The Potentials of Normative Sustainability: An Analysis of Sustainable Development Strategies on Global, Supranational and National Levels
Deželan, Tomaž; Maksuti, Alem; Uršič, Matjaž

The Potentials of Normative Sustainability.
An Analysis of Sustainable Development Strategies on
Global, Supranational and National Levels[1]

Tomaž Deželan, Alem Maksuti and **Matjaž Uršič**
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Ljubljana
Slovenia

Abstract

The paper discusses the degree of normative sustainability achieved by selected regimes according to their sustainable development strategies. Focussing on Agenda 21, the Mediterranean Strategy of Sustainable Development, the European Union's renewed Sustainable Development Strategy and Slovenia's Development Strategy, the paper draws on Becker et al.'s cross-disciplinary concept of sustainability and the operationalisation of normative sustainability. On the basis of the analysis of objectives and rationales behind the investigated strategies as well as examination of the general context, the paper puts forward the differences between the examined regimes and explores the possible factors inducing them. The paper concludes with a general observation that the analysed regimes reflect a fair degree of normative sustainability.

Keywords: sustainable development, sustainable development strategy, normative sustainability, Slovenia, European Union, Agenda 21, Mediterranean region, open method of coordination

---

[1] An early draft of this paper was presented at the "Open Method of Coordination: An Analysis of Its Consequences" International Conference held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 23-24 September, 2010.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Matjaž Uršič, Assistant Professor
Affiliation: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana
Address: Kardeljeva ploščad 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
e-mail: matjaz.ursic2@guest.arnes.si

Tomaž Deželan, Alem Maksuti and Matjaž Uršič: *"The Potentials of Normative Sustainability. An Analysis of Sustainable Development Strategies on Global, Supranational and National Levels "*

EQPAM Vol.3 No.2 April 2014
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

1. Introduction

Sustainable development has become a buzzword in political and bureaucratic discourse in the past two decades and has long passed the point of being a neologism. In fact, the term increasingly pervades the everyday life of global citizenry despite having been coined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), now called the World Conservation Union, and the Brundtland Commission approximately 25 years ago.[2] The frequent (mis)use of the term in politico-administrative communication and problems translating it into other languages has compromised its lucidity and positive overtone. As a result, its conceptual clarity and restrictive use is imperative in order to restore its credentials since the majority of national, global or local strategic documents, policy platforms and even research project proposals contain some aspect of sustainable development.

The irresponsible and often misleading use of the term is no exception in Slovenia with the discourse of political parties as well as other public, private and civil society actors being saturated with sustainability and its aspects. Further, strategic documents based on the principles of sustainable development are progressively shaping our regulatory regimes. Namely Slovenia, as well as other countries of the third wave of democratisation, have experienced a much less organic process of incorporating the principles of sustainability than other Western countries since it encountered relatively harsh conditions to become a member of different international organisations. Hence, the citizenry frequently experienced sustainable development principles as an invasion of alien principles into their customary way of life, which frequently generated reluctance and disapproval. On the other hand, non-governmental actors are increasingly gaining support for their efforts related to environmental or societal goals.

1.1 Theoretical Background

The origins of the concept of sustainable development cannot be explicitly dated, although many authors argue that it can be traced back to the ancient civilisations of Sri-Lanka, Sub-Saharan cultures, and practices in China, South America and Europe as well as characterise it as one of the most ancient ideas in human heritage.[3] In his portrayal of the concept as "long-lasting and not ephemeral", by which "present demands and consumption do not deprive future generations", Hulse[4] dates it to Tertullian and even earlier leaders and authors such as Kagemna (2900 BC), Amen-em Apt (1500 BC), Amenhotep (1400 BC), which prescribe ethical patterns of government and individual responsibility to take care of others. Probably the

---

[2] Seema, *A brief history of sustainable development*. It should be noted that non-English speaking environments also faced the challenge of translating the term into their national languages. For example, in Slovenian a myriad of different terms has been employed to denote sustainable development, from *trajen razvoj* [continual/enduring development] (Flajšman, *Naprej k naravi : trajen razvoj, varstvo okolja in gozdarstvo*), through *sonaraven razvoj* [co-natural development] (Plut, "Nekatere degradacijske značilnosti in predlogi sonaravne rabe vodnih virov v Sloveniji"; Suhadolc and Lobnik, "Pomen tal za sonaravni razvoj Slovenije") and *sonaravno uravnoteženi razvoj* [co-natural balanced development] (Lah, *Sonaravno uravnoteženi razvoj Slovenije*; Lah Turnšek, "Biotehnologija in genetika ter sonaravno uravnoteženi razvoj Slovenije") to *trajnostni razvoj* [sustainable development] (e.g. Gantar, "Prehod v informacijsko družbo in trajnostni razvoj"; Kos, "Trodelna struktura trajnostnega razvoja"; Hrustel Majcen, "Trajnostni razvoj in kmetijstvo"), which is the mainstream term at the moment. To date, several other terms persist in various parts of the scientific community (e.g. *uravnoteženi razvoj* [balanced development] (Stanovnik and Slabe Erker, "Znanost in raziskovanje za uravnoteženi razvoj"), *sonaravno trajnostni razvoj* [co-natural sustainable development] (Slokar, "Usmeritve za sonaravno trajnostni razvoj")), although they have not gained general acceptance.

[3] Voight, *Sustainable development as a principle of international law; Resolving conflicts between climate measures and WTO law,* 11.

[4] *Sustainable Development at Risk; Ignoring the Past,* 3.

most prominent figures of the ancient world linked to sustainable development are Hammurabi, with his 282 codified laws and Cicero, with his insistence that the State take care of and provide for the safety and security of all Roman citizens, both present and future.[5]

Perhaps the most influential and radical in the field was the essay of Malthus, who believed that the population was held in check by misery, vice, and moral restraint.[6] The Malthusian debate raged through the centuries and burst into life with the Club of Rome and the new Malthusianism.[7] On the other hand, a school of thought called Cornucopians, also identified by some as the "technocratic perspective",[8] dismissed Malthus by asserting that an increase in population pressure acts as an incentive to develop new technology and production of more food. The idea that population growth naturally leads to development, at which point population pressures would decline, is built in a similar fashion and heavily founded on Marx's vision of ever-expanding consumption possibilities based upon the enterprise of capitalists.[9]

By contrast, although the idea of reconciling the needs of development with protection of the environment is not new, the concept of sustainable development in its current understanding certainly is.[10] In line with Kuhn's reasoning of scientists' pursuit of new discoveries and the accumulation of knowledge the established paradigm cannot encompass, the "paradigm shift" approach gains importance since the new framework provides an explanation of certain anomalies, even though it cannot yet be fully empirically supported.[11] Consequently, sustainable development is no longer about the integration of environmental considerations into the economic development process, but rather about the development process of a qualitatively different nature since it is not merely the systems of ecology and economics that need to be addressed.[12] According to the author,[13] sustainable development policy represents an epistemic shift which developed into a new paradigm and thus a new human condition.

