

## THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF THE CONCEPT "RELYING ON OWN STRENGTHS"

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### Summary

*Starting from the reality of the countries of the Western Balkans, i.e. countries in transition and the fact that many of them are handicapped by their population, territorial and other potentials for implementing a policy of relying on their own forces on an individual basis, it is natural that within the framework of cooperation between developing countries, that conception appears in the form of collective reliance on one's own strengths. To carry out such an orientation, additional effort is needed, both for theoretical thinking and for the elaboration of practical solutions regarding the form of mutual cooperation of the mentioned countries. The concept of "relying on one's own strength" was not conceived as a consequence of complex theoretical discussions and argumentative polemics of economic theorists, but as a necessary necessity of contemporary practice. Namely, it is necessary to look at the possibilities and eventual consequences of the application of the commitment to "reliance on one's own forces" from both a theoretical and an economic-political point of view.*

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

A number of prominent economic analysts articulate the establishment of a new world order and emphasize that the complex of problems that are essentially based on "relying on one's own forces" is of particular importance. This formulation, after all, like the entire plea for the introduction of a globalized economic order, is the result of an effort to promote new approaches, new methods in the practice of modern development, to stimulate the creativity of economic development policy holders and to simultaneously mobilize all subjects to accept the need accelerated economic development. Hence, the concept of "relying on one's own strength" was not proposed as a result of complex theoretical discussions, argumentative or unargued polemics of economic theorists, but as a necessary necessity of contemporary practice. The concept can give basic life force to this concept, but at the same time it does not release, above all, those who accept it, certain obligations to develop certain theoretical frameworks for that determination imposed by the contemporary practice of international economic cooperation. Namely, it is necessary to look at the possibilities and eventual consequences of the application of the commitment to "reliance on one's own forces" from both a theoretical and an economic-political point of view. To the extent that the positive and negative accompanying projections of the proposed orientation would be studied in the theoretical field, it would be possible to avoid certain negative tendencies in a timely manner, and in this respect the theoretical consideration of this concept deserves special attention.

## 2 REVIEWING THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

Until the beginning of the nineties of the last century, it seemed that neither in theory nor in practice there were any controversial issues surrounding the process of accelerated development of underdeveloped countries. There were differences in terms of development methods, development dynamics, the role of individual sectors in the process of economic development, commitment to the so-called "middle way", but the meaning of the term development itself was not raised as a contentious issue.

Already at the end of the twentieth century, in the transition countries of the Western Balkans, and not only in them but also among theorists from other parts of the world, and above all within a narrow group of economic theorists in developed countries, a certain doubt began to appear regarding the very concept of development interpreted on the so-called "classic way". In other words, taking over the value scale of the economically modern society as a criterion for successful or less successful solving of the problem of economic development is now being questioned. This doubt did not arise suddenly, nor by chance. In our opinion, its source lies primarily in the failures of the current policy and development methods in countries in transition. Although it would be difficult to claim that failure is complete, it would be even more difficult to prove that success is complete, even in those countries where, from the point of view of primarily material indicators of economic development, there are certain positive results. Without going into details on this occasion, it is enough to point out the example and experience with costs and effects, both material and social-cultural and humanistic, two categories that until recently represented the explanation of the theory and policy of economic development. Within the framework of the

economic path of development in terms of material indicators, these processes were emphasized simultaneously at a high point in the argumentation about successful development. Both processes, industrialization and urbanization, were to develop intensively in countries in transition. Otherwise, they would lead to disturbances in social and cultural values. Therefore, such processes would lead to a re-examination of their role in the sense of the increasingly numerous demands to study their own cultural and social values, to better adapt the process of economic development to the identity of the national being of a certain environment. Such attitudes have also left their mark on the attitudes articulated within international financial mechanisms.

Movements in the world economy and the impossibility of countries in transition to successfully compete with industry on the world market only added new energy in the direction of formulating requests about the need for the countries of the Western Balkans to rely more on their own forces in their economic development and seek their own path of development according to the European model. This should mean a modern path of development, the prospect of weakening the relics of the old economic system and connections with retrograde centers, but not only because in these retrograde conditions the mechanism of placing goods, especially young industrial producers, becomes difficult, but primarily because of a conscious commitment to eliminate competition. Therefore, instead of the relatively high degree of disconnection between the economy of the transitional countries and the developed economies of Europe, globalization brings a determination to strengthen integration ties within the single European Union.

### 3 THEORY OF THE NEW INTERDEPENDENCE

In this way, the need for new theoretical illumination of these movements is initiated from the point of view of theory, and not only from practice. From the point of view of increasingly complex requirements for relying on one's own forces, the acceptability of various theoretical conceptions of international economic development is ensured to a large extent, whether they are free trade and liberal, Keynesian, neoliberal, peripheral economic theory, or theoretical attempts to underdeveloped countries as the best frameworks, paths and methods of development show the countries of the East as the most important stronghold for all kinds of international economic relations.

