

CSR and Sustainable Development – Two Concepts with Different Beginnings and a Common Future

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Abstract

The concepts of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable development have emerged as separate independent units in different historical periods, but today their content, orientation and tools are basically identical. Both concepts focus on the economic, ecological and social aspects of the activity not only of contemporary business organizations, but of those in the public sector as well. The main purpose of the paper is to track the evolution of the ideas on CSR and Sustainable development, to reveal the historical prerequisites for their emergence and to outline the differences in their initial interpretation. After that the gradual convergence of these ideas is tracked in respect to orientation and content by making a comparative analysis of the most common practical initiatives for CSR and sustainable development as Social standards certification, CSR Stock Exchange indices and Corporate Sustainability assessment, Social Business and Social Entrepreneurship. The results about the availability of common ideas on CSR and sustainable development in contemporary business practices as Fair trade, Supported Agriculture and Slow movement are presented. The trends for their future development are outlined, including the application of new and innovative concepts concerning responsible and sustainable business in Europe, and, in particular, in some of the Balkan countries. Arguments are brought forward to support the thesis that today CSR is a basic element and an essential part of the overall efforts for sustainable development.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Sustainable Development, Social Business, Fair trade, Supported Agriculture, Slow movement.

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1. Introduction

The beginning of the theoretical debate about the responsibility of business to society was set over 200 years ago and was concentrated on the business' economic role of contributing to people's wellbeing by means of the efficient use of public resources under the conditions of free trade (*Smith, 1776*). Issues concerning the social functions of business were raised at the beginning of the 20th century (*Carnegie, 1900; Sheldon, 1923*), with the term "social responsibility" formulated only as late as the 1950s (*Bowen, 1953*) and the thesis that it is not enough for company efforts to only be focused on maximizing profits is being popularized (*Davis, 1960*). These beliefs have not found unanimous acceptance as for ex. *Levitt (1958)* and *Friedman (1962)* argued them and supported rational-economic concept of the business responsibilities. Nevertheless, during the last decades of the 20th century more attention is being paid to the necessity of finding a balance between the economic objectives of companies and the social goals of society (*McGuire, 1963; Drucker, 1974; Davis & Blomstorm, 1975*). This trend reflects the contemporary beliefs about a socially responsible business organization, whose policy is voluntary orientated towards taking into consideration the present and future social needs (*Sethi, 1975; Carrol, 1979*). It is expressed not only in making commitment to environmental protection, abiding by labour law or participating in charity campaigns. The role of modern business is viewed in a wider context – as that of an active participant in the solution of various social problems and as an initiator for the achievement of sustainable development (*Sethi, 1975; Drucker, 1992*).

These days companies' application of sustainable business practices has been facilitated by an extreme variety of initiatives and institutions. They appear as associations, forums, business

partnership networks, round tables, rating agencies, stock exchange indexes, standards, companies for social audit, CSR disclosure and Corporate sustainability reporting. The creation of these initiatives for stimulating the practical application of responsible business behaviour first started in the USA in the 1970ies (*Business Round Table, 1972*). In Europe the fall of the Berlin Wall gave a strong impetus to their development (*IBLF, 1990*), and today their influence is felt all over the world.

The above mentioned initiatives for popularizing and establishing good socially responsible and sustainable business practices have been created in different periods, by different institutions, hold different objectives and adopt different strategies. They use an extremely wide variety of terminology, methodology and instruments. Nevertheless, some of them share identical views on the essence and dimensions of CSR and sustainable development, as well as the means for their popularization. Others, however, hold different opinions of the overall scope of CSR and sustainable development, while still others focus their efforts only on certain aspects of these issues and their establishment as good business practices. Therefore, **the aim** of the present study is to systematize, characterize and juxtapose well-established CSR international initiatives as well as some new and innovative concepts concerning responsible and sustainable business in Europe, and, in particular, in some of the Balkan countries. Simultaneously the research is focused on bringing forward the historical causes that necessitated their emergence, as well as providing an outline of the chronology of the process.