Taking the presented viewpoints into account, the lack of a consensus regarding the state of the world's ecosystem and the role of humanity is still producing a multitude of time-bound and world-view-bound definitions of sustainable development, although several international organisations and their bodies periodically report on the status of various aspects (configurations of elements) of sustainable development, with a special stress on the environment and the ecosystems in their areas of interest.[14] It is fair to say that a "mainstream" definition has been constructed around the struggles to put the increasingly acute problem of the last few decades on the global agenda. When talking about present-day relevant definitions of sustainable development it is worth mentioning Pezzey, a former World Bank official, with his list of 72 definitions of sustainable development.[15] Nevertheless, one of the most influential elaborations of sustainable development, the outcome of a major discussion within the 1983 World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), was presented in the Commission document "Our Common

---

[5] Ibidem, 4.

[6] Rogers et al., *An introduction to sustainable development,* 20.

[7] Ibidem.

[8] Gough and Scott*, Higher education and sustainable development: paradox and possibility*.

[9] Rogers et al., *An introduction to sustainable development,* 21.

[10] Voight, *Sustainable development as a principle of international law; Resolving conflicts between climate measures and WTO law,* 12.

[11] Gough and Scott, *Higher education and sustainable development: paradox and possibility,* 16.

[12] Jensen, "From economic to sustainable development: Unfolding the concept of law".

[13] Jensen, "From economic to sustainable development: Unfolding the concept of law," 511.

[14] Rogers et al., *An introduction to sustainable development,* 21.

[15] Ibidem, 22.

Tomaž Deželan, Alem Maksuti and Matjaž Uršič: *"The Potentials of Normative Sustainability. An Analysis of Sustainable Development Strategies on Global, Supranational and National Levels "*

EQPAM Vol.3 No.2 April 2014
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

Future", also known as the Brundtland Report in 1987. In Article 1[16] the report states that "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

As a result, there was an imperative to mainstream sustainability globally, despite the various systems and interpretations. Nevertheless, the Commission provided a broad strategic framework, although it has frequently been criticised for its laxness, especially by calling for the design of strategies for sustainable development paths (Article 26) and proposing critical objectives for policies to pursue on those paths (Article 27). In line with this report several other discussions produce utile conceptualisations, with one certainly being Musinghe's discussion of three approaches (economic, ecological and socio-cultural)[17] or the understanding of sustainability in terms of analytical-normative-strategic dimensions.[18] We employ the latter as our analytical framework and elaborate on it in the following section.

1.2 Analytical Framework

Unrestricted use of the term sustainable development calls for operationalisation of the concept in order to allow us to grasp its complexity and prevent possible false inferences. In accordance with this argument, we present a conceptual framework of sustainable development that will allow us to test possible hypotheses without being limited to a fuzzy theoretical framework. Following the seminal work of Becker et al.[19], we understand the concept of sustainable development as a dynamic process by which societies manage the material conditions of their reproduction, including the social, economic, political and cultural principles that guide the distribution of environmental resources. The dynamic nature of socio-ecological transformations, valuated in terms of qualities of processes, structures and systems is therefore used as the conceptual foundation of our scrutiny of our country's performance in terms of sustainable development. It has to be noted, contrary to modernisation theory, that there is no universal path to sustainable development or societal structure,[20] which allows the framework to encompass different but equally successful paths to a sustainable society.

Equifinality[21] is therefore one of the basic principles of sustainable development. Sustainable development is in essence a cybernetic concept since its various components have to be treated synchronically and in co-dependence.[22] The "sustainability" capacity of an individual entity can thus be assessed on the basis of existing structures, (sub)systems as well as basic societal processes related to sustainable development (economic processes, social processes and governance and political participation). To be precise, its three dimensions – analytical, normative and strategic or political – although with each defining a different context, allow a valuable examination and explanation of the concept due to their inherent intertwinement.[23]

The analytical dimension primarily puts forward the identification of conditions that are deemed sustainable and non-sustainable, therefore allowing for the qualification of states and processes within a given empirical continuum. In an analytical sense sustainability is employed principally in a negative sense,

---

[16] United Nations, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*.

[17] Rogers et al., *An introduction to sustainable development,* 23.

[18] Becker et al., *Sustainability: A cross-disciplinary concept for social transformations*.

[19] *Sustainability: A cross-disciplinary concept for social transformations,* 19.

[20] Ibidem.

[21] See Bertalanffy, *General system theory: foundations, development, applications*.

[22] Kos, "Trodelna struktura trajnostnega razvoja," 49.

[23] Becker et al., *Sustainability: A cross-disciplinary concept for social transformations*.

thus identifying socio-ecologically undesirable processes rather than *vice versa* due to the multitude of paths towards sustainable social transformations. Namely, the variety of conditions and social trajectories makes a positive definition both unattainable and disputable since such a definition would discard possible alternatives and enthrone one single optimal path to a sustainable society.[24] The analytical dimension of sustainable development appears to be pervaded by a number of technical elements originating from the natural sciences (e.g. multitude of indicators, indexes etc.), but in fact it is a very plural and disputable area due to frequent disagreements among the scientific community as well as the contentiously arduous processes of gaining a political consensus to recognise sustainability standards.[25]

Second, the strategic dimension implies a system of governance at all levels that properly implements policies of sustainable social transformations with coherence between social economic and environmental goals and special attention dedicated to widespread participation and social justice.[26] The strategic dimension primarily entails the tasks of critically evaluating various goals in terms of sustainability as well as the means to attain them and assessing the institutions and institutional arrangements established to achieve the level of sustainable society. In addition, the detection of relevant stakeholders as well as the inclusion of a variety of actors, with particular attention to the local level, and the detection of possible conflicts among them may contribute to the construction of working strategies focussing on the transformation of existing mechanisms of non-sustainability.

The normative dimension, on the other hand, implies the acknowledgement of a hierarchical relationship of the economy, society and the environment. According to Becker et al.,[27] a market economy depends on society and the environment and should be subordinated to social and ecological constraints. In terms of the normative dimension, sustainability refers to compatibility between social, economic and environmental goals at all levels, social equity and social justice as an overriding goal, the recognition of cultural diversity and multiculturalism, and support for the maintenance of biodiversity.[28] The normative level highlights the incoherence between analytical demands and societal responses to them since the latter tend to be motivated by other incentives (interest, economic, cultural, psychological etc.). Hence, attaining normative sustainability, signalling the holistic character of sustainable development, appears to be of pivotal importance and may fundamentally influence the analytical and strategic dimensions.

