

The effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Greece and the investigation of the role of spatial planning

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Abstract. The formulation of the Greek Green Deal plan will require introduction in concise format and in sentence form: a) the complete reorganization of the way the wider public sector operates b) basic interventions in the national energy policy, c) the reformation of contemporary urban morphology and structure. Modernization of the primary sector, the exploitation of mineral wealth, the support of shipping, d) the highlighting of the prospects for sustainable development and finally, e) the development of a green network in the island, f) the support of shipping and especially that of short distances, g) the highlighting of the prospects for sustainable development for over 27% of the national land area occupied by Natura 2000 sites and finally, h) the development of a green network in the island complexes by providing energy autonomy in 10-15 non-interconnected islands. The National Strategy lays the foundations for transiting to a new model of fair, sustainable and inclusive development. It is also shaping a new paradigm of holistic public policy-making. The development of measurable objectives that can be achieved is essential to be defined so that the National Strategy can become effective in the future. This new paradigm attempts to initiate a virtuous cycle between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development. In the following discussion, it addresses the intervention areas of the ten business plans, describes the current situation and finally analyzes the new environment and challenges. In support of the theoretical part, a primary research was conducted using interviews. Methodologically the research was based on interviews and concluded that spatial distribution can help at the environmental level in the new era, given the current events and the needs of cities.

Keywords: Reorganization, sustainable, economic crisis, effectiveness, Sustainable Development Goals SDGs.

INTRODUCTION

Today, sustainable development, spatial planning and in general the strategy that can help cities in terms of the environmental aspect at the international level, is necessary and all countries are called to implement it. International organizations are developing a broader strategy to manage the above based on their need so that they can be driven safely in the future. The economic crisis that passed in combination with the pandemic, the environmental imbalance, etc. determines the above need (Bénassy-Quéré and Weder di Mauro, 2020, Hafner and Raimondi, 2020).

The EU participated in the UN Sustainable Development

Summit in 2015, having already developed its own strategy since 2010. At this summit, the EU committed to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 objectives, as it is fully in line with its vision and it is an opportunity for it to align with the global effort to build a sustainable future. On 22 November 2016, the EU responded to the 2030 Agenda and approved a sustainable development package containing (EU, 2016a): The “Communication on the next steps for a sustainable European future”, which describes the contribution of the various existing EU policies and legislation to the achievement of the 17 objectives (EU, 2016b). A proposal

for a new “European common concept for development” (“our world, our dignity, our future”) proposing a common vision for development cooperation for the EU and its Member States, but in line with Agenda 2030. Among its sectoral European policies, EU development policy plays an important role in the implementation of the Agenda, as it is a major driver of growth in the world. Key points of this proposal are: a) the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimension to eradicate poverty; b) the change of means of implementation; and c) the strengthening of partnerships (EU, 2016). A framework for “a renewed partnership with the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific” (ACP)(EU, 2016b).

The inclusion of the 17 objectives in European policies and current priorities and the drafting of regular reports on its progress from 2017 onwards. All this is analyzed in the “Communication on the next steps for a sustainable European future” which shows that the 17 objectives are covered by the existing EU policies and the Europe 2020 strategy, but further strengthening of the efforts is required. Initiation of studies for the further development of its vision and sectoral policies after 2020. Finally, it is clear that many of the 17 goals of sustainable development are inextricably linked to the European Commission’s ten priorities. Factors such as the circular economy, which encourages the development of sustainable production and consumption patterns, create multiplier effects and contribute to the achievement of many sustainable development goals (SDGs). Thus, SDGs are essentially a horizontal dimension of the overall European strategy.

The second Eurostat evaluation report (2018) on monitoring and evaluating the progress of the implementation of SDGs in the EU based on a European set of indicators for SDGs (EU SDG indicator set) created in 2017. It is quite relevant with the global indicators for these objectives, as well as with the European targets in particular, which carry out the evaluation of long-term European policies (Europe 2020, 7th action program) (EU, 2018). Finally, based on the selected indicators, the EU seems to be moving away (in the sense that it does not meet the indicators) from SDG 10 mainly due to the continuing income gap (income inequalities) in the Member States. Goals 6(Clean water and sanitation), 13(Climate action), 14(Life below water) and 16(Life on Land) the EU has no clear data (Pang *et al.*, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The European Commission has launched a future-oriented debate on sustainable development, as part of the broader reflection on the future of Europe that began with the White Paper in March 2017 (EC, 2017: EU, 2017). Having as a compass the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNDP, 2019), in January 2019 the EU published a paper on the factors contributing to the transition to sustainability, thus compiling three scenarios for the best way to achieve

the SDGs.

