
Implementation of the European Green Deal (EGD) related to Green Economy Policy in the European Union 2020-2024

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ABSTRACT

The European Union faces various environmental challenges, including rising greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, and ecosystem degradation caused by economic development models that still rely heavily on fossil fuels and natural resource exploitation. In response, the European Union introduced the European Green Deal as a development strategy aimed at achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and promoting the transition toward a sustainable green economy. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the European Green Deal in supporting Green Economy policies in the European Union during the period 2020– 2024. The research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method and relies on secondary data obtained from books, academic journals, reports from international organizations, and official documents of the European Union. The results show that the implementation of the European Green Deal is carried out through several key policies, including clean energy transition, circular economy development, sustainable transportation, sustainable food systems, biodiversity protection, and green transition financing. These policies demonstrate the European Union's efforts to integrate environmental aspects into economic development to achieve a Green Economy, although several challenges remain, such as the dependence of some member states on fossil fuels and the large investment required for the green transition

Key Word: *European Green Deal, Green Economy, European Union, Environmental Policy*

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the European Union (EU) adhered to a conventional, growth-oriented economic development model. For over three decades, the EU built its economic foundation upon fossil fuel consumption and the exploitation of natural resources. Dependence on coal, petroleum, and natural gas became a primary characteristic of the region's economy, particularly within the industrial, transport, and electricity sectors (Chudy-Laskowska, 2022). According to the European Environment Agency (EEA, 2022), fossil fuels accounted for over 70% of primary energy requirements in the EU until the early 2010s; furthermore, nations such as Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic remained reliant on coal for power generation. This pattern of dependency hindered the acceleration of the energy transition.

It can be concluded that prior to the implementation of the European Green Deal, economic development in the European Union remained reliant on fossil energy, natural

resource exploitation, and wasteful consumption patterns that generated significant waste. Although this approach successfully stimulated economic growth and strengthened integration among member states, its negative impacts on the environment and social welfare were substantial. Consequently, the European Green Deal emerged as a response to an unsustainable legacy economic system, serving as a strategic effort to steer the European Union toward a green economy that is more equitable, environmentally friendly, and resilient to the climate crisis. The European Union, as a regional organization in Europe, launched the European Green Deal as a policy framework projected to lead the EU toward a green economy by 2050. Furthermore, there is a clear objective to achieve climate neutrality while simultaneously generating substantial employment opportunities within the green sector for its member states.

THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

The Concept of the Green Economy

The Green Economy is an economic development concept that integrates the three primary pillars of sustainability: economic, environmental, and social (United Nations Environment Management Group, 2011). This idea emerged from an increasing awareness of the negative impacts of conventional economic growth, which relies heavily on the exploitation of natural resources and fossil fuels. Within the Green Economy framework, one of the most prominent elements is the creation of green jobs. Employment within the green economy is defined as economic activity that contributes to reducing energy, raw material, and water consumption, while simultaneously lowering greenhouse gas emissions and minimizing or even entirely avoiding all forms of waste and pollution (ILO, 2022)

In a global context, the European Union has emerged as a key actor taking concrete steps to implement a green economy through the launch of the European Green Deal (EGD) in December 2019 (Vela Almeida et al., 2023). The EGD represents the EU's new growth strategy, aiming to make Europe the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050. Through the EGD, the European Union promotes economic growth that is no longer dependent on resource exploitation and pollution, but is instead driven by innovation, resource efficiency, and social solidarity (Kasztelan, 2021).

The European Green Deal encompasses a wide range of policies and initiatives, ranging from the decarbonization of the energy sector and investments in sustainable transport to biodiversity strategies and a framework for a circular economy (Kasztelan, 2021). Furthermore, the EGD reinforces the principle of transitional justice through mechanisms such as the Just Transition Fund, which aims to support the regions and social groups most affected by the structural shift toward a green economy. This initiative underscores that the success of a Green Economy depends heavily on the economic system's ability to ensure inclusivity and social justice throughout its transformation process.

The transformation toward a Green Economy and the ambitious efforts within the EGD demonstrate that sustainable development does not have to come at the expense of economic growth (Berghmans, n.d.). On the contrary, by investing in natural capital, clean technology, education, and inclusive social systems, a development model that is both environmentally friendly and promotes widespread social prosperity can be achieved (Berghmans, n.d.). The researcher considers this concept appropriate for use in this study because the research also discusses the Green Economy as a primary aspect of European Union policy, supported by the European Green Deal as its means of implementation.

Neoliberal Institutionalism

Neoliberal Institutionalism is a dominant paradigm in contemporary International Relations (IR) studies that emerged as a critical response to the foundational assumptions

of neorealism specifically regarding the anarchic nature of the international system and the inherent difficulties of interstate cooperation. In contrast to the neorealist perspective, which emphasizes conflict and power interests, neoliberal institutionalists contend that states, as rational actors, are capable of establishing mutually beneficial cooperation through stable international institutions.