With the proposed framework in mind, we intend to scrutinise efforts made to attain normative sustainability on three levels: global (System of United Nations), supranational (European Union), supranational — regional (Mediterranean region) and national (Slovenia). Our principal intention is to test the hypothesis that ***the investigated sustainable development regimes[29] do not reflect normative sustainability***. Our scrutiny is focussed on sustainable development strategies of the presented levels, since these strategies are a "coordinated, participatory and iterative process of thoughts and actions to

---

[24] Ibidem, 21.

[25] Kos, "Trodelna struktura trajnostnega razvoja," 49. For example, there was an intense process of political bargaining when establishing the sustainable development indicators (SDI) in the case of the European Union since member states had obvious objections to the inclusion of indicators where they perform insufficiently. The same process is revived every time the Commission and/or its collaborating bodies try to introduce new indicators or enforce more restrictive values of them (interview with a senior EC Secretariat-General official).

[26] Becker et al., *Sustainability: A cross-disciplinary concept for social transformations,* 22.

[27] Ibidem.

[28] Ibidem.

[29] In this paper, we employ a generic understanding of the term "regime". We understand sustainable development regimes as a set of rules, cultural, political and social norms that regulate the operation of sustainable development in the polity.

Tomaž Deželan, Alem Maksuti and Matjaž Uršič: *"The Potentials of Normative Sustainability. An Analysis of Sustainable Development Strategies on Global, Supranational and National Levels "*

EQPAM Vol.3 No.2 April 2014
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

achieve economic, environmental and social objectives in a balanced and integrative manner".[30] As core strategic documents of an individual regime, sustainable development strategies present an appropriate unit of analysis in terms of investigating central norms. As grounds for rejection or approval of our hypothesis, we employ genealogies of strategies on investigated levels,[31] and the analysis of objectives and rationales behind the strategies.

2. The Institutional Nexus of Sustainable Development Strategies and Their Genealogies
2.1 Global and Regional Institutionalisation of Sustainable Development

Due to several factors, predominantly greater awareness of environmental degradation, poverty, social disruptions, humanitarian crises and also the Club of Rome, the international community realised the need to reformulate the mainstream vision of development and the role of the market economy. The declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (the Stockholm Declaration) marked the beginning of a new concept of development, by advocating its socio-political implications and not merely its undesirable environmental impacts.[32] After the Stockholm Declaration in 1972, development was no longer regarded only in terms of gross national product but as a policy aimed at better living conditions for all and this shift was followed by a stronger focus on development paths in developing countries by linking development cooperation and basic environmental protection.[33] The World Conservation Strategy from 1980 is one of the first international documents to explicitly deal with development and environmental limits[34].

While some earlier approaches to sustainable development were oriented to ecology as well as utilisation and expressed the relevance of environmental protection for the socio-economic interests and needs of developing countries, it is the Brundtland Report that has had the most far-reaching implications for the overall transformation of policy and law based on the sustainable development concept.[35] Via the Brundtland Report sustainable development became a broad policy objective, although it faced some harsh criticism regarding its vagueness and restrictiveness in relation to developing countries. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro had the concept of sustainable development already installed and incorporated in all its documents.[36] The Rio Declaration introduced a new approach with a central focus on the Brundtland Report and the mainstreaming of environmental protection into developmental progress. However, like the original report and notwithstanding Agenda 21, the Rio documents suffer from the indeterminacy and ambiguity of the concept, allowing decision-makers to apply a wide margin of discretion when dealing with sustainable development.

After the Rio conference sustainable development became widely accepted as states started to implement Agenda 21 in their national policies and laws. Agenda 21 identified information, integration and

---

[30] Meadowcroft, "National Sustainable Development Strategies: Features, Challenges and Reflexivity," 154.

[31] United Nations, *Agenda 21*; Mediterranean Action Plan, *Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development: A Framework for Environmental Sustainability and Shared Prosperity*; Council of the European Union, *Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) − Renewed Strategy*; and Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, *Slovenia's Development Strategy*.

[32] Rogers et al., *An introduction to sustainable development,* 42.

[33] Voigt, *Sustainable development as a principle of international law; Resolving conflicts between climate measures and WTO law,*13.

[34] Ibidem, 14.

[35] Ibidem, 15.

[36] Blewitt, *Understanding sustainable development,* 15.

participation as key determinants for countries to achieve sustainability. It emphasised the role of information, the need to change sector-centred ways of doing business to new approaches that involve cross-sectoral coordination and the integration of environmental and social concerns into all development processes. Further, Agenda 21 highlighted the need for broad public participation in decision-making as a fundamental prerequisite for achieving sustainable development.[37] In 1997, the General Assembly of the UN held a special session to in order to evaluate the implementation of Agenda 21 (Rio +5) and identified progress as uneven due to trends of globalisation, growing inequalities in income and a continued deterioration of the environment. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, with its plan for implementation, affirmed the UN's commitment to Agenda 21, alongside the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other international agreements.

Seen from a broad perspective, a multitude of international organisations has adopted the concept of sustainable development and are actively exploring new and better indicators to measure progress as well as draft new guidelines to foster sustainable development. For example, the UN established the Commission on Sustainable Development as a high-level forum on sustainable development and as preparatory committee for summits and sessions on the implementation of the principles of sustainable development. In addition, the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), World Bank, World Trade Organisation, Global Environmental Facility, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Arctic Council, World Water Forum, African Union etc. have all tried to embrace the concept of sustainable development in their operations.[38] Despite the multitude of international activities promoting sustainable development, the pivotal document on a global level still appears to be Agenda 21, which is why we selected it as a unit for analysis.

2.2 Regional Supranational Institutionalisation of Sustainable Development

Three years after Stockholm and the setting up of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), sixteen Mediterranean countries and the European Community adopted the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), which is the first scheme to be adopted as a Regional Seas Programme under the auspices of the UNEP.[39] With the objective of assisting Mediterranean countries to assess and control marine pollution, formulate national environment policies, improve the governments' ability to identify better options for alternative patterns of development and optimise choices for the allocation of resources, the plan became the Action Plan for the Protection of Marine Environment and Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean (MAP Phase II) in 1995.[40]

The dynamic that led to the revision of MAP also initiated the decision to establish a Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) in Montpellier in 1996.[41] The latter presents a forum for dialogue and proposals where the Contracting Parties of the MAP define a sustainable development strategy for the Mediterranean region. MCSD acts as an advisory organ to the MAP and is composed of representatives of the contracting parties as well as civil society actors. After reaching an agreement on a common vision, the MCSD drafted six key challenges to sustainable development that should be

---

[37] Ibidem, 16.

