

# REVIEW OF THE BOOK “THE PURSUIT OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN EU FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS” BY LUCHINO FERRARIS

## RECENZIA KNIHY “THE PURSUIT OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN EU FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS” OD AUTORA LUCHINO FERRARIS

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The concept of sustainability has been an emerging issue in different fields within the last decades. It is a topic that has been resonating not just among scientists, academics and international organizations but also among general public. Indeed, this topic is primarily linked to the natural environment and to agriculture among other economic activities. It is, therefore, clear that there exist a need and public order for the types of publication as the presented monograph titled “The pursuit of sustainable agriculture in EU free trade agreements” written by Luchino Ferraris is.

As the title indicates, the monograph predominantly analyzes the concept of sustainability in agricultural matters within the arena of the European Union. More precisely, the focus is on the bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) that the EU has enclosed with third countries worldwide.

It is only logical that such important global player, as the EU, is trying to address sustainability within its trade activities. The author even claims that EU environmental standards are the highest in the world. But the question is till what extent individual countries and other stakeholders should adjust their actions in order to comply with requirements imposed on them. By other words, how the free trade agreements are influencing the state of environmental sustainability in the countries involved in FTAs. The presented monograph is trying to respond to the questions and it offers a broad reasoning for justifying the author’s standpoint. The content of the monograph is divided into three ideological sections, while each of these sections is covered by two chapters.

The first section is dedicated to creation of the theoretical background for further development of the topic. Within this part, the author tries to clarify the paradigm of sustainability. The approach to the concept consists of conceptual, philosophical and legal angle. Then, the focus shifts to the observation of how sustainability is embedded in the fundamental documents of the EU. These documents are further analyzed for notions of the agricultural and environmental references and the depth of such notions, or more precisely the lack of them.

Sustainable agriculture per se, together with its reflection in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), its reforms and measures, is the main subject of analysis of the second chapter. Here, the author focuses on the potential imprints that the CAP can have in the activities of the partner countries when it comes to sustainable agriculture.

Within the second section, the focus is on the researched subject but from the economic and trade angle. Author argues that the enclosed FTAs are aiming at promoting EU values such as sustainable development, human rights and good governance. The main findings from analyzing FTAs are here confronted with the broader scope of the World Trade Organization’s law. Further, close attention is paid to studying the notion, regulation and enforcement of Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapters within FTAs. These chapters can be seen as an important tool of TSD implementation in the third countries, however, the author stresses out that formulations of the chapter are always reflecting the unique circumstances and there was not observed any “blueprint approach”.

Finally, the last section of the presented monograph is of a more practical nature. Within this section there are 6 case studies elaborated. These are divided into two parts – first one including FTAs enclosed with developed and the second one with developing countries. The pattern from the previous chapter is maintained also here, meaning that within the case studies, the focus is on provisions that include description of TSD chapters, the regulation and enforcement.

The analysis showed that the concept of sustainability is, in one way or another, presented in all studied agreements. Furthermore, the EU is trying to increase the environmental standards of the partners’ countries however, these attempts are not legally binding.

The structure of the monograph is topped by summarizing and concluding chapter where author replies to the stated research question(s) and indicates the possible further development of this research.

The theoretical discussion covered within the monograph is

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rather exhaustive and holistic what undoubtedly contributes to widening general knowledge about the discussed subject. Further, it brings approach, which has not yet been seen in the legal literature. On the other hand, some sections are missing straightforwardness. This minor critique, however, is addressed by the fact that there is a summary after every ideological part, which brings the readers back on track. The language of the publication is with no doubt highly professional but this does not decrease the general readability of the monograph. Contrary, it can serve not just to scientists within or outside of

the legal sphere but also to general public.

References are another part of consideration when assessing a scientific publication. In case of this book, the author used a very good set of references. The used sources are relevant, exhaustive and up to date. Further, I would like to highlight that despite the author was moving in a rather blurry sphere he succeeded in developing and maintaining clear and comprehensive approach and methodology of the research.

Overall, I believe that this publication represents a very useful addition to the existing library.