This theory is also highly suitable for this research, as the primary actor in this study is the European Union. In this context, the researcher views the European Union as a representation of a regional institution. This study uses qualitative approach to explore and understand to achieve to the word in case uni european green deal. Neoliberal institutionalism faces significant challenges due to its heavy reliance on assumptions of rationality and state compliance with collective rules, without deeply considering factors such as domestic dynamics, internal political pressures, or the varying economic and social capacities among member states.

Consequently, it can be concluded that while neoliberal institutionalism offers a robust conceptual framework for understanding regional integration and international cooperation, its implementation remains dependent on the extent to which these institutions can accommodate the complexities of interstate relations.

Global Environmental Politics Theory

This theory is viewed through the lens that the environmental crisis is not merely caused by natural or technological factors, but also by global political and economic decisions that reflect the inequality of interests between developed and developing nations (Paterson, 2000). In relation to the European Green Deal (EGD), global environmental politics theory provides an understanding that this policy functions not only as a green economic strategy but also as a political instrument for the European Union to strengthen its global position in international environmental governance. Vogler (2020) asserts that the EGD represents the EU's "normative power," where Europe seeks to lead the world through strict and innovative environmental policy standards.

Through the EGD, the European Union does not only target carbon neutrality by 2050 but also aims to become a global benchmark in sustainable development, green trade, and climate diplomacy. Thus, the EGD is a tangible manifestation of global environmental politics: on one hand, it is an effort to address the climate crisis, and on the other, it serves as a political strategy to expand the European Union's influence at the international level

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis. Through this research, the researcher aims to examine the implementation of the European Green Deal (EGD) in supporting Green Economy policies from 2020 to 2024. The analysis focuses on applying selected concepts and theories, supported by empirical findings. Descriptive analysis is employed to explore these issues in greater depth by detailing the primary pillars of the EGD.

Alan Bryman and Emma Bell state that the term 'qualitative research' is adopted to denote a social research approach where a problem cannot be resolved solely through quantitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2019). Many qualitative researchers are critical of such narrow interpretations, as the distinctiveness of qualitative research does not lie merely in the absence of numbers. Furthermore, the qualitative approach utilizes inductive techniques for problem-solving, in contrast to the deductive nature of quantitative approaches.

The researcher deems this type of research relevant for explaining the subject matter, as the study focuses on the implementation of the European Green Deal to support Green Economy policies between 2020 and 2024.

DISCUSSION

The European Green Deal (EGD) is a comprehensive strategy designed by the European Union to transform its economic and social structures toward a more sustainable and environmentally friendly development model. Concretely, the EGD seeks to make the European Union the first region in the world to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels (European Commission, 2020). The European Green Deal emerged as a response to traditional policy frameworks that were deemed unsuccessful in addressing the rapid pace of climate change and environmental degradation. Consequently, it was designed as a comprehensive policy "compass" for the European Union to steer economic development, energy, transport, industry, and the agricultural sector toward a higher level of sustainability.

This policy encompasses not only climate targets but also economic restructuring, social agendas, and technological innovation within the direction of the EU's regional development. The European Green Deal emerged as a response to traditional policy frameworks deemed insufficient in addressing the rapid pace of climate change and environmental degradation; thus, it is designed as a comprehensive policy "compass" for the European Union to steer economic development, energy, transportation, industry, and the agricultural sector toward greater sustainability.

Clean Energy and Climate Action Pillar

The clean energy and climate action pillar serves as the primary foundation of the European Green Deal, as the energy sector is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union. Since 2020, the EU has positioned the decarbonization of the energy system as a core prerequisite for achieving a Green Economy.

REPowerEU demonstrates that the clean energy pillar within the European Green Deal possesses the flexibility to navigate global dynamics. Rather than delaying climate targets, the European Union adjusted its implementation strategy by emphasizing the diversification of energy sources and increasing renewable energy capacity. This approach reinforces the argument that a Green Economy is not at odds with energy security needs; instead, it can serve as a long-term solution to reduce economic and political vulnerabilities.

Overall, the implementation of the clean energy and climate action pillar during the 2020–2024 period shows that the European Union is striving to build a more sustainable energy system through a combination of policies, regulations, and investment support. Despite facing various challenges particularly regarding the differing capacities among member states this policy remains the central foundation in driving the transition toward a Green Economy. By prioritizing clean energy, the European Union seeks to ensure that future economic growth can proceed in tandem with environmental protection efforts.

Clean Industry and Circular Economy Pillar

The clean industry and circular economy pillar focuses on transforming production and consumption structures within the European Union to become more resource-efficient and waste-minimal. In 2020, the implementation of this pillar was marked by the launch of the updated Circular Economy Action Plan, which emphasizes the

importance of sustainable product design, recycling, and reducing dependence on primary raw materials.

The clean industry and circular economy pillar in the European Green Deal asserts that the transformation toward a Green Economy is inseparable from changes in how the EU produces and consumes. For decades, the region's industrial system was dominated by a linear economic model a "take-make dispose" pattern that relied on the continuous exploitation of natural resources.

The implementation of the clean industry and circular economy pillar within the European Green Deal during the 2020–2024 period indicates a gradual yet consistent shift in the direction of the EU's industrial policy. Despite facing challenges regarding industrial adjustment and the readiness of business actors, this policy serves as a vital foundation for building a more sustainable production and consumption system. By mainstreaming the circular economy into policy, the European Union strives to ensure that the transformation toward a Green Economy is not merely a short-term endeavor but is sustainable over the long term.

Sustainable Transportation Pillar

The transportation sector is a critical focus of the European Green Deal due to its significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. In 2020, the European Union began promoting a shift toward low-emission transportation through sustainable mobility strategies. The EU started encouraging the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) as the primary alternative to conventional vehicles. This policy is supported by fiscal incentives, subsidies for EV purchases, and support for research and development in battery technology

. These steps aim to lower initial barriers for consumers and industries in adopting new sustainable technologies, including the promotion of EVs and the improvement of public transportation. This initial phase reflects an effort to balance economic mobility with environmental protection (European Commission, 2020).

The transportation sector occupies a strategic position within the European Green Deal because of its substantial role in EU emissions. Unlike the energy sector, which has seen emissions decline over the past few decades, the transportation sector has shown a relatively stable emission trend that is difficult to reduce. This is caused by a high dependency on fossil fuels, particularly in road and air transport. Therefore, the transformation of the transportation sector is an inseparable part of the EU's efforts to achieve a Green Economy.

Implementation within the European Green Deal during the 2020–2024 period demonstrates a clear and consistent shift in direction. Despite facing various challenges such as infrastructure readiness, public acceptance, and varying capacities among member states the transportation sector remains a vital pillar in the EU's efforts to reach its climate targets. By making low-emission transportation a priority, the European Union is working to ensure that regional connectivity supports, rather than hinders, its environmental goals.

Sustainable Food System Pillar (Farm to Fork)

The Farm to Fork (F2F) pillar aims to transform the European Union's food system to be more environmentally friendly and healthy. Launched in 2020, this strategy seeks to reduce the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers while increasing organic farming as part of the Green Economy transition (European Commission, 2020).

The Farm to Fork pillar is a vital component of the European Green Deal because food systems are directly linked to environmental issues, public health, and the economic resilience of rural areas. The European Union maintains that a transformation toward a

Green Economy cannot be achieved without fundamental changes in how food is produced, distributed, and consumed.

The EU views a sustainable food system as a means to actually enhance food security in the long term. By reducing dependency on chemical inputs and imported raw materials, the agricultural sector is expected to become more resilient to external shocks. Overall, the Farm to Fork pillar within the European Green Deal reflects the EU's holistic approach to building a sustainable food system. Despite facing various challenges—both politically and economically this strategy remains an essential part of the European Union's efforts to achieve a Green Economy.

Biodiversity Pillar

The biodiversity pillar focuses on the protection and restoration of ecosystems. In 2020, the European Union launched the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 to expand protected areas and restore degraded ecosystems (European Commission, 2020). This pillar asserts that protecting the natural environment is the primary foundation for the EU's economic and social sustainability.

Biodiversity is viewed not only as an ecological asset but also as a vital resource supporting various economic sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and forestry. In the context of a Green Economy, the protection of biodiversity is regarded as a long-term investment. Healthy ecosystems provide essential ecosystem services, including:

- * Clean water supply
- * Carbon sequestration
- * Flood control
- * Soil fertility

These services hold significant economic value, even though they are often not directly reflected in market mechanisms. Overall, the biodiversity pillar within the European Green Deal reflects the EU's long-term approach to building a Green Economy. Despite facing various implementation challenges, this policy demonstrates a strong commitment to protecting and restoring ecosystems as the basis for sustainable development.

Conclusion

First, the European Green Deal serves as a comprehensive economic transformation strategy for the European Union, integrating Green Economy principles into the regional policy framework. The EGD is not solely focused on greenhouse gas emission reduction; it is also designed to build a new economic development model that is more sustainable, inclusive, and competitive.

Second, during the 2020–2024 period, the implementation of the EGD has demonstrated the EU's tangible efforts to translate the Green Economy concept into concrete policies and programs. This is reflected in:

1. Strengthened climate regulations and increased investment in renewable energy.
2. The development of a circular economy and the transformation of sustainable transportation systems.

The protection of biodiversity and support for the creation of green jobs. Various policy and funding instruments, such as the Just Transition Fund, serve as evidence of the European Union's commitment to ensuring that the transition toward a green economy is conducted fairly, leaving no vulnerable groups or regions behind.

Third, from the perspective of neoliberal institutionalism, the European Union acts as a regional institution that facilitates cooperation among member states in addressing shared environmental challenges. Through the EGD, the EU strives to create common rules, norms, and mechanisms that can reduce uncertainty, lower coordination costs, and encourage member state compliance with the green economy agenda.

Fourth, within the framework of global environmental politics, the European Green Deal functions not only as an internal EU policy but also as a political instrument to strengthen the EU's role and influence in global environmental governance. Overall, although these achievements are not yet fully optimal and continue to face various structural and political challenges, the EGD remains a vital foundation for the European Union's green economic transformation in the future.

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