[38] Voigt, *Sustainable development as a principle of international law; Resolving conflicts between climate measures and WTO law,* 19.

[39] United Nations Environmental Programme, *The Action Plan*.

[40] Ibidem.

[41] Mediterranean Action Plan, *Institutional framework*.

Tomaž Deželan, Alem Maksuti and Matjaž Uršič: *"The Potentials of Normative Sustainability. An Analysis of Sustainable Development Strategies on Global, Supranational and National Levels "*

EQPAM Vol.3 No.2 April 2014
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

addressed in the Mediterranean, making development and environmental protection a top priority.[42] After 10 months of preparation, MCSD prepared a wide-ranging Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD), which was adopted during MAP's 14th meeting in Portorož, Slovenia, in 2005.[43]

The MSSD calls for action to pursue sustainable development goals, taking into account regional idiosyncrasies. Hence, the gaps between developed and developing countries is well acknowledged, and the necessity to help the transition of some Mediterranean countries in the East Adriatic, the South and the East Mediterranean is well identified.[44] Overall, the strategy is designed for Mediterranean countries to benefit from the strategy equally by exposing four main objectives: contributing to economic development by enhancing Mediterranean assets; reducing social disparities and improving cultural integration; changing unsustainable production and consumption patterns as well as ensuring sustainable management of natural resources; and improving governance at local, national, and regional levels.[45] MSSD was thus selected as the second unit of analysis.

2.3 Sustainable Development in/and the European Union

In the European Union sustainable development suffers from an absence of clarity. It is rarely unambiguous in terms of institutional competencies, as the idea or translation into relevant policies. In EU policies, the relationship between sustainable development and environmental protection and action to combat climate change is not always clear, let alone their relationship with the Lisbon Strategy, which aims at strengthening innovation and economic growth.[46] The EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) and the Lisbon Strategy create two competing long-term visions for the EU. The EU SDS outlines the main priorities for sustainable development within and outside the EU and should represent a broad spectrum of goals. However, it is unclear whether the EU SDS is considered as separate and complementary to the Lisbon Strategy, separate and in direct competition with the Lisbon Strategy, or an environmental addition to the Lisbon Strategy.[47] Berger and Zwirner[48] point out four possible scenarios for a future link between post-Lisbon and EU SDS documents: overarching development strategy; EU SDS being merged into post-Lisbon strategy; post-Lisbon strategy being merged into EU SDS; and two parallel strategies. The latter seems the most likely scenario in the upcoming years.

According to Pallmaerts,[49] the EU's political commitment to the EU SDS is at best ambivalent since different institutions have differing views on its purpose, scope and status. The relationship is therefore *à la carte* since the EU SDS is sometimes presented as an "overarching objective", an integral part of the Lisbon Strategy, and even disconnected from it due to the separate temporal and political tracks.[50] In addition, according to Schaik et al.,[51] the SDS falls within the remit of DG Environment, which should

---

[42] Hoballah, "Sustainable development in the Mediterranean region," 161.

[43] Ibidem.

[44] Mediterranean Action Plan, *Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development*.

[45] Mediterranean Action Plan, *Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development: A Framework for Environmental Sustainability and Shared Prosperity*.

[46] Schaik et al., *Adapting EU governance for a more sustainable future Background paper to Getting into the right lane for 2050*.

[47] Pallemaerts, "The EU and sustainable development: An ambiguous relationship"; Schaik et al., *Adapting EU governance for a more sustainable future Background paper to Getting into the right lane for 2050*.

[48] *The Interfaces between the EU SDS and the Lisbon Strategy: Objectives, governance provisions, coordination and future developments. ESDN Quarterly Report December 2008*, 14.

[49] "The EU and sustainable development: An ambiguous relationship," 32.

[50] Ibidem.

[51] *Adapting EU governance for a more sustainable future Background paper to Getting into the right lane for 2050*.

indicate that sustainable development is primarily considered an environmental issue within the daily practice of EU policymaking. However, our personal experience while conducting interviews reflects a lack of conceptual clarity and organisational transparency, which was previously identified by Steurer et al.[52] Due to the vagueness of the institutions and organisations dealing with it, critics claim that the focus has been shifted to sustainable growth, an element of the Lisbon Strategy.[53] This is supposed to be a consequence of using the open method of coordination (OMC)[54] in areas concerning the environment.[55]

When looking at the national level, national sustainable development strategies reflect a strong international and a relatively weak European background since a key driver for introducing them in European countries was the global environmental governance architecture agreed upon at the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio.[56] Namely, Agenda 21 called for the design and adoption of national strategies and their monitoring with a set of indicators. Due to the absence of Agenda 21's implementation mechanisms, the Rio +5 summit in 1997 agreed that formulation strategies should be completed in all countries by 2002. Despite the drafting of the EU's sustainable development strategy in 2001, many EU member states only developed their strategies in line with the UN and OECD guidelines in time for the Johannesburg World Summit.[57] While the European Union's renewed Sustainable Development Strategy proved to be an important factor in designing national strategies, an EU-specific governance architecture facilitating coherence in sustainable development policymaking, introduced in 2006, did not live up to expectation due

---

[52] "The vertical integration of Lisbon and sustainable development strategies across the EU: How different governance architectures shape the European coherence of policy documents".

[53] Schaik et al., *Adapting EU governance for a more sustainable future Background paper to Getting into the right lane for 2050*.

[54] Several authors, albeit very cautiously and indirectly, have tried to link the OMC with sustainable development. For example, Von Homeyer (*Experimentalist environmental governance in the EU: complex challenges, recursive policy-making, and international implications*) linked sustainable development with the OMC through Sabel and Zeitlin's (*Learning from difference: The new architecture of experimentalist governance in the European Union*) framework of experimentalist governance architecture. In addition, and this time more bluntly, Von Homeyer et al. (*Exploring the EU open method of coordination: Risks and chances for European environmental policy*) correlated the OMC with sustainable development strategies by proposing a definition of the process that is closer to empirical evidence than the normative one listed in the Lisbon Strategy. Similarly, Usui ("The democratic quality of soft governance in the EU sustainable development strategy: A deliberative deficit"), although much more diplomatically, described the EU SDS process as an OMC-like style by extensively referring to Borras and Conzelmann's ("Democracy, legitimacy and soft modes of governance in the EU: An empirical turn") four yardsticks of democracy and legitimacy of soft modes of governance in the EU. By virtue of operationalised Lisbon instruments associated with the method, probably the first link between the OMC and sustainable development was provided by Laffan and Shaw (*Classifying and mapping OMC in different policy areas*) when mapping and classifying different open methods of coordination in different policy areas. In contrast, Pallmaerts ("The EU and sustainable development: An ambiguous relationship") identified a negative link between sustainable development and the OMC through the instrument of annual reporting, which apparently contributed to the impression of sustainable development being on a side-track. However, the most straightforward and elaborate link was provided by Steuer et al. ("The vertical integration of Lisbon and sustainable development strategies across the EU: How different governance architectures shape the European coherence of policy documents") since they described the EU SDS as the "light form of OMC". The authors confirmed their assumption of an "OMC spill-over" after conducting interviews with top officials at the Secretariat-General, although the impression appears to be only temporary since after the first European Council revision in 2007 the process lost its momentum and political salience.