2. Historical prerequisites for the emergence of the notions of CSR and sustainable development

These days success in business has many and various dimensions. Beliefs about the role of business in society are not unequivocal, either. They vary widely – from treating business as a source of wellbeing, innovations and an engine for the development of society, to negative judgments concerning workers exploitation, poor working conditions, manufacturing unhealthy products, abuse of monopolistic positions or unfair disclosure of company information. Viewed against this background, people's concepts of success in business and its role in today's society are changing.

Within the historical emergence of the CSR concepts, several notions can be outlined that evoked their appearance. Some of them are related with philanthropy and charity as an old idea and practice. Philanthropy is associated with examples dating back to ancient times – e.g. the familiar case of the selfless and voluntary help to others, as offered by the Good Samaritan (*Adrian, M. et al 2013*). There are different reasons for philanthropy – varying from pure altruism to selfish motives. Proceeding from this idea are the initiatives of wealthy US and European businessmen involving donations to community, arts and educational projects at the beginning of the 20th century (e.g. *Rockefeller and Carnegie in the USA, Cadburys and Hanburys in the UK*).

There are numerous examples in contemporary business practice, as well as those of the past, illustrating another reason for CSR – certain companies seem to engage in CSR responding to pressure exercised by consumers, regulators, distributors and other stakeholders. Through CSR they attempt to wipe clean their corporate image and build positive reputation after their name has been involved in compromising activities related to environment pollution, abuse of human rights and other unethical practices. Such an example is the first large-scale consumer boycott of slave-grown sugar and rum in the UK in 1790s when more than 300,000 Britons were boycotting sugar produced by the British West Indian slave plantations (*Chandler and Werther, 2014*). In the mid-20th century widely discussed are the effects of the responsible behaviour of some “unhealthy” industries (tobacco, oil, chemical) as a result of media pressure or governmental regulations – for instance, tobacco corporations made donations to health and

sport projects in the 1960s. The link between CSR and reputational risk in consumer markets is also obvious in the case of European boycott of *Royal Dutch/Shell* in 1995 over its plan to dump the Brent Spar oil platform at sea, as well as *Exxon* actions following their spilling of more than 300 000 barrels of oil into the ocean near Alaska in March 1989. A similar situation was seen at the beginning of the new millennium with the multi-country boycott against *Nike* over sweatshop conditions at Asian suppliers. Retailers as *Zara*, *Benetton*, *Carrefour* and *Walmart* were involved in Bangladesh factory disaster in 2013 when more than 1,100 factory workers died as a result of an eight-story building collapse. *Nestle*, *British American Tobacco*, *H&M* and *C&A* faced the same problems following the huge fire at the packaging factory of a subcontractor of theirs in Bangladesh in 2016.

Some researchers (*Sharon, 1995*) believe that CSR ideas sprang up amidst professional communities in the late 19th and early 20th century. Here a classic example is the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, founded in 1880. Its members have been attempting, through demonstrating great attention to socially responsible activities, to raise the prestige of the profession. As it is well-known, they were accused of not accounting for the individual and psychological peculiarities of the workers but rather viewing them as an addition to machines. A substantial reason for the emergence of CSR concepts is the arising of ideas for humanization of attitudes towards industrial laborers. The 18th and 19th centuries witnessed countless campaigns and political reforms designed to improve working conditions and human rights. These problems have attracted the attention of practitioners *Robert Owen (1800)* and scientists since the dawn of Industrial Revolution through the human relations school of management and over to present (*Sheldon, 1923; Gilbreth, 1923; Follett, 1930; Mayo, 1932; McGregor, 1960*). Modern initiatives for CSR and sustainable business come as a logical sequel of these ideas. Today they contain requirements for providing healthy and safe working conditions, lack of discrimination in employment, payment, promotion in corporate hierarchy and dismissal of workers, decent wages, collective bargaining agreement, protection of workers' interests by trade unions and other.