Before describing the three scenarios, a reference should be made to the four key factors that will contribute to this transition that concern (EC, 2019): sustainable production and consumption patterns (e.g. circular economy), sustainable energy and climate change, innovation, digitization, education and technology, governance and coordination of sectoral policies.

The implementation of SDGs requires better cooperation at all levels (European, national, regional, local). The involvement of civil society, the scientific and academic community and the private sector is now essential. To this end, the European Commission set up, in 2017, a platform that brings together many stakeholders to exchange ideas on the implementation of SDG 11 (High Level Multi-stakeholder Platform on SDGs).

The three scenarios for the future of SDG-based sustainability in Europe are as follows (EC, 2019):

An integrated European SDG strategy to guide the actions of the EU and the Member States. In this case, the issue of SDGs will be consolidated at a high political level and will be the guiding map in the development of strategic frameworks for the EU and the Member States. The Commission should continue to integrate SDGs into all relevant EU policies, but no action will be required by Member States. In this scenario, SDGs will continue to inspire the EU in its policy-making, even after 2020, but it will not be binding on Member States to achieve SDG commitments. Strengthening the focus on external action while consolidating the current philosophy of sustainability at EU level.

This scenario is based on the logic that the EU is already a pioneer in many aspects of SDGs, and therefore could focus on helping the rest of the world, while pursuing improvements at European level. Finally, on 9 May 2019, the European Commission met to adopt a strategic agenda for the next five years. The agenda was set to be adopted in June 2019, and according to the first draft adopted on the same day, the EU sought to prioritize, *inter alia*, sustainable development with key areas of energy, environment and climate change and promote green economy (EC, 2019).

The pandemic has overturned all public and private economic development and investment plans. The huge changes in social behavior and daily life of the citizens have reduced the quality of life of Greeks (Datta, 2020; Sanmarti, 2020). The substantial reduction of the passenger movements, the new modes of operation of the production chains, the launch of the e-commerce, teleworking and distance learning of companies and educational units have created a new global and European reality (Bénassy-Quéré and Weder di Mauro, 2020, Hafner and Raimondi, 2020).

The central European goal is an EU climate-neutral in 2050, with interventions in all sectors of the economy: decarbonization of the energy sector that causes 75% of

gaseous pollutants, renovation of buildings that account for 40% of energy consumption, innovations in the European industry that uses only 12% recycled materials, cleaner movements and transports that cause 25% of emissions. EU goals are realistic since the Union succeeded in the period 1990-2018 to reduce emissions by 23% and at the same time to increase European GDP by 61% (Economics, 2020, United Nations, 2020, Agrawala *et al.*, 2020; Mohideen *et al.*, 2020).

The Green Deal and the Digital Transformation of the European economies are the pillars of the new European, but also of each national growth model, fully compatible with the global goals of sustainable development (SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals). Especially in the EU and Greece, the recent decision to allocate €750 billion to Next Generation EU and the expected proportion of all European funds, of which €72 billion will be allocated to Greece, form the most important challenge that the country is facing in recent decades (D'Adamo and Rosa, 2020, Smith, 2020, Mukanjari and Sterner, 2020).

The central goal of Greek planning is certainly the formation of a modern, smart, competitive, innovative new productive model that economically upgrades the country, produces competitive and exportable products and services, reduces social and spatial inequalities and creates new jobs (Fertl, 2020, Kuzemko *et al.*, 2020, Georgiou, 2020). A key priority in the coming years must be the systematic increase in productivity and extroversion (ie the increased share of internationally traded goods and services in GDP), as well as the closer link between production and universities, research and innovation. The criterion of hierarchy and planning is certainly the creation of non-mechanisms of maximization of added value in the domestic economy, from the purchase of capital goods and specialized services in all the extensive actions that will be undertaken in the fields of green development and digital transformation (Nikas *et al.*, 2018, Creel *et al.*, 2020, Roloff, 2020).