[55] Pallemaerts, "The EU and sustainable development: An ambiguous relationship," 39.

[56] Steurer et al., "The vertical integration of Lisbon and sustainable development strategies across the EU: How different governance architectures shape the European coherence of policy documents," 72.

[57] Steurer and Martinuzzi, "Towards new patterns of strategy formation in the public sector: first experiences with national strategies for sustainable development in Europe".

Tomaž Deželan, Alem Maksuti and Matjaž Uršič: *"The Potentials of Normative Sustainability. An Analysis of Sustainable Development Strategies on Global, Supranational and National Levels "*

EQPAM Vol.3 No.2 April 2014
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

to the significant inferiority of the EU SDS process compared to the Lisbon process.[58] Despite introducing the "light form of the open-method of coordination" into the revised EU SDS process, the Commission's bias has been identified. Though coordinating both processes, the Secretariat-General in one case acts as a pacesetter and in the other as a brakeman by neglecting its obligations to assess national sustainable development progress reports and formulate recommendations for improving policymaking in the field.[59] This is evident by the absence of facilitation of the national sustainable strategy processes. Nevertheless, EU SDS may be an important factor in the creation of national development strategies for accession countries like Slovenia,[60] which is also why we included the document in our analysis.

2.4 Sustainable Development at the National Level – the Case of Slovenia

There are many reasons why we chose Slovenia for our case study. First, Slovenia is one of a select few states (along with Cyprus, Italy, Greece, France, Spain, Malta and, until recently, also Croatia), where, disregarding the subnational level, the interplay of at least three sustainable development regimes are in play - national, regional and supranational. Second, acknowledging the potential feasibility issues of the study for the authors if any other unit of analysis was chosen, Slovenia promises a unique [61] environment for observing the interaction of the three regimes in a post-communist setting. It is precisely this communist heritage of (central) strategic developmental (planning) mechanisms that offers an additional dimension to the frequent reluctance among this cluster of states to bind themselves to and implement strategic developmental documents.

Slovenia as a case on the state-level reflects more or less a similar image of vagueness, especially in terms of non-transparency when it comes to sustainable development. It manifested a moderate amount of commitment to the provisions of Agenda 21 in the 1990s. However, some important steps forward have been taken, most notably with the creation of the Slovenian Council for Sustainable Development which was set up to adopt guidelines and recommendations for sustainable development in the Republic of Slovenia, assess the documents related to sustainable development and take part in discussions and give suggestions referring to the National Environment Protection Programme and other sectoral strategies based on the principles of sustainable development. The Council was put under the auspices of the Ministry for Environment and Physical Planning. Otherwise, the policies accompanying sustainable development aspects were dealt with within competent ministries.

In the national assessment report prepared for the World Summit on Sustainable Development[62] Slovenia refers to two major documents (Strategy for the Economic Development of Slovenia and the National Environmental Action Programme) that constituted the national Agenda 21 strategy, thus indicating efforts towards sustainability prior to the EU SDS. However, those documents had a tremendous sectoral focus, which is contradictory to the Agenda 21's cross-sectoral orientation, although they provided for some abstract balance of economic, social and environmental aspects and shifts towards sustainable development and consensus-building. Congruently, some local authorities introduced processes leading to the creation of "nascent" Local Agenda 21s, with a primary focus on environmental issues. The orientation

---

[58] Steurer et al., "The vertical integration of Lisbon and sustainable development strategies across the EU: How different governance architectures shape the European coherence of policy documents," 73.

[59] Ibidem.

[60] See Deželan, "Sustainable development in Slovenia: cooperation in vain?".

[61] Croatia joined the EU in 2013. As a result, despite intensive appropriation of the EU's sustainable development principles in the pre-accession period, its short history of membership in the EU fails to constitute a solid case for observation.

[62] Republic of Slovenia, *National assessment report prepared for WSSD*.

of the majority of strategic documents related to Agenda 21 was on the environment (one major exception being the Strategy for Economic Development), also due to the involvement of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, which acted as the main pillar. Some preparatory processes existed prior to the Johannesburg Summit,[63] but it is fair to say that most of the provisions prior to Johannesburg dealing with sustainable development remained *pro forma*. Namely, the Council for Sustainable Development convened for the first time in 2001 and by 2003 it had already been transferred to the Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy. In addition, there was no systematisation for sustainable development in Slovenia at the turn of the century and thus all related structures virtually had no function in the system of government.[64]

A new era in Slovenia's sustainable development field came with the adoption of a development strategy in 2005 by the government – the fourth unit of our analysis. It normatively includes all three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), satisfying the conditions for it to be regarded as national sustainable development strategy. A revision of the Development Strategy was planned with the involvement of the National Council for Sustainable Development, which in 2007 fell under the auspices of the Government Office for Development and European Affairs. With its scenario-building exercise, the revision of the strategy started in 2008 in order to identify gaps in the current strategy and achieve a consensus about priority measures for the future. In terms of mechanisms of integration, the National Council for Sustainable Development was heavily involved in preparation of the national strategy which was commissioned to the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development. The National Council organised five topic-specific preparatory discussions, including one with regional and local representatives. In March 2011, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia[65] initiated the renewing of the strategy, which retains the rationale of its predecessor, since its intention is to facilitate the EU 2020 strategy. The dominance of the "Lisbon rhetoric", therefore, remains to be embedded into the core of the upcoming national (sustainable) development strategy.

2.5 Settings and Rationales of the Strategies' Build-Up Processes

Processes leading to the drafting of selected strategic documents in the observed settings reflect different rationales. On the global level, the aim of sustainable development activities, stemming from activities initiated in the '70s and primarily the Brundtland report, created fertile ground for a document close to the conception of normative sustainability. The dynamics preceding the adoption of Agenda 21, and the setting surrounding it, encapsulate conditions favourable to substantive normative sustainability. Similarly, under the influence of the United Nation's framework, primarily its Environment Programme, the environment of the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Strategy reproduced rationale favourable to comprehensive deliberation towards creating a sustainable region.[66]

On the other hand, the atmosphere surrounding the drafting, adoption and revision of the EU SDS reveals a high degree of ambivalence towards such a document in the EU infrastructure. As Berger and Zwirner[67] point out, the EU failed to reach a consensus regarding the question of whether or not to have a separate development strategy/document. Although EU SDS was drafted in parallel to the Lisbon strategy,

---

[63] See Deželan, "Sustainable development in Slovenia: cooperation in vain'".