The evolution of CSR concepts is also viewed as a result of the changes in people's expectations from business, following the sequence of social crises – those of the 1870s, 1930s and 1970s (*Edmunds, 1977*). The first one, in the 1870s, was expressed in the negative attitude towards large corporations owing to misconduct, bribery, monopolistic price setting and demise of small businesses. In the 21st century, similar moods exist against globalization and multinational corporations, expressed by modern social movements such as "*Occupy Wall Street*", which in 2011 organized protests in over 900 cities globally. In response to them some international initiatives popularizing CSR worldwide aim exactly at turning globalization into a driving force of development (*Global Compact of United Nations*).

The second crisis in the development of business – society relations took place in the 1930s when the Big Corporations were blamed for the Great Depression. In response to these moods and in an attempt to curb the influence of trade unions, which had accumulated a great deal of power, corporations (like Ford Motor Company, for instance) started to apply socially responsible practices such as a reduced working day, improved safety at work and additional social benefits for workers. The third crisis in the business – society relations occurred in the 1970s. Broadly speaking, it was a result of a number of new ideas like consumerism, feminism, environment protection, and was fuelled by the social discontent with the Vietnam War, Watergate scandal and other (*Donnelly et al, 1992*). As a result, the public expectations from business include initiating actions that are not only a lawful reaction to problems arising in society, but also suggest that the business should take a more active role in their prevention.

Another reason for the emergence of CSR concepts is the loss of trust in business and business executives resulting from a series of business scandals. One of the first to shell-shock the public

in the 1970s was the case of the \$500 m paid as damages following deaths and injuries sustained during road accidents that have been found to be caused by flaws in Ford Pinto automobiles (Dowie, 1977). More recent examples of corporate scandals refer to the subjective wishes of owners and executive managers to conceal the true financial results of their companies. *Enron's* bankruptcy (2001) made history, much like the record financial fraud committed by *WorldCom* (2002), which hid expenses of \$3,9 billion, and that of the pharmaceutical giant *Merck* (2003), exaggerating revenues to the amount of \$14 billion. It is believed that among the facilities for limiting these negative effects is disclosure of non-financial information about company activities, which is found today in the practices of CSR disclosure and Sustainability reporting. The above mentioned factors are complemented by the aggregate impact of the trends outlined at the end of the 20th century, such as market globalization, increasingly intensive competition, rapid technological innovation, concern for the planet's resources and the complicated environmental situation, the demographic changes taking place and the transition from industrial economy to knowledge-based economy. As a result of the impact of all these factors, as well as the implications of the global economic crisis and recent migration issues, over the last few years there has been growing support for the thesis that CSR is one of the contemporary instruments for long-term growth, sustainable development and enhancement of corporate competitiveness (Mintzberg et al, 2002; Porter and Kramer, 2006).

It is necessary to note that there are some differences in developing the ideas about CSR and the terminology used. These differences result from the existence of two approaches – the Anglo-Saxon and the European continental one. The first focuses on the so-called *corporate citizenship* – corporations are viewed as “good corporate citizens” of society. The second approach CSR is in the context of achieving *corporate sustainability* which is closely linked to the ideas of *sustainable development* (Schaltegger, 2009).

Unlike the historical development of the CSR concept, in which the focus on the social role of business dominates, the issues of social inequality and social aspects in the *sustainable-development concept* start being important not after the 80s and 90s of XX C. As it is known from specialized literature, in coming up with the concept about sustainable development, in the 60s and 70s of XX C the emphasis is on its ecological dimensions (Meadows et al., 1968). These initial ideas of achieving “ecological sustainability” reflect the attempts to establish conditions that provide simultaneously protection of the environment and economic development. Step by step social attention to them is attracted by the actions of various representatives of civil society so that later the point of establishing state, regional and international institutions on environment and development reached (Brundtland Commission, 1987). Thus, at the end of XX C, economic dimensions in the concept of sustainable development are as significant as the ecological ones. It's not before the start of XXI C that the notion of the social dimensions in the concept about sustainable development also having the same level of importance as the ecological and economic ones is established. Regardless the fact that social aspects are included in the concept of sustainable development on a later level, today accepting the principle of equality of the economic, social and ecological dimensions is present in both concepts – that of CSR and sustainable development.