Given that these are new requirements of practice, it is understandable that they hardly fit into the framework of existing theoretical concepts. This time, too, practice and its requirements come before theory, and if theoretical thought lags behind the needs of practice, the better it will be for theory itself, and even more so for practice. Although it is difficult to say that all the countries of the Western Balkans, as relatively underdeveloped countries, have behind them more than half a century of political activity in the matter of economy, from the point of view of general tendencies of development, there are grounds for assuming that in these countries there is also a high degree of disappointment with the results of development so far. Accepting the parameters of developed countries and basically taking over the parameters of the consumer society as a criterion for evaluating the process of their own economic and social development, both the forces that carry and organize that development and the broad sections of the population can state that the gap between the countries of the Western Balkans and the developed countries of Europe is deepening instead of narrowing. Hence the question of the justification of concepts

whose application suggests faster "running" in order to stay in place.

The institutional formulation of the requirement to rely on one's own forces came to the fore at the beginning of this century under pressure to involve the international community in the development of those countries, which is categorical in its thinking that all the countries of the Western Balkans must rely on themselves and that they are the only ones responsible for the current and future state of their country. The essence of these requirements boils down to the need to nurture one's own, independent development of the economy and society, to formulate one's own goals for that development, development priorities and to make full use of one's own capacities of all kinds and one's own natural resources. This is the essence of the message formulated in the request for complete and permanent sovereignty of states in relation to their own natural resources and economic activity.

In the theoretical generalizations of this issue, it would be necessary to start from the understanding that the issue of relying on one's own forces and by the bearers of that demand is formulated primarily within the framework of collective reliance on one's own forces, and not from the point of view of the isolation of the countries of the Western Balkans from world economic trends and the European Union, which is what these countries strive for. Only such a setting of interdependence has its real basis. And the civil theory of international economic relations uses this methodology to the maximum, thus seeking a better place for all underdeveloped countries in the globalized economy.

The tasks of theoretical illumination of the concept of reliance on one's own strengths depend, first of all, on the very understanding of the idea of what one's own strengths are" and what "reliance" means. According to the understandings of these concepts manifested so far, if they were to

be proclaimed as the goals of the development of the national economy and society as a whole, future economic and social development should include the use of all domestic factors and resources in the system, from the political organization of the country according to European principles, to the very a profession that should play an increasingly important role in future development. Understood in this way, the determined reliance on one's own forces excludes any isolation, and requires less dependence on external influences from the economic and political powers of the surrounding countries.

At the basis of this understanding, especially for underdeveloped countries such as the countries of the Western Balkans, which have a relatively larger population, a larger territorial area and relatively significant natural resources, lies the effort that economic progress and the improvement of general conditions in the country can be achieved far more efficiently by one's own forces. , by their mobilization and rational use, rather than the previous way of connecting. In the framework of this linking of the roles of the so-called export sector, then international financing, technology transfer, etc., in which the developed countries of the West had the main say, should have brought the expected improvements, but these improvements did not occur. A large number of countries, especially those that have already developed a certain industrial base and that have tried to emancipate themselves from external dependence more quickly by applying the concept of export expansion or import substitution, have not only failed in this, but their degree of dependence tends to increase. This is reflected in:

- a) in the tendency of faster import growth;
- b) in the tendency to increase external debts;
- c) in the tendency of increasing unemployment, etc.

Hence, the new theory of relying on one's own forces should be a kind of theory of a new type of international economic interdependence in which the hitherto unilateral interdependence with a far greater specific weight and role of the developed countries of the West would appear in a new form and with new contents.

The countries of the Western Balkans have remained unknown in a certain sense, because in the development of the theory and practice of the economic system so far, they have not engaged in accordance with their capabilities or their participation in world industrial production. As the development of the theory and practice of relying on one's own forces depends in the current circumstances primarily on the internal orientation of underdeveloped countries, countries in transition, and on the role of developed countries, it is logical that these two components were given much greater weight in the following analysis.

#### **4 TECHNOLOGY AND RELIANCE ON OWN STRENGTHS**

It is impossible to talk about any kind of economic progress without mentioning technological progress, revision of goals and criteria of economic development. This also necessitates a revision of the understanding and practice of technology transfer.

Earlier experiences show the failure of the mechanical transformation of socio-economic solutions, intellectual capital, a failure that sooner or later becomes present during "revolutionary" changes. Likewise, the thesis that economic development is "natural" to the extent that it becomes an integral part of the way of life of a certain environment, if it fits into the real ambitions of the population, the existing scale of values, historical, cultural and general conditions, was elaborated. Where these conditions are not respected, the cost of

economic development, especially development measured by standard parameters, can be too high, both in terms of human capital and its use, as well as in the creation of a certain environment for the development of the economy and society, and a certain way of life in a given national and social environment. .

On this occasion, it is necessary to point out that the practice of intensive economic development through urban industrialization, urbanization, the transfer of the mass of the population from the rural to the urban environment, even when viewed from a general point of view, led to certain improvements in production and consumption per inhabitant, but also to such social upheavals that could not have certain negative effects for the economic development process itself.