[64] Radej, "Gospodarski razvoj in okolje v sistemu in dokumentih razvojnega načrtovanja," 54.

[65] Government of the Republic of Slovenia, *Informacija o pripravi Strategije razvoja Slovenije za obdobje 2013 – 2020*.

[66] See Hoballah, "Sustainable development in the Mediterranean region".

[67] *The Interfaces between the EU SDS and the Lisbon Strategy: Objectives, governance provisions, coordination and future developments. ESDN Quarterly Report December 2008*.

Tomaž Deželan, Alem Maksuti and Matjaž Uršič: *"The Potentials of Normative Sustainability. An Analysis of Sustainable Development Strategies on Global, Supranational and National Levels "*

EQPAM Vol.3 No.2 April 2014
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

the indecisiveness on both levels (member state and EU institutions) and the incongruence between the visions of EU's role as a global player in sustainable development and its role within member states seriously hampered the odds for drafting a normatively sustainable document. Similar ambivalence toward "true" sustainable development was reflected in Slovenia's Development Strategy, which does not just present the state's most important strategy on sustainable development, but also performs the function of the most important economic strategy document. In reality, it operates primarily as the guiding "toolbox" of economic development and Lisbon indicators. Under the dominance of macroeconomic planners, the strategy presented an opportunity to implement the primary intention of drafting "hard-core" economic development strategy as well as satisfying expectations of the international community. These circumstances inherently reduced the likelihood of the primacy of values of normative sustainability in Slovenia's Development Strategy.

3. Normative Sustainability of Selected Strategic Documents

In line with existing research in the field,[68] sustainable development strategies present a valuable insight into the conceptualisation of sustainable development and it's envisioned framing. Conditions surrounding the strategy, as presented in the previous section, may provide important contextual information, though the content of the strategic document reveals the actual priorities individual society opted for.

It is difficult to compare sustainable development strategies, especially if they represent the vision of a sustainable future at different levels (global, supranational, national and subnational). An additional problem arises with the hugely diverse and confusing terminology, since strategies employ various terms for the same thing. In a chaos of different key, priority or principal aims, goals and objectives, conceptual clarity is essential. Hametner and Steurer[69] resolve the terminological chaos with discrimination between different goals, objectives and priorities on the basis of their abstraction. The top-level goals present priorities/goals explicitly named in the document, while high-level goals present priorities/goals clearly nested within top-level goals.[70] An analysis of four documents on the basis of formulation, placing and balance between top- and high-level goals reveals important teleological differences.

The order of top-level goals reveals the order of priorities in strategic documents and is a clear indicator of the principal values the authors had in mind. From this aspect, the EU SDS proves to be the most normatively sustainable since social and environmental issues clearly precede economic ones. Agenda 21 and MSSD are somewhat ambivalent in this respect since economic priorities appear as forerunners in the case of MSSD, while Agenda 21 puts economy on the same level as social issues (though only on the top-level goals), ranking environmental issues somewhat lower. However, all three strategic documents clearly try to balance the three "pillars" of sustainable development (society, environment and economy) on the top-level. EU SDS reflects significantly different values since the order of top-level goals clearly favours economy in position and scope. Although all strategic documents cover all three sustainable development pillars, the SDS reveals the "patchy" nature of the document, which had its

---

[68] See Hoballah, "Sustainable development in the Mediterranean region"; Berger and Zwirner, *The Interfaces between the EU SDS and the Lisbon Strategy: Objectives, governance provisions, coordination and future developments*; Steurer et al., *The Governance of the Lisbon Process: National Reform Programmes, Structural Indicators and Sustainable Development Strategies*; Meadowcroft, "National Sustainable Development Strategies: Features, Challenges and Reflexivity"; Silveira, "National sustainable development strategies: Moving from theory to practice"; George and Kirkpatrick, "Assesing national sustainable development strategies: Strenghtening the links to operational policy".

[69] *Objectives and Indicators of Sustainable Development in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of European Coherence*.

[70] Ibidem.

sustainable development pillar implanted due to convenience. Sustainable development has been implanted as the last priority — the integration of measures to achieve sustainable development — in order to fulfil international expectations for the creation of a national sustainable development strategy.[71] The overall balance of top-level goals is therefore predominantly economy-oriented in the case of SDS, while other strategic documents reflect a balanced definition of top priorities, with Agenda 21 even favouring social and environmental issues (Table 1). The same can be identified when scrutinising the operationalisation of top-level goals to high-level goals, where the pattern of (un)balanced distribution amplifies.

Table 1. Comparison of the strategic documents according to the features of normative sustainability

	Agenda 21	MSSD	EU SDS	SDS
The order of top-level goals	o	o	+	-
Coverage of three pillars of sustainability within top-level goals	+	+	+	+
Balance of top-level goals	- (SD leaning)	+	+	- (economy leaning)
Priority of social and environmental top-level goals	+	-	+	-
Balanced operationalisation of top-level to high-level goals	- (SD leaning)	+	+	-
Cross-sectional nature of top- and high-level goals	+	+	+	-
Integration of three principles into policies	+	+	+	o (integration of environment)
Contextual background	+	+	o	-

Priority of social and environmental issues, as a core indicator of normative sustainability, is evident in the case of Agenda 21 and EU SDS. Both documents integrate the abovementioned issues with economic matters in a very subtle and society/environment-promoting manner. On the other hand, MSSD and SDS lean heavily toward economic issues, though MSSD balances environmental and social concerns with economic intentions. SDS reveals two most significant pillars of sustainable development as an "add-on" to the consistent economic strategy. Such representation of sustainable development and normative sustainability in selected documents is consistent with the context in which the documents were drafted and their functions. Agenda 21 was clearly conceived as a milestone on the path to sustainable societies and may be considered as an indicator of the paradigm change already announced in the Bruntdland report. In a similar manner, EU SDS was conceived as a guiding document toward the overarching long-term goals of the European Union, where other short- and mid-term (economic and developmental) goals are defined in other documents (Lisbon Agenda, EU 2020 etc.). The MSSD, primarily the SDS, have different

---

[71] The notion of sustainable development generated in the document feels like a pre-Brundtland environmental pillar since the first two pillars dominate the document like in the Lisbon Strategy. This is reinforced after a review of the organisation commissioned to draft and annually monitor the implementation of the strategy – the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, which is a government institution prolific in economic analysis and performs the monitoring of the implementation of the Lisbon goals.