According to the *World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987)* “in essence, sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development; and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations.” WCED indicates further that “*critical objectives for environment and development policies that follow from the concept of sustainable development* include: reviving growth; changing the quality of growth; meeting essential needs for jobs, food, energy, water, and sanitation; ensuring a sustainable level of population; conserving and enhancing the

resource base: reorienting technology and managing risk; and merging environment and economics in decision making.”

Today the idea that CSR is a basic element and an essential part of the overall efforts for sustainable development is shared by more and more international organisations and institutions. Thus for ex., CSR underpins the European strategy for sustainable development (*European Commission, 2001*). Some specialized agencies of the United Nations (for ex. *UNIDO*) use CSR instruments in their attempt to align private enterprises to the goal of sustainable global development. Assuring synchrony and balance between the economic, ecological and social aspects is accepted as a criterion for sustainable development of private and public organisations, separate regions and society as a whole.

3. Contemporary understandings of CSR and Sustainable development defined by different international organizations and initiatives

For the purposes of the present study it is important to juxtapose the beliefs about the essence and elements of the socially responsible and sustainable business practices suggested by leading international organizations that popularize the implementation of CSR and sustainable development worldwide (table 1).

Organization / Year of establishment	Mission/main objectives	Main terms used	Main dimensions
<i>Organizations and business partner networks</i>			
<i>International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF)</i> 1990 in London, by Prince of Wales and international business leaders	To engage in development activities... contributing to <i>sustainable economic growth</i> ,... to encourage <i>responsible business</i> in the markets in which companies are operating	CSR – “Popularization of the practices of responsible business which benefit the society and facilitate social, economic and environmental sustainable development by means of maximizing the positive impact of business over the society and minimizing the negative one“	Economic Social Environmental
<i>United Nations Global Compact (GC)</i> 1999, in Davos, during the World Economic Forum	To encourage private sector, civil society, trade unions, UN agencies and other stakeholders to apply ten principles for <i>social and environmental responsibility</i> in their daily practices	<i>Corporate citizenship</i> – defined by “Company’s contribution to society through its business activity, social investments and charity campaigns, including events for the public welfare“	Human Rights Labour standards Environment Anti-corruption
<i>Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI)</i> 2003, by Foreign Trade Association	To provide companies with the best system to improve working conditions in the global supply chain	The standard of <i>social responsibility SA 8000</i> is considered the benchmark for “best practice” and BSCI members are required to be certified according to this standard.	Human Rights Labour standards Discrimination Environment
<i>CSR Certification Standards</i>			
<i>SA 8000 – CSR certification standard</i> 1997, USA by <i>Social Accountability International (SAI)</i>	To encourage organizations to develop, maintain, and apply socially acceptable practices in the workplace	„SA 8000 is a <i>sustainable standard</i> for ensuring the empowerment and protection of the health and welfare of all personnel throughout a worksite and a company’s supply chain, while providing a management system for employers to demonstrate and verify their compliance with the Standard“	Labour standards Health and Safety Freedom of Association Discrimination Remuneration
<i>ISO 26000-CSR certification standard</i> 2010, by ISO	To provide guidance on how businesses and organizations can operate in a socially responsible way. This means acting	<i>Social Responsibility</i> is the responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment through transparent and ethical behaviour that: (1) contributes to	Human rights Labour practices Environment Fair operating practices

