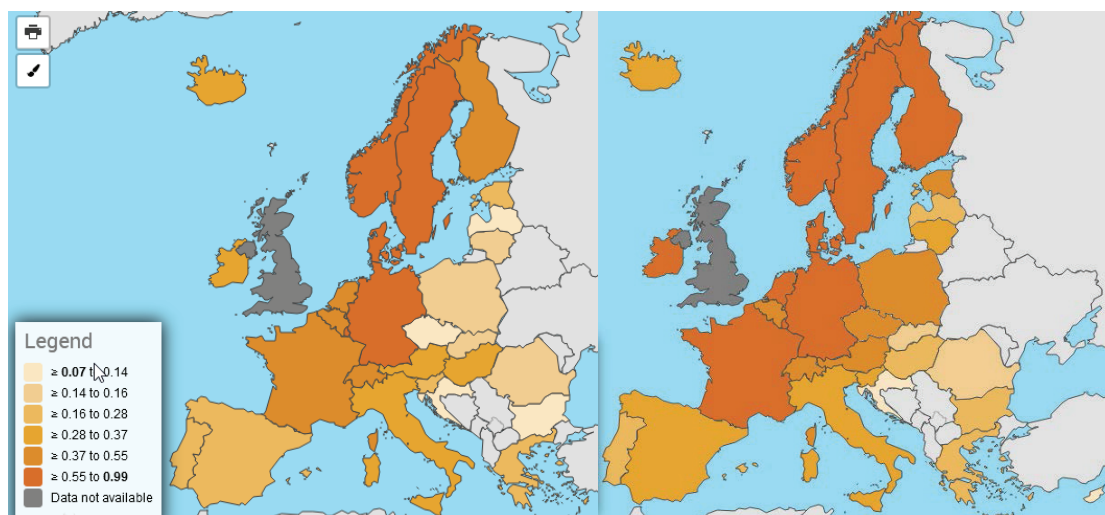


Fig. 1. Map of Official development assistance (ODA) as a share of gross national income, 2021 (left) vs 2022 (right)

Source: OECD (2024)

In 2022, the EU retained its position as the leading global donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA), contributing approximately USD 100.4 billion. This sum encompasses the collective ODA provided by the 27 EU Member States and EU institutions. Furthermore, with an ODA/GNI ratio of 0.56% in 2022 (0.49% in 2021), the EU's overall commitment to ODA was notably higher than that of many other donors in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), such as Canada, Japan, or the United States. Concurrently, there is a growing significance of aid from emerging donors. For instance, in 2021, Saudi Arabia and Turkey allocated approximately 1% of their GNI to ODA, but in 2022 their ratios were much lower.

In order to allocate resources to areas of greatest need – specifically, least developed countries (LDCs) and nations grappling with fragility and conflict – the EU has set a target to collectively provide 0.15–0.20% of GNI to LDCs in the short term, aiming to achieve 0.20% by 2030 as per the 2030 Agenda. However, in 2021, the EU's combined official development assistance to LDCs only accounted for 0.11% of GNI, marking a period of stagnation around this level since 2012. Consequently, the EU has not made progress towards its 0.20% target in recent years. In 2021, only three Member States – Luxembourg, Sweden, and Denmark – surpassed the targeted GNI ratio of ODA to LDCs. Additionally, Finland exceeded the short-term target with a ratio of 0.16%.

The EU aims to empower developing nations to leverage a combination of aid, investment, and trade alongside their own resources and policies to enhance capacity and achieve self-sufficiency. For instance, Official Development Assistance can serve as a catalyst to stimulate additional financial resources, including domestic tax revenues or capital from the private sector. Furthermore, innovative approaches have been devised, such as blending grants with loans, guarantees, or equity sourced from both public and private financiers.

By integrating EU financial assistance with domestic and private revenues, there exists a foundation for attaining the objectives outlined in the 2030 Agenda. This framework enables investment in essential

areas such as social services, renewable energy, infrastructure, transportation, and information and communication technologies. Ideally, developing nations can bypass some of the unsustainable production and consumption patterns observed in industrialized countries, thereby fostering sustainable development (Fig. 2).