Tomaž Deželan, Alem Maksuti and Matjaž Uršič: *"The Potentials of Normative Sustainability. An Analysis of Sustainable Development Strategies on Global, Supranational and National Levels "*

EQPAM Vol.3 No.2 April 2014
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

rationales, which are also related to the level for which the document is written. Due to the economic diversity of Mediterranean countries, the MSSD understandably aims to create a condition in order to nurture the concept of sustainable development. Hence, MSSD is still heavily pervaded by economic issues, though it consistently balances them with priority areas. SDS, on the other hand, is a national development strategy that is heavily embedded in the developmental model of the modern state. As a core developmental strategy, unlike other selected strategies, SDS does not have parallel economic strategies and is heavily integrated into the implementation of the state's sovereign powers. It appears that its implementation potential makes it more conservative and less of a "pie in the sky".

4. Conclusions

The analysis of the selected four strategic documents and the circumstances in which they were drafted reveals inherent and distinct differences in recurrent processes of conception and envisioned implementation of sustainable development. The focus on normative sustainability allowed us to investigate compatibility between social, economic and environmental goals at all levels. Examination of the normative dimension functioned as a shortcut to grasping the regime's general understanding of sustainable development, since normative sustainability highlights the incoherence between analytical demands and societal responses to them. One of the best strategies for an insight into the very fibre of normative sustainability is to concentrate on sustainable development strategies. As coordinated, participatory and iterative processes of thoughts and actions to achieve economic, environmental and social objectives in a balanced and integrative manner, they revealed some important differences between the regimes and helped us to test our hypothesis.

On the basis of our research, the investigated regimes reveal a substantial amount of normative sustainability, though significant differences between them have also been identified. Since sustainable development strategy performs the function of a long-term strategic document, which frequently entails an idealised vision of society in the future, the rejection of our hypothesis was somewhat predictable. Namely, sustainable development strategies rarely possess mechanisms for effective implementation, thus allowing the drafters to be more daring and creative. However, strategies at different levels encapsulate actors with different sovereign powers, and hence, varying degrees of legitimate expectations for implementation. It is therefore understandable that the Slovenian national development strategy proved to be the most conservative and normatively unsustainable. The political reality forced the writers of SDS to be more budget-conscious and "short-sighted". There is no alternative document, compared to EU SDS, which has a down-to-earth alternative that is also more highly sought. On the other hand, it would be irrational to expect a high level of normative sustainability from systems entailing economically diverse sub-systems, with different degrees of economic development. The dominance of economic issues in some cases is, therefore, not to be judged as inherently unsustainable and a sustainability *à la carte* approach should not be *a priori* rejected if it is conceived according to the regime's capacities.

References

1. Becker, Egon, Thomas Jahn, Immanuel Stiess, and Peter Wehling. *Sustainability: A cross-disciplinary concept for social transformations.* Paris: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, MOST Policy Papers 6, 1997.
2. Berger, Gerald and Wilhelm Zwirner. *The Interfaces between the EU SDS and the Lisbon Strategy: Objectives, governance provisions, coordination and future developments. ESDN Quarterly Report December 2008*, 2008.

Available at http://www.sd-network.eu/quarterly%20reports/report%20files/pdf/2008-December-The_Interfaces_between_the_EU_SDS_and_the_Lisbon_Strategy.pdf (10 June 2010).

3. Bertalanffy, von Ludwig. *General system theory: foundations, development, applications.* New York: George Braziller, 1969.

4. Blewitt, John. *Understanding sustainable development.* London: Earthscan, 2008.

5. Borras, S. and T. Conzelmann. "Democracy, legitimacy and soft modes of governance in the EU: An empirical turn". *European integration*, 29, 5, (2007): 531–548.

6. Council of the European Union. *Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) − Renewed Strategy*, 2006. Available at http://www.sd-network.eu/pdf/quarterly%20reports/EU_SDS_final_version_2006_June26_en.PDF (23 May 2010).

7. Deželan, Tomaž. "Sustainable development in Slovenia: cooperation in vain?". In *The open method of coordination: a view from Slovenia*, ed. Danica Fink-Hafner. Ljubljana: Faculty of Social Sciences, 2010.

8. Flajšman, Božidar. *Naprej k naravi : trajen razvoj, varstvo okolja in gozdarstvo.* Ljubljana: Ekološki forum LDS, Liberalna akademija, 1998.

9. Gantar, Pavel. "Prehod v informacijsko družbo in trajnostni razvoj". In *Sonaravno uravnoteženi razvoj Slovenije*, ed. Avguštin Lah. Ljubljana: Svet za varstvo okolja Republike Slovenije, 2004.

10. George, Clive and Colin Kirkpatrick. "Assesing national sustainable development strategies: Strenghtening the links to operational policy". *Natural Resources Forum*, 30 (2006): 146–156.

11. Gough, Stephen and William Scott. *Higher education and sustainable development: paradox and possibility.* New York: Taylor and Francis, 2007.

12. Government of the Republic of Slovenia. *Informacija o pripravi Strategije razvoja Slovenije za obdobje 2013 – 2020*, 2011. Available at http://www.planbzaslovenijo.si/upload/SRS/srs-dispozicija.pdf (15 May 2011).

13. Hametner, Markus and Reinhard Steurer. *Objectives and Indicators of Sustainable Development in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of European Coherence*. ESDN Quarterly Report December 2007, 2007. Available at: http://www.sd-network.eu/?k=quarterly%20reports&report_id=7 (15 May 2010).

14. Hoballah, Arab. "Sustainable development in the Mediterranean region". *Natural Resources Forum*, 30 (2006): 157–167.

15. Homeyer, von Ingmar. *Experimentalist environmental governance in the EU: complex challenges, recursive policy-making, and international implications.* Berlin: Ecologic, 2008.

16. Homeyer, von Ingmar, Anneke Klasing, and Andreas Kraemer. *Exploring the EU open method of coordination: Risks and chances for European environmental policy*. Berlin: Ecologic, 2004.

17. Hrustel Majcen, Marta. "Trajnostni razvoj in kmetijstvo". In *Sonaravno uravnoteženi razvoj Slovenije*, ed. Avguštin Lah. Ljubljana: Svet za varstvo okolja Republike Slovenije, 2004.

18. Hulse, Joseph H. *Sustainable Development at Risk; Ignoring the Past*. Delhi: Cambridge University Press India Pvt. Ltd., Foundation Books, 2007.

19. Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development. *Slovenia's Development Strategy*, 2005. Available at http://www.slovenijajutri.gov.si/fileadmin/urednik/dokumenti/Slovenia___s_Development_Strategy.pdf (24 May 2010).

20. Jensen, Hanne Birgitte. "From economic to sustainable development: Unfolding the concept of law". *Systems research and behavioural science*, 24 (2007): 505–513.

21. Kos, Drago. "Trodelna struktura trajnostnega razvoja". In *Sonaravno uravnoteženi razvoj Slovenije*, ed. Avguštin Lah. Ljubljana: Svet za varstvo okolja Republike Slovenije, 2004.

22. Laffan, Brigid and Colin Shaw. *Classifying and mapping OMC in different policy areas*. NewGov working paper 02/D09. Dublin: University College Dublin, 2005.

23. Lah Turnšek, Tamara. "Biotehnologija in genetika ter sonaravno uravnoteženi razvoj Slovenije". In *Sonaravno uravnoteženi razvoj Slovenije*, ed. Avguštin Lah. Ljubljana: Svet za varstvo okolja Republike Slovenije, 2004.

24. Lah, Avguštin. *Sonaravno uravnoteženi razvoj Slovenije.* Ljubljana: Svet za varstvo okolja Republike Slovenije, 2004.

25. Meadowcroft, James. "National Sustainable Development Strategies: Features, Challenges and Reflexivity". *European Environment*, 17 (2007): 152–163.

26. Mediterranean Action Plan. *Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development: A Framework for Environmental Sustainability and Shared Prosperity*, 2005. Available at http://www.mzopu.hr/doc/Mediterranean_str_28022006.pdf, 12.2.2011.

Tomaž Deželan, Alem Maksuti and Matjaž Uršič: *"The Potentials of Normative Sustainability. An Analysis of Sustainable Development Strategies on Global, Supranational and National Levels "*

EQPAM Vol.3 No.2 April 2014
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

27. Mediterranean Action Plan. *Institutional framework,* 2011. Available at http://www.planbleu.org/planBleu/cadreInstitutionnelUk.html (12 February 2011).

28. Mediterranean Action Plan. *Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development,* 2005. Available at http://www.planbleu.org/planBleu/smddUk.html (12 February 2011).

29. Pallemaerts, Marc. "The EU and sustainable development: An ambiguous relationship". In The European Union and Sustainable Development: Internal and External Dimensions, eds. Marc Pallemaerts and Albena Azmanova. Brussels: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 2006.

30. Plut, Dušan. "Nekatere degradacijske značilnosti in predlogi sonaravne rabe vodnih virov v Sloveniji". In *Naprej k naravi II.,* ed. Božidar Flajšman. Ljubljana: Ekološki forum LDS, Liberalna akademija, 2000.

31. Radej, Bojan. "Gospodarski razvoj in okolje v sistemu in dokumentih razvojnega načrtovanja". In *Naprej k naravi II.,* ed. Božidar Flajšman. Ljubljana: Ekološki forum LDS, Liberalna akademija, 2000.

32. Republic of Slovenia. *National assessment report prepared for WSSD*, 2001. Available at: http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/prep_process/national_reports/slovenia_assessment_report.doc (14 June 2010).

33. Rogers, Peter P., Kazi F. Jalal, and John A. Boyd. *An introduction to sustainable development*. London: Glen Educational Foundation, Earthscan, 2008.

34. Sabel, Charles F. and Jonathan Zeitlin. *Learning from difference: The new architecture of experimentalist governance in the European Union.* European governance papers No. C-07-02, 2002.

35. Schaik, van L.G., M.T.J. Kok, and A.C. Petersen. *Adapting EU governance for a more sustainable future Background paper to Getting into the right lane for 2050*. Bilthoven: Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, 2009.

36. Seema, Paul. *A brief history of sustainable development,* 2010. Available at: http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwt.nsf/db900SID/LHON-68ZJDP/$File/Introducing_ Sustainable%20_Development_Introduction.pdf?OpenElement (1 November 2010).

37. Silveira, Mary Pat. "National sustainable development strategies: Moving from theory to practice". *Natural Resources Forum*, 30 (2006): 86–89.

38. Slokar, Marko. "Usmeritve za sonaravno trajnostni razvoj". In *Sonaravno uravnoteženi razvoj Slovenije*, ed. Avguštin Lah. Ljubljana: Svet za varstvo okolja Republike Slovenije, 2004.

39. Stanovnik, Peter and Renata Slabe Erker. "Znanost in raziskovanje za uravnoteženi razvoj". In *Sonaravno uravnoteženi razvoj Slovenije*, ed. Avguštin Lah. Ljubljana: Svet za varstvo okolja Republike Slovenije, 2004.

40. Steurer, Reinhard and Andre Martinuzzi. "Towards new patterns of strategy formation in the public sector: first experiences with national strategies for sustainable development in Europe". *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 23 (2005): 455–472.

41. Steurer, Reinhard, Gerald Berger, and Markus Hametner. "The vertical integration of Lisbon and sustainable development strategies across the EU: How different governance architectures shape the European coherence of policy documents". *Natural Resources Forum*, 34 (2010): 71–84.

42. Steurer, Reinhard, Markus Hametner, Gerald Berger, and Ewald Rametsteiner. *The Governance of the Lisbon Process: National Reform Programmes, Structural Indicators and Sustainable Development Strategies*, 2008. Available at http://www.sd-network.eu/quarterly%20reports/report%20files/pdf/2008-March-The_Governance_of_the_Lisbon_Process.pdf (20 November 2010).

43. Suhadolc, Metka and Franc Lobnik. "Pomen tal za sonaravni razvoj Slovenije". In *Sonaravno uravnoteženi razvoj Slovenije*, ed. Avguštin Lah. Ljubljana: Svet za varstvo okolja Republike Slovenije, 2004.

44. United Nations. *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*, 1987. Available at: http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm (1 June 2010).

45. United Nations. *Agenda 21*, 1992. Available at http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/Agenda21.pdf (13 March 2010).

46. United Nations. *Johannesburg Summit 2002: Slovenia, country profile*, 2002. Available at http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/wssd/slovenia.pdf (11 June 2010).

47. United Nations Environmental Programme. *The Action Plan*, 2011. Available at http://www.unepmap.org/index.php?module=content2&catid=001001002 (12 February 2011).

48. Usui, Yoichiro. "The democratic quality of soft governance in the EU sustainable development strategy: A deliberative deficit". *European Integration*, 29, 5 (2007): 619–633.

49. Voigt, Christina. *Sustainable development as a principle of international law; Resolving conflicts between climate measures and WTO law*. Leiden and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009.