Obviously, any plans will remain a blank slate if not implemented in a timely manner through an effective Business Plan with timelines and measurable goals. The risks are great if dealt with in the traditional way of the various NSRFs, or other public policies of recent decades, which instead of showing new funding needs in addition to the original ones, have always lagged behind in both absorption and fulfillment of the original development objectives (Bogojević, 2020, Toussaint *et al.*, 2020).

The development we claim must be smart (using new technology), green (tackling climate change / crisis), socially and spatially fair (tackling inequalities at the individual and spatial level), without exclusions (young, women, Disabled), by creating decent new jobs (Petridis *et al.*, 2017, Forouli *et al.*, 2019, Messerli *et al.*, 2019, Rowan and Galanakis, 2020).

Achieving such goals is based on three horizontal priorities for the coming decades: climate change and green growth, digital revolution and on-the-job skills. To

these must be added the rapid change in international trade, which affects all national target (Papageorgiou, 2017, Tsalis *et al.*, 2020).

The focus on Greece only as a case study was chosen for a basic reason. Greece is a country that has all the prerequisites to develop and implement the appropriate environmental and spatial policy, but has not yet managed to do so. Therefore, a study will be carried out on what is being done and what should be done, always guided by the data set by the European Union. If one considers the time needed to understand SDGs as a development tool. Due to the time constraint, in the context of this article, it was chosen to study only the case of Greece as there would be faster access to additional information. There are relevant conditions and examples in Mediterranean and Latin American countries, but the process of studying and controlling the present countries would be difficult, given the difficulty of accessing data. Countries such as Portugal and Italy have already advanced, as they are tourist destinations, in their environmental upgrading and spatial planning, while there are countries such as Brazil that need to do so, but have problems, mainly in terms of economics and mentality, which they need to overcome.

The aim sought to be covered by the examination of the case study is to investigate the way in which the effort to implement the SDGs in Greece is approached and to investigate the role of spatial planning in this process. It should be noted that the investigation of the implementation of SDGs in Greece is a very broad issue and therefore, in the context of this article, it will study from the perspective of four factors based on which the individual objectives will develop. Firstly, the institutional one, which includes institutional adjustments and division of responsibilities, made by Greece to manage the broad nature of the SDGs. Secondly, the policy, which concerns the contribution of the goals to the spatial, and development policy. Third the respective means at their disposal by being one of the main research issues and finally, the study from the point of view of the issue of governance and evaluation (indicators). As emerged from the literature review (Papageorgiou, 2017, Tsalis *et al.*, 2020), the implementation of the SDGs and the achievement of sustainable development is largely a matter of good governance and therefore could not be excluded from the individual objectives, especially in the case of Greece where the issue of governance is at an early stage (Papageorgiou, 2017, Tsalis *et al.*, 2020).

On the other hand, the logic of creating sub-goals for the role of spatial planning is developed on two levels. In theory, which explores perceptions about the role of spatial planning in general and the contribution of SDGs to them, and secondly whether SDGs contribute to its emergence at a perceptual level. The second level of investigation is the practical one and concerns the examination of the role that spatial planning plays in practice, during the process of the implementation of the SDGs in Greece. (Papageorgiou, 2017, Tsalis *et al.*, 2020).

Greece is committed to and prioritizes its sustainable development goals, as defined by international and European policies. Having been hit hard by the economic crisis of recent years and the ongoing pandemic, the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development can give a new direction to our country and the 17 Goals it has set will help as a reminder of the priorities. This will ensure a balance between economic development, social cohesion and justice, as well as environmental protection and ecology, the following present the methodological and practical part of the study.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The necessity of conducting the interviews stems from one main reason and concerns the lack of quality and up-to-date information, while its purpose is to collect opinions from the appropriate people, to meet the individual objectives of the study. In this way, it will be ascertained, how they work and what is the effect of the actions taken for the implementation of the SDGs in practice, determining, through the experience so far, which areas need improvement and what changes are required.

