

MASTER THESIS OF EUROPEAN UNION LAW

**EU's pursuit of sustainable development
through soft governance
—From the Lisbon Strategy to the Europe 2020**

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Major: European Union Law

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I'm so glad to be able to acknowledge my indebtedness to those who has generously supported me in this research year.

I'm grateful to the Faculty of Law of University of Macau, for giving me the chance to join this program. The academic year led me to the EU law study and paper writing. The Jean Monnet Seminars provided me such an abroad platform to listen to a variety of wonderful speeches from scholars and officials around the world. These experiences help me a lot in my research work. Thanks to all the professors for giving me so many learning chances.

I'd like to sincerely express great gratitude to my supervisor—Professor Castro, without whose scholarly advice and professional guidance I could not have completed this work. He has inspired my interest in this meaningful topic, warmly encouraged me to work on this topic, and patiently guided my research for this whole year.

Thanks also to my parents who provided me the greatest worth in my personal character—dedication and persistence in my research work. Thanks to them for standing by me through the decisions of my educational career and even the road of my life.

I'd like to thank my classmates, Zheng Shaoyuan as well as Zhuo Min, who patiently encouraged me and helped me to get over the great hump in my research. We got through this research year together.

I wish you all the best!

Abstract:

Ever since it was established in 1957, the European Union (EU) increased in both membership and power and it has been acting well as a unique supranational international organization. Meanwhile, the EU has been faced with both external (globalization) and internal (integration but diversity) challenges. In order to prepare itself for these new challenges, EU sets sustainable development as one of the fundamental objective.

In the new century, to ensure a sustainable development, the EU set a decennial strategy—the Lisbon Strategy in 2000. The Lisbon Strategy aimed at coordination of economic, social and environmental development by accelerating structural reforms. Since then, the soft governance within EU came into force and the Open Method of Coordination was widely used. The Lisbon Strategy extended to cover various policy areas. After a 5-year implementation, Lisbon strategy was relaunched in 2005 during the mid-term review. In 2008, the Lisbon Strategy was renewed again because of the global economic crisis. Due to the strategic schedule, the European Commission made assessment of the Lisbon Strategy in 2010. However, though getting through a number of difficulties, the Lisbon Strategy is still proved to be rather disappointing for the European Commission. Though EU failed in most its goals, it did start a new governance model—soft governance for EU's sustainable development.

In order to be more flexible externally and stronger internally, the European Commission, based on the achievements of the Lisbon Strategy, proposed a new strategy—Europe 2020 Strategy as a successor. However, the new Europe 2020 Strategy also drew lessons from its predecessor, modifying its governance as well as implementation. The Europe 2020 Strategy is a huge social project with more defined goals, more systematic framework, stronger governance, more enhanced instruments as well as more players. The economic governance is well developed in this new strategy.

Above all, this thesis will not limit to the Lisbon Strategy and Europe 2020 themselves but try to draw some lessons from them in soft governance, and then

further to the new soft governance model for EU's pursuit of sustainable development.

Key words: EU's sustainable development; Lisbon Strategy; Europe 2020 Strategy; Soft governance; Open Method of Coordination; European Semester; external dimension.



Table of Content

Abstract

Introduction

1. The significance of this research topic
2. Main research issues
3. Literature Review
4. Methodology

Chapter I The Legal Basis for EU's sustainable development and the soft governance

- 1.1 The development of the EU in the 20th century
- 1.2 General introduction of EU's pursuit of sustainable development
 - 1.2.1 The general history of EU's sustainable development
 - 1.2.2 The challenges for EU's sustainable development
- 1.3 The development of soft governance and its role in EU's sustainable development
 - 1.3.1 What's soft governance?
 - 1.3.2 The development of soft governance in the EU
 - 1.3.3 The role of soft governance in EU's development

Chapter II Is the Lisbon Strategy a real failure?

- 2.1 The background of the Lisbon Strategy
- 2.2 The development of the Lisbon Strategy
 - 2.2.1 The mid-term review of Lisbon Strategy in 2005
 - 2.2.2 The renewed strategy in 2008
- 2.3 The content of the Lisbon Strategy
 - 2.3.1 Economic growth
 - 2.3.2 Social Cohesion
 - 2.3.3 Environmental Improvement
- 2.4 The implementation of the Lisbon Strategy
 - 2.4.1 The governance structure of the Lisbon Strategy

- 2.4.2 Political Action Plans
- 2.4.3 The Open Method of Coordination
- 2.4.4 Relevant policy methods
 - 2.4.4.1 The EU Sustainable Development Strategy
 - 2.4.4.2 The Stability and Growth Pact
 - 2.4.4.3 The EU Structural Funds and Cohesion Funds
- 2.5 The results of the Lisbon Strategy
 - 2.5.1 The Achievements of the Lisbon Strategy
 - 2.5.2 The reasons for failure

Chapter III Is the Europe 2020 Strategy putting the EU tack on the track?

- 3.1 The initiation of the Europe 2020 Strategy
 - 3.1.1 The Background
 - 3.1.2 The general introduction of the Europe 2020 Strategy
- 3.2 The Europe 2020 compared with the Lisbon Strategy
 - 3.2.1 Lessons that can be drawn from the Lisbon Strategy
 - 3.2.2 The Improvements of the Europe 2020 Strategy
- 3.3 The prospect of the Europe 2020 Strategy
 - 3.3.1 The development of soft governance in the Europe 2020
 - 3.3.2 The influence of the Lisbon Treaty on the Europe 2020

Chapter IV What can the EU learn from the Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020 for its sustainable development?

- 4.1 The prospect of EU's sustainable development from the perspective of the Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020
 - 4.1.1 Sustainability is rooted in EU policies.
 - 4.1.2 The implementation mechanism is multiple and enforceable.
 - 4.1.3 External dimension is highlighted by the new strategy as an integral part of sustainable development.
- 4.2 The prospect of soft governance in EU's pursuit for sustainable development

V. Conclusion

List of Abbreviations

BRICs	Brazil, Russia, India, China
ECOFIN	Council of Ministers for Economics and Finance
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EEMU	European Economic and Monetary Union
EES	European Employment Strategy
EU	European Union
FSAP	Financial Services Action Plan
NRP	National Reform Program
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
SCP	Stability and Convergence Program
SGP	Stability and Growth Pact
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SSD	Strategy for Sustainable Development

