

CIRCULAR ECONOMY AS A MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT THAT FORMS
A NEW IDENTITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
EDUCIRC2022

CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN EU DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES



This research was supported by the
Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia,
#GRANT No 303,
*Circular economy as a model of development
that forms a new identity of the
Republic of Serbia - EDUCIRC2022*



This material was created with the financial support of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.
Educons University in Sremska Kamenica is solely responsible for the content of this material, and this content
does not reflect the views of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.

EU Green Deal

Sustainable development represents a comprehensive effort to develop the planet in a way that will enable the preservation of resources and ensure good quality of the environment for current and future generations. Although not legally binding, sustainable development has become an integral part of the development strategies of most countries of the world, the European Union and the Republic of Serbia.

The European Union is deeply committed to sustainable development and environmental protection, so all member states, as well as countries seeking membership, must implement comprehensive changes and respect defined standards in this regard.

Over time, the European Union has adopted a large number of documents that regulate this area, with defined activities, financing and control mechanisms.

With the transition to the 21th century, the efforts of the European Union to remain on the path of sustainable development intensified, resulting in the adoption of the *Green Deal* in 2019 by the European Commission as a long-term umbrella development strategy, requiring member states to adapt all their activities to be aligned with the new strategy.

The European Union wants to become a world leader in the implementation of sustainable development and complete decarbonization by 2050.

The two main goals of the Green Deal are:

1. ***Designing a set of policies that will enable green transformation***

There is an obvious need to review existing policies in the areas of clean energy production, industry, production and consumption, infrastructure, transport, agriculture, construction and other sectors. In addition, it is necessary to protect and restore the ecosystems, sustainable use of resources and improve the health and quality of life of all citizens.

Therefore, the European Union is committed to promoting, studying and investing in activities that will enable changes in the direction of total sustainability, which include:

- Achieving climate neutrality by 2050 (with an emphasis on taxation of greenhouse gas emissions, and encouraging and financing changes in business and behavior);
- Establishment of a safe energy supply system (investments in renewable energy sources, infrastructural projects, with the implementation of digitization of energy production and consumption processes);
- Transformation of the industrial sector in the direction of sustainability and circularity (transition from the traditional - linear production process, in which resources and energy are intensively consumed, and apart from the final product, a large amount of waste is created, to a circular business model, during which resources are consumed with maximum efficiency and the amount of waste is reduced to a minimum, with the development of various systems for recycling and reuse);
- Changes in the construction sector, which needs to be efficient in the consumption of resources, both during construction and during the exploitation of buildings;

- Transformation of the transport sector, as a major polluter of cities (accelerating the transition to sustainable and smart solutions, along with building the necessary infrastructure, intensifying multimodal transport and changing citizens' habits);
- Creation of a healthy and ecological system for food production (introduction of clean technologies, support for agriculture, while improving the independence of the European Union in terms of food supply and protection of domestic producers); and
- Preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity (strict application of existing and adoption of new regulations, monitoring, education, cross-border cooperation).

2. *Introducing the principle of sustainability in all policies of the European Union*

Implementation of the Green Deal is possible only with ample cooperation and respect for the principles of fairness and equality. The European Union envisages and encourages cooperation not only between member states, but also with numerous international organizations and institutions. In order to enable the green transition, it is necessary to provide the following:

- Support for green finance and investment that will enable a fair green transition (it is estimated that 260 billion euros will be needed for the green transition of the European Union, which is about 1.5% of the gross domestic product. It is necessary for the investments to be continuous and to ensure involvement of the public and private sectors) ;
- Adoption of the budgets of the member states, containing increased allocation of resources for the implementation of the Green Deal;

- Support for research and innovation (development of new technologies, digitalization, implementation of solutions that will encourage realization of the Green Deal goals and long-term competitiveness of the European Union, as well as ensure quality of life for all its citizens); and
- Support for education and training (education of young people about sustainable development, support for innovation and entrepreneurship, and encouragement of lifelong learning).

Green Agenda for the Western Balkans

The countries of the Western Balkans are committed candidates for membership in the European Union. The document *Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans*, which was adopted in 2020, defines in close detail the priorities and directions of development of the region, and its basis is the transition from traditional to sustainable ways of doing business, production and consumption. According to the Declaration, the countries of the Western Balkans should focus their activities on the following:

- Alignment of the Western Balkans region with the European Union's determination to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 (with an emphasis on reducing and eliminating the use of coal in the region, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, encouraging energy production from renewable sources, making changes to the transport system, in particular, intensification of rail traffic);

- Recognizing and using the potential of circular economy (circular economy is considered the basic driver in the realization of the green transition as a whole, and it is necessary to develop and implement appropriate strategies for the following: sustainable use of raw materials, creation of an environmentally friendly product life cycle, reduction of waste production and adequate treatment of waste, and for the establishment of regional cooperation in terms of plastic waste management);
- More intensive activities to reduce water, air and soil pollution (alignment with European Union standards, modernization of the monitoring system, investment in waste water treatment and sustainable use of water in agriculture);
- Intensification of activities pertaining to ecologically-based agriculture and food industry (sustainable rural development, safety and security of food supply, harmonization with European Union standards when it comes to animal welfare, promotion and support of organic agriculture);
- Encouraging tourist activity, while preserving natural potentials and biodiversity (protection of natural habitats and species, development of action plans for the protection of biodiversity and forest areas, regional cooperation) .

**Project “Circular economy as a model of development that forms
a new identity of the Republic of Serbia “**

The project is based on the EU Green Deal and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, while respecting the specificities and needs of the Republic of Serbia.

The development strategies of the European Union define the circular economy as the main driver of the green transition and a model for its long-term and successful implementation.

The introduction and implementation of the circular economy is associated with a large number of challenges in the Republic of Serbia, one of which is certainly the lack of information on the economy's capacity for circularity, especially in rural areas.

A realistic assessment of the situation is one of the basic prerequisites for creating the necessary plans, defining priorities, identifying possible potentials and obstacles for the development of the circular economy in the Republic of Serbia. Accordingly, the main goal of the project was defined as: determining the capacity of the Serbian economy for circularity, with an emphasis on rural areas.

Main outcomes of the project:

- Assessment of the Serbian economy's capacity to transition to a circular model, which will enable decision-makers to gain insight into the situation in rural areas in terms of the level of information, readiness, commitment and expectations;
- Procurement, training and use of modern analytical software for data processing and modeling of development scenarios;
- An Interactive Database;
- Connecting interested parties and creating preconditions for the continuation of activities after the realization of the project;
- Publishing scientific publications.

Publisher: Educons University, Sremska Kamenica

Project financed by: Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia

Duration of the project: April 2023 – April 2025.

Press: Tampograf, Novi Sad

Circulation: 200 copies

Date: 22.09.2023.

Project website: <https://www.educirc.rs/>

Contact: Prof. Mirjana Radovanović, Project manager

021 4893 617

mirjana.radovanovic@educons.edu.rs

This brochure was created with the financial support of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia. Educons University in Sremska Kamenica is solely responsible for the content of this publication, and this content does not express the views of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.



Science Fund
of the Republic of Serbia

This research was supported by the
Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia,
#GRANT No 303,
*Circular economy as a model of development
that forms a new identity of the
Republic of Serbia - EDUCIRC2022*



EDUCIRC2022
EDUCONS
UNIVERSITY

This material was created with the financial support of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia. Educons University in Sremska Kamenica is solely responsible for the content of this material, and this content does not reflect the views of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia.