EU

European Union

Committee: European Union

Topic: Sustainable Business Practices in the European Union

Written by: Isabella Venegas

We are very happy to have you as a delegate in this year's SPISMUN 2025 of San Patricio International School Model of the United Nations, Campus Del Paseo. This is an exciting opportunity for you to engage in important discussions and develop your debating skills. We hope you not only learn and participate a lot, but also have fun along the way!

Feel free to share any questions, suggestions, or comments you may have with us. We are here to support you and want to ensure you have a great experience.

Your Chairs for this Conference will be Sara Céspedes as your Secretary, Emma Alvarez as your Moderator and I will be your Director. We truly hope you have a wonderful time and gain valuable insights into the global issues we will discuss in this Committee.

Sincerely,

Isabella Venegas

I.   Committee Background

The European (EU) Union was created by the Maastricht Treaty, which was signed on

November 7 1991 but entered into force on November 1,

1993. This treaty created the formal invention of the

European Union. The EU was signed and created by the

European heads of state, the European community at that

time were Belgium, France, Germany, Italy,

Luxembourg, the Netherlands Denmark Ireland Spain

Portugal Greece and the United Kingdom.

The European Union as a committee in the UN main focuses were they work together to find a solution to the issues. The EU works to strengthen human rights. The EU supports international peace and *security. The E*U common security and defense policy missions and operations have worked along with the UN in several countries. The European Union plays a crucial role, through the efforts of this commitment has created international cooperation.

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) is an essential advisory body of the European Union, established by the Maastricht Treaty in 1994. It serves to represent local and regional authorities within the EU, ensuring that their voices are heard in the legislative process. Its purpose and functions are the primary purpose of the CoR to provide opinions on EU legislation that affects regions and cities.

It focuses on the impact of policies on local governance, public services, and regional development. The CoR works to ensure that EU decisions consider the realities of life in diverse communities across Europe. The CoR played a critical role in enhancing democratic participation at the local level. By representing the interests of local and regional authorities, it contributes to a more inclusive and balanced decision-making process within the EU.

In recent years, the Committee has focused on key issues such as climate change, migration, and economic recovery post-COVID-19. It has organized numerous sessions and workshops to discuss these topics and to promote cooperation among regions. In conclusion the Committee of the Regions is vital for ensuring that local and regional perspectives are integrated into EU policy-making. Its work supports the development of a more cohesive and responsive European Union that meets the needs of all its citizens by now in 2024.

II. History of the Topic

History of sustainable business practices in the European Union (EU) began in the 1990s, when people started to become increasingly concerned about the environment. During the Earth Summit, also known as the Rio Summit, in 1992, there was an urgent call to create economic policies that protect our planet. That year, world leaders discussed the importance of developing ways to grow economically without harming the environment.

In 2001, the EU launched its first Sustainable Development Strategy. This was an important step because it aimed to balance economic growth with environmental protection. The idea was that economic progress should not come at the expense of damaging nature. Thus, strategies began to be implemented that encouraged companies to adopt more responsible and sustainable practices.

Then, in 2015, an initiative known as the Action Plan for the Circular Economy was introduced. This plan aimed to help businesses become more efficient in their use of resources and to reduce the amount of waste they generate. The circular economy suggests that instead of following a linear model (take, make, dispose), companies should focus on reusing and recycling resources as much as possible.

At the same time, the EU also supported the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, adopting measures to combat climate change and promote responsible practices. It was clear that there was a need to work together, both locally and globally, to address these important environmental challenges.

In 2019, the European Green Deal was introduced, an ambitious initiative aimed at making Europe the first continent to be carbon neutral by 2050. This means that the EU is committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and promoting clean energy. The Green Deal includes plans to invest in clean technologies, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy sources.

Now, in 2025, sustainable practices are essential in the EU. Corporate responsibility and transparency are fundamental in business operations, and more companies are recognizing the importance of having a positive impact on the environment and society. Significant investments are being made in clean technologies and environmentally friendly practices, reflecting a strong commitment to a greener future.

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The evolution of sustainable practices in the EU shows us how it is possible to achieve economic growth while caring for the planet. This path not only benefits the economy but is also crucial for future generations and the health of our environment. Collaboration among governments, businesses, and civil society is key to achieving a more sustainable and responsible future.

III. Current Issues

Germany

In Germany, the government has made significant investments in renewable energy through the *Energiewende Plan*, which aims to eliminate nuclear energy and increase the use of solar and wind power. While Germany stands out as an example of sustainability, it still faces challenges, such as integrating renewable energy into its electricity grid and ensuring that all industries, including manufacturing, adopt sustainable practices.

Poland

In Poland, the transition to sustainability presents more difficulties. Despite plans to reduce carbon emissions, the country heavily relies on coal for electricity generation. The shift to renewable energy is complicated by the lack of financial resources in some companies, highlighting the need for support and funding to facilitate this change.

Moldova

Moldova, although not a member of the European Union, also engages in the conversation about sustainable practices and faces its own set of challenges. The Moldovan economy, which relies heavily on agriculture, is affected by economic difficulties and a lack of resources, limiting the adoption of sustainable practices. Issues such as soil degradation and the scarcity of adequate tools and knowledge are significant obstacles.

IV. UN Action and Resolutions

The United Nations has made substantial strides in promoting sustainable business practices and tackling environmental challenges. Below are key actions and resolutions that have been implemented:

- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: *Adopted in 2015, this comprehensive framework consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) designed to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for everyone.* Goal 12 specifically emphasizes responsible consumption and production, urging nations to encourage sustainable practices in businesses.

- UN Global Compact: *Launched in 2000, this initiative encourages companies around the world to embrace sustainable and socially responsible policies.* It offers a framework for businesses to align their operations with ten principles that cover human rights, labor standards, environmental protection, and anti-corruption efforts.

- Paris Agreement (2015): *This landmark international treaty on climate change aims to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius.* It stresses the importance of countries developing climate action plans, encouraging businesses to incorporate climate considerations into their strategies.

- UN Environment Programme (UNEP): *UNEP collaborates with businesses to promote sustainable practices,* providing guidelines and resources to help companies reduce their environmental footprint. Initiatives like the "Green Economy" and "Resource Efficiency" programs support businesses in transitioning to more sustainable models.

- Sustainable Development Goals Business Forum: This annual gathering brings together leaders from the private sector, governments, and civil society to share best practices and collaborate on achieving the SDGs, showcasing how businesses can drive sustainable development.

- UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development: This initiative highlights the critical role of education in fostering sustainable practices among businesses and communities. It encourages integrating sustainability into educational programs and training initiatives.

- Global Reporting Initiative (GRI): While not a UN initiative per se, GRI aligns with UN objectives by offering a framework for organizations to report their economic, environmental, and social impacts, promoting transparency and accountability in business operations.

- Business and Human Rights Framework: The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights provide a global standard for preventing and addressing the adverse human rights impacts linked to business activities. This framework urges companies to respect human rights in their operations and supply chains.

V. Essential Questions

1. What are the most significant sustainable business practices currently being implemented by EU member states?

2. How do the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development influence corporate behavior in the EU?

3. What role do small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play in promoting sustainability within their communities?

4. How can EU policies encourage companies to adopt circular economy principles?

5. What challenges do businesses face when transitioning to sustainable practices, and how can these challenges be addressed?

6. In what ways can the EU support countries with fewer resources, like Moldova or Poland, in their sustainability efforts?

7. How can businesses measure and report their sustainability efforts effectively to enhance transparency?

8. What impact do consumer preferences have on companies' decisions to adopt sustainable practices in the EU?

9. How can collaboration between the private sector, governments, and civil society be strengthened to promote sustainability?

10. What lessons can the EU learn from non-EU countries regarding successful sustainable business practices?

VI. Conclusion

In 2025, and from several years ago, sustainable practices are vital within the European Union, where corporate responsibility and transparency have become cornerstones of business operations.

Companies increasingly recognize their role in positively impacting the environment and society, driving significant investments in clean technologies and eco-friendly practices.

The current landscape reveals a diverse picture across EU member states. For instance, Germany has made notable progress through its Energiewende initiative, which prioritizes renewable energy sources. However, challenges persist in other nations, such as Poland, where reliance on coal hampers sustainability efforts, and Moldova, where <u>economic limitations restrict the adoption of green practices.</u> These varying circumstances highlight the need for tailored strategies to foster sustainability in different economic contexts.

The United Nations has also played a crucial role in promoting sustainable business practices globally. Initiatives like the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Global Compact, and the Paris Agreement have established frameworks that guide countries and businesses in their sustainability efforts. The emphasis on collaboration among private sector leaders, governments, and civil society is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and addressing pressing environmental challenges.

To further this agenda, it is important for delegates to explore key questions, such as the most effective sustainable practices, the influence of EU policies on corporate behavior, and how businesses can measure their sustainability efforts. By engaging with these essential questions, delegates can contribute to a more cohesive and responsive approach to sustainable development in the EU and beyond.
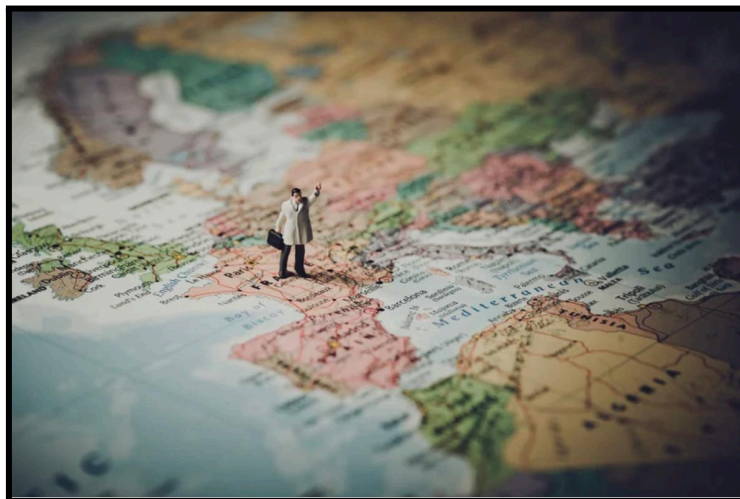
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