Before following the interview methodology, it is advisable to set the boundaries of the research. Any reference to horizontal co-operation mainly reflects the ministerial level with its respective services, but also the co-operation between the General Secretariat of the Government (GSG) and other bodies such as the Committee. Vertical cooperation is mentioned mainly between the GSC and the ministries. In any other case it will be explained.

The research was conducted only through the qualitative analysis process and the tool used throughout the process was interview questions. The researcher chose an unstructured research approach, specifically did not choose to have specific questions, but posed the topic as a guide and left the respondents to answer. In this way the respondents were not limited in their answers and expressed their views freely. They expressed far more things to analyze than they would have done if the researcher had limited them. Demographically the sample consisted of 15 men and 5 women, all relevant to the subject, academics and entrepreneurs. The number of respondents was 20 and since the research was qualitative, the emphasis was on the quality of the answers and not on the quantity. Specifically, since the analysis of the answers was carried out through the content analysis, no graphs or other such research illustrations were used, but the focus was mainly on the part of presenting the answers of the respondents and drawing conclusions from the present procedure.

First, of all should be noted that the interviews were conducted via telephone for two main reasons. The impossibility of time coordination with all the interviewees for their realization on a personal level, as there was the

problem of lack of spatial proximity and secondly, the existence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes, while no tape recorder was used as the respondents did not want, and so the researcher kept notes (Nayak & Singh, 2021). However, in order to ensure the good quality of the interviews, a specific methodology was followed that was developed on two levels. Firstly the freedom given to the answers and secondly the selection of individuals.

Regarding the first level, the structure of the questionnaire consisted of four themes. The first theme concerns the operational effectiveness of institutional structures and governance processes, the second the role of spatial planning and the contribution of SDGs, the third the sectoral policies, tools and how to integrate SDGs, and the fourth the evaluation and monitoring of the goals. Depending on the interviewee, the questions were modified.

As already mentioned above the individuals that participated in the interviews represent the environmental ministry or are representatives of the Global Steering Group (GSG) or a company or were academics and therefore have an active involvement in the issue while working in departments that cover the areas of planning, urban planning and development, i.e. ministries that shape the spatial and developmental strategy in Greece.

RESULTS

The findings that emerged from the operational effectiveness of the institutional changes and the division of responsibilities will be mentioned together with those concerning the contribution of SDGs to governance, as the aim of the former, as emerged from the ESA study, is to carry out governance procedures. First, there was absolute unanimity regarding the suitability of the general responsibility for the monitoring and implementation of SDGs by the GSG, concerning two main reasons. Firstly, because of the centrality of the body and the possibility of direct contact with other structures and secondly the lack of appropriate means by a specific ministry to manage the enlarged nature of the SDGs. This fact proves in practice that the architecture and structure of the SDGs led to a holistic view of the issue of sustainable development and not to the fragmentary, i.e. only the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment (Tsalis *et al.*, 2020),

At the same time, however, it proves the deep understanding on the part of the Greek state for the need for cooperation. In the context of opening the processes of achieving sustainable development, SDGs helped solve the problem of the lack of horizontal coordination of ministries at the official level, which, according to the interviewees, is also a chronic problem of public administration. The effectiveness of the Interministerial Coordination Network (ICN) is generally considered satisfactory, as it functions as a forum in which the focal

Points began to communicate, to inform about their actions and to exchange views on the implementation of the goals. Coordination was deemed impossible without the functioning of this institutional structure. Also positive is the fact that the focal points have been officially designated by the ministries and are permanent staff of the ministry to ensure the institutional continuity of the forum.

In fact, it is the first time that the issue of governance has followed such a positive course in the history of the Greek administration. To better understand how much the governance cycle has expanded, a typical example of just four stakeholders will be cited. The governing body of the Committee, the meeting of rectors, coordinating the academic community, the meetings for local and regional government, and the ICN are all linked through the central role of the GSG. It should be emphasized that the circle of the Committee and the circle of the ICN are very closely linked as the meetings of the Committee on sustainable development issues are attended by both the Secretary General and the Minister of Environment and Energy in order to convey the concerns of the ICN and vice versa. At the same time, there are efforts, at a very early stage, to create a new cycle of government that will involve the Greek Parliament. The GSG is, therefore, the coordinating body for these governance processes that have not existed before. It should be emphasized, of course, that the accessible nature of SDGs helps in this whole process as they do not have specialized terminology and are addressed to everyone.