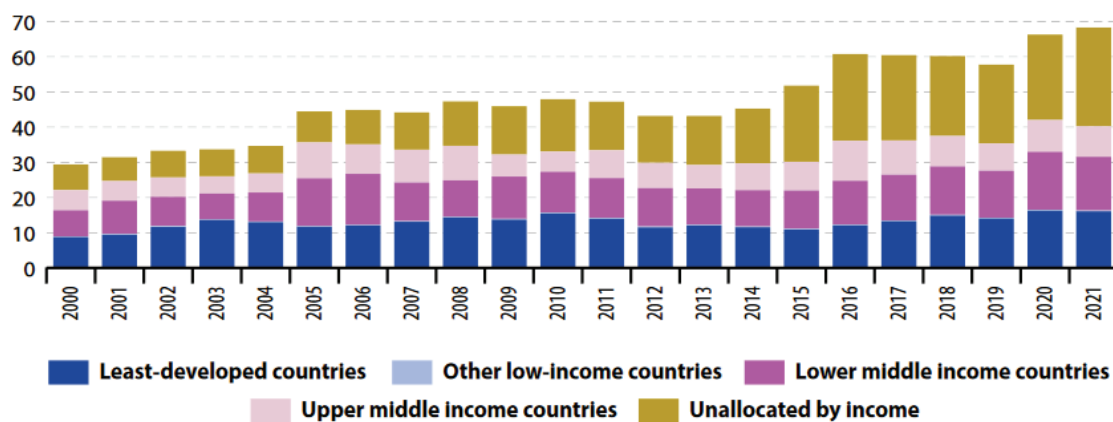


Fig. 2. The EU ODA by recipient income group, 2000–2021 (EUR billion, constant prices)

Source: Monitoring report, 2023

The potential role of trade in fostering sustainable development has long been recognized, as evidenced by the EU’s 2021 Trade Policy Review and the European Green Deal, which underscore the significance of trade policy in realizing the EU’s sustainable development objectives. Export activities can generate domestic employment opportunities and enable developing nations to acquire foreign currency, which can then be utilized to import essential goods. Enhanced integration of developing countries into global markets may lessen the dependency on external public funding. Several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight the importance of trade in promoting sustainable development. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the EU’s trade-related metrics do not provide insights into whether the traded products are manufactured in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner.

Between 2007 and 2022, the EU witnessed a more than twofold increase in imports from developing countries, soaring from EUR 617 billion to EUR 1,508 billion. During this timeframe, imports from developing countries experienced an average annual growth rate of 6.1%. In the short term, notably since 2017, imports surged even more rapidly, expanding at an annual rate of 12.5%. Both trends were predominantly propelled by a substantial uptick in imports from developing countries, surging by almost 40% in 2022 compared to 2021. Particularly noteworthy was the robust growth observed in imports from least-developed countries, which soared by over 84% from 2021 to 2022 (Fig. 3).

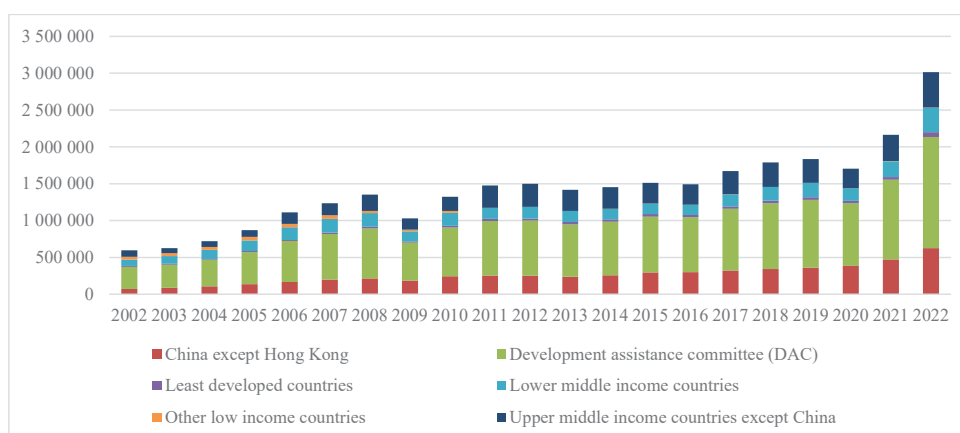


Fig. 3. EU imports from developing countries, according to country income group, 2002–2022 (EUR billion, current prices)

Source: Eurostat (online data code: *sdg_17_30*)

The proportion of imports from developing countries to the EU, relative to imports from all countries outside the EU, rose from 43.2% in 2007 to 50.2% in 2022. Similarly, in 2022, developing countries (including China) constituted half of all extra-EU imports, mirroring the figures from 2021. China (excluding Hong Kong) alone represented 20.9% of EU imports in 2022, nearly double the share of imports from the United States, which stood at 11.9%. Conversely, the nearly 50 nations classified as least developed by the UN contributed just over 2% of all EU imports in 2022 (Fig. 4).

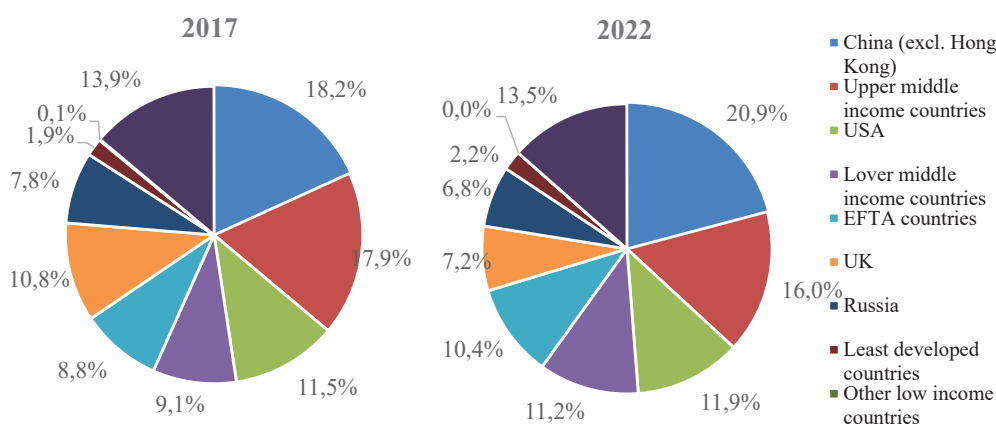


Fig. 4. Extra-EU imports by trading partner, 2017 vs 2022

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: *sdg_17_30*; *ext_lt_maineu*)