	in an ethical and transparent way that contributes to the health and welfare of society	<i>sustainable development</i> , including the health and welfare of society; (2) takes into account the expectations of <i>stakeholders</i> ; (3) is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behavior, and (4) is integrated throughout the organization and practised in its relationships	Consumer issues Community involvement and development
<i>CSR and Corporate Sustainability Stock Exchange Indexes</i>			
<i>Dow Jones Sustainability index (DJSI)</i> 1999, The Dow Jones Group	To evaluate the <i>sustainability performance</i> of the top 2500 companies worldwide (largest companies, based on the size and price of their stocks)	<i>Corporate Sustainability</i> – “a business approach that creates long-term shareholder value by embracing opportunities and managing risks deriving from economic, environmental and social developments”	Economic Environmental Social
<i>FTSE4 Good Indexes</i> 2001, Financial Times & London Stock Exchange	To measure performance of companies that meet globally recognized <i>corporate responsibility</i> standards	FTSE4 Good serves as a benchmark index to track the performance of <i>responsible investment</i> portfolios.	Environmental Social Governance

Table 1. Definitions of leading International organizations for CSR and Sustainable development

Source: International organizations official web-sites

Summarizing the information from table1, we can conclude that most institutions emphasize on the need to introduce a uniform policy of integrating companies' social, economic and environmental commitments into their overall management. As we have already pointed out, these three dimensions feature in both CSR and Sustainable Development. What is more, there are organizations (Baron, 2014) who argue that the terms CSR and sustainable development should be considered synonymous. At the same time, certain institutions pay more attention to the role of business for creating conditions for sustainable economic development, enhancing the quality of life and solving the local government's social problems. The meaningful dimensions of the social responsibility of business also include covering certain social expenses of the public, participation in charity campaigns and other. Attention is paid to the need of transparent and ethical behaviour, which suggests the use of appropriate criteria and indicators for assessment of socially responsible business practices and their sustainable reporting in the annual corporate reports.

Certain international organizations (e.g. *BSCI* and *OECD*) do not formulate their own definitions of CSR, but make use or elaborate on definitions provided by other institutions. Thus, the UN views individual multinationals' corporate practices as a foundation for achieving the so called Global Corporate Citizenship, assumed to be the core of CSR (UN, 1999). According to other institutions (EC, ISO), the debate between various stakeholders over finding a suitable definition of the notion of CSR calls for a longer time period and they have engaged in long-lasting discussions of the topic. In its various documents and directives the European Commission points out that CSR suggests a business behaviour that exceeds the minimal legal requirements and includes a deeper commitment to issues relating to preserving and developing the wellbeing of society. On numerous occasions the EC also emphasizes on the CSR potential for enhancing company competitiveness and accentuates on the idea of achieving sustainability as the ultimate goal of the socially responsible business practices applied (EC, 2007). Accepting CSR as a criterion for sustainability was also affirmed at the conference for sustainable development in Johannesburg (2002).

Conclusions of the analysis of the essence and dimensions of socially responsible and sustainable business practices provide us with a reason to summarize the following tendencies in their contemporary interpretation. Most scientists and institutions accept that CSR is a

component of contemporary strategic business organization management and an element of their corporate culture. Voluntary adherence to socially responsible business behaviour is perceived as a criterion for long-term growth and sustainable development. Another summarizing point in the contemporary interpretations of CSR is the focus on its purpose – to create possibilities for satisfying the needs of all stakeholders and facilitate the achievement of sustainability of the society as a whole.

4. Applying contemporary socially responsible and sustainable business practices

Over the last few decades new concepts of responsible and sustainable business have been created and these concepts have been disseminated in various parts of the world, for example *Social Business*, *Social entrepreneurship*, *Fair trade*, *Community Supported Agriculture*, *Slow movement*, *Sustainable Lifestyle*, *Diversity Management*. The present study analyzes their dissemination in some Balkan European countries (Table 2).