However, in contrast to the above, some doubts were expressed about the effectiveness of the operation of the ICN. Both the small number of meetings and the large number of representatives (about 50 people) within the ICN do not allow on one hand a substantial understanding of how to achieve sustainable development in terms of ministries. That have not dealt with this issue again and on the other does not generally help to obtain a comprehensive view of the implementation of the goals and therefore active participation. The Ministry of Environment and Energy seems to be more concerned with the goals as it has the experience and institutional memory in the issues of sustainable development, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the same time, it appeared that the relevant necessary information was not disseminated effectively within the ministries and the rest of the administrative staff, a fact that was deemed as a particularly negative for the implementation of the goals.

There is also a lack in the creation of horizontal cross-sectoral actions and in the interconnection of SDGs, as observed from the mapping. Although some steps have been taken to ensure the interconnection of SDGs to achieve multiplier effects (e.g., actions of the Ministries of Rural Development, Tourism and Culture) the need for cooperation still exists.

Regarding the contribution of SDGs to the policies and the means they use for their implementation, useful conclusions were drawn. The integration of the goals into

policies is also a challenge both globally and nationally, and to achieve this requires a long process of actions. The first step in this direction was the formation of the eight (8) national priorities, the mapping but also the creation of institutional structures where through the continuous communication of the GSG with the ministries and focal points institutional cohesion has gradually begun to be established. The next step is the approval of the implementation plan (at the end of 2019 or at the beginning of 2020) in order to highlight in practice the connection of the SDGs with the regulations that are produced (e.g. legislation, policies, etc.), but also the evaluation of these connections to the extent that they contribute to society as a whole. This is a challenge for the Greek state, as according to the interviewees, the deficit of the public administration is being implemented. The limited implementation time of the overall process of adoption of the goals has not allowed their incorporation to date in relevant regulations. An indication in this direction, however, is the request for the connection of the SDGs with all the currently funded projects.

Even in the National Development Strategy published at the same period (July 12, 2018) that the SDGs in Greece were specified, neither the way they will be achieved nor an action plan was approved by the competent bodies. As a result, on the one hand, the degree of political priority of the SDGs remains unclear and on the other, the administrative staff called upon to plan the next programming period (NSRF) find it difficult to understand their achievement and the way ministries work together and therefore cannot integrate the mechanisms for their implementation.

Regarding the role of spatial planning in achieving sustainable development, spatial planning sets the framework for the transition of SDGs to sectoral policies. More specifically, it is considered vital for the implementation of the SDGs, firstly because it represents multilevel governance and secondly because several goals have a direct spatial dimension from the beginning (e.g., sustainable cities, protection of marine ecosystems, etc.) and require spatial interventions. Spatial planning thus emerges as the most appropriate means of coordinating policies, confirming the theory.

However, in practice, in the case of Greece, this role is limited to two main reasons where the former concerns it indirectly and the latter directly. First, there is a lack of clarity and effectiveness of the institutionalized processes in the participation of the different levels of government in general (e.g., what are the responsibilities, who will participate, etc.), which as a result, undermine its role, as such processes in Greece occur only when necessary, by an institutionalized tool. Secondly, there is a lack of effective consultation for the spatial plans, which depends on many factors (e.g. the prevalence of specific interest groups), but mainly on the stage at which participation enters.

Regarding the contribution of the SDGs to the means-

tools of spatial planning, they have not yet been affected in any way but are expected to change in their specialization, as the holistic nature of the SDGs concretizes and better defines the desired goals in the context of sustainable development. The place-based approach and the Integrated Urban Intervention Plans respond better to the broad nature of SDGs as they create multiplier effects for an area. However, several limitations of this tool need to be addressed in order to be able to actually contribute to the implementation of the goals. On the one hand, the institutional complementarity of the criteria for the area in which the Integrated Urban Development Plan (IUDP) will be applied is required mainly through the institutionalization of a definition, for both the Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) and the metropolitan ones, and on the other hand, the resolution of metropolitan governance issues is required. As in the case of Athens for example, many responsibilities belong to the central ministries. There is also an excessive focus sometimes on spatial interventions that undermine other aspects of development such as social.