‘Aid for trade’ constitutes a segment of Official Development Assistance aimed at trade-related projects and initiatives, with the goal of enhancing trade capacity and infrastructure in developing countries, particularly the least developed among them. In 2020, the EU and its Member States emerged as the foremost global providers of aid for trade, contributing EUR 23 billion, accounting for 47% of global aid for trade. Remarkably, just three donors – the EU institutions, along with Germany and France – were responsible for 90% of this total. The allocation of aid for trade to least developed countries constituted 13% of the overall aid for trade in 2020, marking a decline of two percentage points compared to the preceding three years.

Among the other parameters of SDG–17, the EU considers also:

- general government gross debt (the declining trend in the EU in 2007-22);
- share of environmental taxes in total tax revenues (the declining trend in the EU in 2006-22);
- share of households with a high-speed internet connection (the rising trend in 2016-21, SDG target is achieved).

However, the abovementioned indicators are beyond the scope of the current paper and we would not consider them in detail.

Conclusions. At its core, the EU views partnership as a key strategy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) both within its borders and globally. In evaluating its progress on SDG–17, which emphasizes partnerships, the EU considers its performance in three areas: global cooperation, financial governance, and technology access. While the analysis covers a five-year period, the EU’s achievements in global partnership are uneven. Although imports from developing countries have increased, funding allocated to these nations has declined. Additionally, the EU still lags behind on reaching its official development assistance (ODA) target.

The current paper mainly covers the aspects of global cooperation within the SDG-17 target. Further research is needed in the areas of financial governance and technological access as crucial elements of global partnership for sustainable development.

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ПОСИЛЕННЯ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО ПАРТНЕРСТВА ДЛЯ СТАЛОГО РОЗВИТКУ В УМОВАХ ГЛОБАЛЬНИХ КОНФЛІКТІВ: КОМПЛЕКСНИЙ АНАЛІЗ ТА СТРАТЕГІЧНА КОНЦЕПЦІЯ

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Мета. Стаття спрямована на пошук наукових підходів до зміцнення багатостороннього європейського партнерства шляхом всебічного аналізу та визначення стратегічних кордонів з метою підвищення ефективності співпраці кожного суб'єкта через зміцнення його потенціалу в умовах загострення глобальних конфліктів і досягнення Цілей сталого розвитку (зокрема ЦСР-17 «Партнерство заради сталого розвитку»).

Методи. Аналіз статистичної інформації, що надається ОЕСР та Європейською Комісією, стосовно потоків офіційної допомоги ЄС на розвиток, а також імпорту ЄС із країн, що розвиваються.

Результати. ЄС зберіг свій статус головного світового донора Офіційної допомоги розвитку (ОДР). З поправкою на інфляцію нинішній рівень фінансової підтримки ЄС точно відповідає рівню, який він надавав п'ятнадцять років тому. Однак у 2022 році було досягнуто суттєвих успіхів із значним збільшенням внесків приблизно до 100,4 млрд. дол. США, що на 20% перевищує показник 2021 року. Крім того, з 2007 по 2022 рік в ЄС спостерігалося значне зростання імпорту з країн, що розвиваються. Зазначений показник зріс більш, ніж удвічі – з 617 млрд. євро до 1508 млрд. євро. Протягом цього періоду середньорічні темпи приросту імпорту із країн, що розвиваються, становили 6,1%.

Висновки. В основі Європейського Союзу лежить принцип партнерства, який є не лише ключовим драйвером формування ЄС, але й лейтмотивом його ініціатив щодо досягнення Цілей сталого розвитку (ЦСР) як усередині альянсу, так і на міжнародному рівні. При здійсненні моніторингу прогресу досягнення 17-ї ЦСР в рамках ЄС, особлива увага приділяється трьом критичним сферам: глобальне партнерство, фінансове управління та доступність технологій. Досягнення ЄС у глобальному партнерстві протягом останніх п'яти років є неоднозначними. Хоча імпорт із країн, що розвиваються, суттєво зріс, проте фінансування, що виділяється цим країнам, скоротилося. Крім того, ЄС все ще відстає в досягненні мети щодо обсягів допомоги розвитку. Проте у даній сфері спостерігається загальний прогрес, особливо після початку російського вторгнення в Україну.

Ключові слова: глобальне середовище, економічний розвиток, європейське партнерство, цифрова трансформація, сталий розвиток, глобальні конфлікти, фінансова допомога, міжнародна торгівля, інвестиції.