Hence, the theory and practice of economic development, as essentially developed in countries in transition after the 1990s, inevitably came to a crisis, which also manifests itself in the form of a contemporary demand to rely on one's own forces. Imitating development modeled on developed countries, especially EU countries and creating a "copy" of those structures in the environments of certain countries, could not bring exclusively positive results. The roots of such a model of imitating economic development from other areas, in recent post-war relations, and in the introduction of new social relations at the time of the dominance of developed countries regarding the introduction of new technologies to the countries of the Western Balkans, did not bring positive effects. In the period of political emancipation of the countries from these parts of the Balkans, a newly composed bourgeoisie appeared, with more or less intense allies from the environment, by inertia it continues the process of economic development, with the fact that in a significant number of countries this process has stagnated compared to the

countries that were previously associated with the European Union .

To the extent that in the developed countries during the nineties of the last century there was a strengthening of knowledge about modern technology as an improving factor in the countries of the Western Balkans, distrust began to appear towards the consequences of the application of modern technology in an environment that was not adequate due to a number of other characteristics the conditions in which that technology was formed and began to be applied.

In addition, it is necessary to differentiate between the terms "science" and "technology" on this occasion. While the laws of certain sciences are of a universal nature and cannot be the subject of dispute and selection, the application of scientific knowledge in the process of building certain technical and technological solutions and procedures, designing equipment, etc., is an area in which determination can and should be made by those forces that bear social, political, moral, financial, organizational and any other kind of responsibility for the process of economic development in the countries of the Western Balkans. For this reason, neither in the domain of economic development, nor in the domain of technological development, in the concept of relying on one's own forces, is the orientation towards self-sufficiency in the sense of isolation from the external environment accepted. This applies both to the understanding and orientation of countries from these areas, as well as to the so-called of collective reliance on one's own forces.

In accordance with the proposed concept, the thesis about the so-called "appropriate technology". In contemporary literature, this term mainly refers to technology that provides the production of basic means of living, which is able to contribute to the

increase of labor productivity on a mass basis.

## **5 WAYS TO RELIANCE ON YOUR OWN STRENGTHS**

In contrast to supporters of differently conceived theories of economic development, the commitment to relying on one's own forces is not a commitment to isolation. All theories that contain elements of a negative nature led to the severing of ties between the countries of the Western Balkans and the developed countries of the EU.

Commitment to economic ties based on the principles of globalization in the future means great help and relief for the countries of the Western Balkans. Therefore, it would be the determination of the mentioned countries to rely on their own forces, i.e. reduce dependence on other markets in terms of imports, and on the other hand, there would be increased cooperation through coordinated actions, harmonizing policies and structures of internal development, i.e. a common attitude regarding the international economy.

The ways and methods of the policy of relying on one's own forces in the process of economic and social emancipation of the countries of the Western Balkans cannot, therefore, be based on the principles of severing relations, that is, isolation from the EU, on separation from the complex of relations that began with the formation of the European and world market at the end in the nineties of the last century and developed in modern conditions into complex international economic relations. This is all the more difficult, as today it is almost impossible to find any sector of production, branch, even a significant product in any country that does not contain, in a certain proportion, the so-called imported substances. In other words, the process of internationalization of extended reproduction has reached such

proportions that it represents an objective component of the modern world and way of life. That process has a tendency to continue and deepen, and hence the application of the principle of "isolation" or "breakup" would mean opposing the regularity of modern development.

## CONCLUSION

The concept of "relying on one's own strength" requires us to theoretically illuminate new methods, connecting different parts of the world, with different economic, social, historical and other characteristics. This connection appears as a necessity both between the countries in transition themselves, and between them on the one hand and developed countries on the other side, compared to the previous way of connection which was dictated from the political centers of power. Therefore, within the efforts to achieve the New World Economic Order, orientation towards the application of the principle of reliance on one's own forces can be optimally applied if new methods of connection are sought and if connections with the centers of the world economy are provided on a sound basis.

Instead of isolating and breaking ties with the centers of the world economy, it is necessary to revise the existing system of connections and for the countries of the Western Balkans to decide for themselves in which way, in which sectors, through the use of appropriate forms of cooperation, for those types of cooperation that correspond to the basic needs of their economic and social development. Hence, in the implementation of this understood reliance on one's own strengths and determination to connect with developed countries, the countries of the European Union, the question of the nature, structure and form of economic and social development in the transition countries themselves is necessarily raised. Only the government, institution, individual, organization, etc. can make the choice of ways and methods. Who

has the appropriate performance to be able to make a choice. In other words, it is difficult to expect an independent selective policy in any field, if the one who is supposed to carry out the selection is not independent enough, does not have internal support, depends on foreign centers towards which he should exercise his power regarding the independent choice of connection methods.

Political reliance on one's own forces should be elaborated from the point of view of economic theory and economic policy in such a way as to ensure the possibility of guaranteed existence of the countries of the Western Balkans, in accordance with the historically understood basic conditions for the existence of the nation and its development policy in all areas.