On the other hand, the SDGs will contribute to the connection of spatial and development policy through the operation of the ICN. It will emerge from the coordination procedures of the ministries, and it will be understood that the split of the two policies during the planning was ineffective. A typical example that SDGs include both spatial and development policy contributing to their association is Goal 17.14 referring to the achievement of policy coherence. At first glance, this goal seems very abstract, but in practice, when trying to implement it, it is realized that the spatial dimension enters strongly into the process. The soil and space in general is the final recipient of all sectoral policies (spatial and non-spatial) with the interactions between them and in order to be coherent, reference is necessarily made to the spatial dimension of development, which is its real scope.

In other words, the coherence of policies refers both to the horizontal level and to the vertical from the national to the local scale, which is the most critical level for the implementation of policies.

As far as the evaluation of the SDGs is concerned, the results do not differ from those found from personal observation. There was unanimity on the lack of appropriate adjustments in the indicators (quality criteria), in order to reflect the spatial dimension of the goals and the relative progress.

Although not an initial goal, the interviews also drew conclusions about the reasons that make horizontal coordination between ministries difficult. Four main causes continue to exist despite the progress made. First, the existence of an imperfect institutional framework that does not promote or oblige horizontal collaborations, especially at the lowest administrative levels (e.g. municipalities) where they are informal and very limited. Secondly, specifically for the coordination of development and spatial policy, there is a lack of information on how to implement

spatial plans (e.g. lack of circulars). Thirdly, the existence of a tradition of non-cooperation as the ministries on the one hand do not understand how the other factors are involved, which indicates a lack of experience and on the other, the effort to secure a "subject" from the services. Fourth, the existence of a structural problem that makes coordination difficult. In other words, the ministries do not have appropriate stable structures for coordination and formulation of strategies with other ministries and if they exist, they are under-functioning. This is mainly attributed to the political leaderships who do not place much emphasis on the issue, as the relevant initiatives are routinely part of the activities of the political leadership offices (e.g. the offices of ministers or deputy ministers) with the result that when the government changes the relevant know-how is lost. The non-involvement of service agents in this process results in the devaluation of the relevant services, understaffing, etc. In any case, the implementation of SDGs is expected to contribute positively to the development of governance structures and relationships and especially to the connection of spatial and development policy.

Finally, based on the experience of the interviewees, some conditions can be identified for the adoption and implementation of SDGs in Greece, which obviously reflect the proposals made. These are divided into five categories as follows:

1) Governance procedures: Understanding at a high political level the necessity and added value of SDGs, at the level understood by the Ministry of Environment and Energy. Achieving this requires more information and updating. Organization of meetings for SDGs at the parliamentary level is essential, in order to provide information and ensure continuity even in the event of a change of government. These meetings will concern different co-competent committees of the Parliament, coordinated by the Environment Committee. Empowerment of Stakeholder empowerment is needed through the creation of an organizational structure that will act as a forum and bring all groups in contact. This need arose from the fact that, to date, stakeholders are involved by acting individually and not collectively, and such an action that will improve their horizontal cooperation, will also increase the effectiveness of their action. A public awareness program at all levels of government must be organized, as it is considered an implementing body at the same time an implementing body.

2) Spatial planning: Strengthening the consultation/participation processes and improving their quality/effectiveness. Institutionalization on the one hand this implies, on the one hand, the institutionalization of a definition for both the Functional Urban Areas and the metropolitan areas and on the other hand the resolution of issues of metropolitan governance. Utilization of design tools is also needed, such as Integrated Urban Development Plans for the implementation of SDGs as well as the Formulation of quality evaluation criteria

through appropriate indicators.

3) Institutional and structural interventions: Integration of SDGs in laws, specifications, and circulars, in order to make the adaptation to them mandatory. Experience so far has shown that what is voluntary is difficult to assimilate by the Greek state, as the number of mandatory adjustments is already great. Another necessary structural intervention is linking the accompanying documents of the bills, which describe the effects of each regulation on society, the economy and the environment, with the SDGs. The institutionalization of governance procedures (way of cooperation, responsibilities, etc.) must be clear so that collaborations become, in a way, mandatory. Review of the structure of the administration in order to promote cooperation and extroversion and the existence of strategic planning in all ministries (in the sense of directions). The reopening of the Ministry of Coordination also emerged as necessary.

