

no negotiators. On the other hand, in Belarus existence of negotiators in goods realization reduces their competitiveness at international market. Nowadays a number of small businesses are increasing. Consequently, Belarus aims at economic diversification. According to the plans, small business's share in GDP must reach 40% by 2021.

To summarise, it's necessary to learn from the experience of other countries and carefully approach to their integration in Belarus. The main idea is the improvement of tax legislation. Market regulation, free competition, simplification of consumer goods realization, actual advertising and seeking out new markets – all these events will aid to Belarusian small business to get to the next level.

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## **ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS: MODERN TRENDS AND THE SITUATION IN BELARUS**

Since early centuries people from generation to generation have been using the planet's resources to satisfy their needs. The economic prosperity of any country used to be measured by the number of factories and the level of natural resources exploitation. The economic growth of countries was causing serious environmental problems. Today the situation is changing for the better. Most developed counties are trying to reduce the harm to the environment, but the question is how they are doing it. Thus, the first aim of this research is to analyze which exactly economic tools they are using to protect the ecology. The second aim is to study whether any of these tools can be applied to belarussian reality. Finally, the third aim of the research is to determine what difficulties citizens of Belarus are facing today on the way to save the environment.

The countries, whose examples have been taken for the analysis, were chosen according to the 2018 Environmental Performance Index (EPI) which was produced by the Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy. The information about how these countries are using economic tools for the purpose of solving

ecological problems has been taken from the Internet. As for the situation in Belarus, related to the problem of the thesis, it was the author of the thesis who has conducted a research, the results of which will be discussed later.

Coming back to the countries, leading the 2018 Environmental Performance Index (EPI), they are Switzerland, France, and Sweden. At the top of the ranking is Switzerland with a score of 87.42 in overall environmental performance. Switzerland is in the lead thanks to a lot of procedures taken by the government. For example, under an energy strategy passed in 2016, no new nuclear-power stations will be built in the country, but existing ones may operate as long as they stay safe. Besides, Switzerland invests considerable sums to environmental protection. For example, there are about 8,000 various jobs related to the protection of the environment. [1] Moreover, Switzerland is focused on reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, one of the main causes of global warming. The carbon tax has been revised upwards. This affects in particular the construction and transport sectors, two major CO<sub>2</sub> emitters. Switzerland also stands out in Water & Sanitation. The state of Swiss waterways is expected to improve by 2030 thanks to the new constructions under way and the renovation of existing water-treatment plants. Green tourism is on the rise, as well.

France (83.95), which stands the second in the 2018 EPI, has a lot of environmental problems, but copes with them successfully. [2] The country has a good record on carbon emissions, but this is largely due to strong dependence on a nuclear-energy sector. It is planned to reduce the nuclear-power generation share from 75% to 50% by 2025. Although the OECD in its 2016 environmental report attested that France had significantly improved its environmental performance over the last ten years, the performance record with respect to environmental targets is not satisfactory. Too often, environmental policies continue to be subordinated to sectoral policies, which are considered more important. The latest example is that the use of pesticides has increased by 29% (2008 – 2014). The attitude of the government is split between the desire to reduce pesticides and the pressure from farmers who refuse to reduce their use. The French government has also started supporting the development of environmentally-friendly businesses and development of clean technologies. Since 2004, the amount of environment-related jobs has jumped by 36%. In 2012, nearly 45,000 environment-related jobs existed in France, most of which were within the sectors of water, waste management and renewable energy. Additionally, the amount of students taking courses related to environmental problems is also increasing. Also, there are financial benefits in the form of subsidies for buyers of electric cars from both foreign and French carmakers.

Sweden (80.51) rounds out the top five countries in the 2018 EPI and was in the lead a few years ago. [3] According to the Swedish government, its policies have led to just 1% of solid wastes going into landfills, with 99% of solid wastes recycled. Since 2005, Sweden has prohibited selling plastic drink bottles that do not comply with the approved recycling program. Many of Sweden's corporations participate in socially responsible business practices and Swedish companies like IKEA are viewed as environmental leaders. Unlike other countries in Europe,

Sweden's clean technology sector is comprised mostly of smaller start-up companies, rather than of large corporate entities. According to Bloomberg Business, Sweden features around 3,500 clean tech companies that collectively book about \$14 billion in revenues. To help expand the industry, the Swedish government recently has set aside \$180 million for clean tech projects.

As far as Belarus is concerned, the country takes the 44-th place in the 2018 EPI with a score of 64.98 in overall environmental performance. Since the research aimed at figuring out the situation in Belarus, the online questionnaire was held. More than 100 respondents took part in it. Based on the results of the research, 88% of respondents are aware of environmental problems and can list at least 3 of them. However, only 62% of respondents find environmental problems dangerous for their own families and 55% are engaged in solving these problems. Most of people in the country know about environmental problems, but few of them are worried and even fewer are involved in solving the problems. Still, people, who try to make their contribution, save energy and water (77%), separate garbage (64%), take part in ecological programs (4%). The overwhelming majority (66%) admits that Belarus is not an eco-friendly country. And explains why they do not participate in solving environmental problems saying that authorities don't function well (61%), that they are not provided with enough information (30%). Also 44% admit that they are just lazy. It is important to mention that 78% of respondents were women and 73% were aged from 13 to 30.

In conclusion, it must be said that Switzerland, Sweden and France and the way ecological problems are being solved there are a good model for Belarus to follow. These counties as well as Belarus are associated with lakes, forests and beautiful landscapes. But they protect their national treasure in a different way. Their governments impose regulations and support eco-friendly businesses, they give financial benefits to those who contribute to the solution of environment problems and fine those who do not fit in new environmental policies. Such a method of carrot and stick can be applied in Belarus as well, the population of which is already aware of existing problems. People themselves and with the help of the government should understand how serious consequences can be and should start acting. Of course, it is easier said than done, but it is high time we stopped just speaking about environment problems and started taking action.

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