4) Funding: Claiming resources for the establishment of a special support secretariat and staffing with the appropriate personnel, which will organize actions for the information of regions and municipalities (public awareness) oriented, however, to field actions (out-doors actions). Connection of SDGs with financial means, which will act as an incentive for their implementation.

5) Perceptions: change of the perceptions. Transition from the individual to the collective interest through the realization that SDGs concern everyone individually and all as a whole.

DISCUSSION

From the present study it was realized that there is was a general delay in the integration of SDGs in policy making, and the corresponding implementation plan is had to be approved in early 2020, i.e. five years after the country's commitment to the implementation of Agenda 2030. A precondition for this integration is cooperation and coordination, areas in which Greece does not have a tradition of effectiveness, but efforts are being made to organize them on a stable basis.

Therefore, any delay is considered expected as it is related to the starting point of Greece for the implementation of SDGs. If one also considers that until a few years ago and in some cases even today each ministry operated autonomously without knowing what is was happening in another or even in other directorates of the same ministry, Greece has taken the first firm steps in this direction, but it is still far behind. The situation implementation of SDGs, however, is not only in Greece at this early stage, as because, as noted in the interviews, the EU members often omit the existence of SDGs during its their planning omits the existence of SDGs, which are pointed out a posteriori. Probably, the almost voluntary involvement of the focal points with the issue of the SDGs is one of the reasons another reason. Based on personal

observation during the interviews, any attempt to implement the goals at ministerial level may be hampered by the following factors:

1) Confusion as to about the concept of integration. It has been observed that even people working in the same ministry have a different understanding of the meaning of integrating the SDGs into policies. Some believe that it concerns the issuance of an implementation plan that will highlight in practice the way of integration, but also the existence of a timetable, thus shaping the framework of specialization. While others believe that their integration the integration of SDGs in development texts is necessary (in the sense of simply stating that they were taken into account), so that the relevant provisions do not conflict with them.

2) Need to strengthen the role of spatial planning with areas that are not as obvious as social policy. It was observed that when social issues (poverty, exclusion, etc.) arose, the way in which spatial planning contributed in the sense of spatial governance and spatial interventions was not fully understood. This fact proves on the one hand the lack of spatial thinking and on the other the hand, small to non-existent contribution of spatial governance in resolving development issues. Thus, although in theory it is understood that all policies have a spatial imprint, on a practical level there are no corresponding actions.

The following proposals made in this article are also based on personal views and concern both the above obstacles and shortcomings identified during the interviews but no are not given as solutions were given, regarding for the formation of an effective framework for the implementation of SDGs. The obstacles are the existence overcoming the obstacles will require the creation of a formal definition or a single direction for the concept of integration, promoting spatial thinking and governance through the ICN so that all ministries understand their contribution to the implementation of the development goals, organization of more training seminars, workshops, etc.

The shortcomings are In order to overcome the shortcomings, the emphasis should be on informing/educating and guiding ministries that lag behind in understanding the concept and achievement of sustainable development due to a different object on the one hand and the non-horizontal action of sustainable development in the past on the other. The importance of the substantial contribution of the other ministries is crucial for the achievement of the SDGs ("no one left behind"). Dissemination of the necessary information should be within the ministries and in general of the administration units in general, so that it is not limited to those directly involved in the operation of the ICN. Until now, this was done informally through their possible participation in technical procedures for the implementation of SDGs. An example of such an action is the organization of annual conferences.

However, with regard to the institutionalization of the

horizontal coordination procedures mentioned above, it is worth noting that the issue of institutional balance arises again. Based on this, it is more important it can be said that for the implementation of sustainable development, whether it is more important for people to act with sustainable models and therefore essentially understand the need for governance processes or are simply institutionally and not just be imposed on them institutionally without their own approval. At least at the ministerial level, where co-operation has been established, albeit informally, through the ICN, the case for institutionalization should be carefully considered.

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