International initiative	Bulgaria	Romania	Greece	Turkey	Albania
Joining of Global Compact (GC)	2003	2005	2008	2002	2007
GC Number of participants in 2017	48	35	77	249	4
Number of SA 8000 certified companies (2017)	91	112	21	9	1
Social Business (Grameen bank) local branch	-	-	-	-	2013
Fair trade local branch	2007	2005	2004	2007	-
Community Supported Agriculture local branch	2010	2008	1995		
Number of CSAs initiatives (2016)	6	10	7	NA	NA
People involved in CSA/weekly	600-900	900-1000	1200-2400		

Table 2. International initiatives for CSR and Sustainable development in some Balkan European countries

Source: International organizations official web-sites

It is believed that the idea of Nobel Laureate *M. Yunus* about *social business* is a specific variation of the more general concept of *social entrepreneurship* or a logical sequel to the concept of *Stewardship*. In their business social entrepreneurs attempt to combine making a profit with fulfilling a mission designed to solve certain social problems. *Stewardship* reflects the business owners' specific sense of responsibility for everything they possess, as well as for the way they perform their daily operations (*Goyder, M. 2008*).

At the root of *Social Business* lie the innovative business models focused on the search for solutions to social problems. Founded by *M. Yunus*, *Grameen Bank* (Bank of the Poor) in Bangladesh offers micro-credits to extremely poor people, in order to help them create an independent business that would be enough to provide a livelihood. Micro-credits (of up to \$ 10 a person) are granted without any requirements for additional bank guarantees or guarantors; instead, the bank relies on the social solidarity of borrowers. These days, over 8m customers across 80 000 villages in Bangladesh benefit from this business model. *Grameen Bank* has nearly 2500 branches and has been assisted worldwide, since it functions as an example for numerous micro-financing initiatives on nearly every continent. At the same time, *Grameen Bank* has never been a charity organization, but a viable, profitable business, yet a socially directed one, aiming to ensure as many benefits as possible for the underprivileged, instead of maximizing profits. Profit from the business is used for social purposes and eventually individual investors only get back their investment, without any dividends. This constitutes their social responsibility. The benefits of social business are presented in table 3.

In Bulgaria popularization of this idea is associated with the Social Business Laboratory, founded on 27 November, 2010 in Varna. The presentation, organized by Prof. *Yunus*' team and the ensuing workshops were attended by representatives of business, academics and non-governmental organizations from Varna and discussions took place over the chances of the social business idea to spread in Bulgaria. However, the initiative has not met much support

and understanding and no practical results have been achieved, not only in Bulgaria but in other European countries, either. As a matter of fact, so far the only European country where M. Yunus' social business has been developing is Albania.

Contemporary CSR and sustainable practices	Economic benefits	Social benefits	Environmental benefits
Social Business (Grameen Bank)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - helps poor people create their own independent business as a source of livelihood; - access to financial resources for starting a business - improves economic and business conditions in the region - creates conditions for sustainable development of cattle and dairy farming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - solves local community social problems such as unemployment, poverty, poor living conditions, lack of educational opportunities, difficult access to modern technologies and other. - a source of occupation - improves quality of life - enhances opportunity for children's healthy life and nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conserves natural resources - preserves the environment - stimulates organic local products
Fair trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - brings about sustainable development of poor regions - improves working conditions - fair payment for labour - avoids exploitation of women and child labour - improves links along the supply chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assists in observing human and labour rights - eliminates discrimination - creates better conditions for education, mostly for children - assists in the creation of better health care for local people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stimulates organic production - stimulates growing local crops in traditional ways - assists local farmers with certifying organic production
Community Supported Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stimulates the sustainable development of small regions - stimulates regional economy and local producers, SMEs - reduces unemployment - locals' incomes are growing - reduces risks of investment for the producers - ensures stable demand for the production - producers fair remuneration - producers are protected against pressure from middlemen buying their products - independent from financial institutions and the need to present bank guarantees in order to get a loan - possibility for better planning of future output 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - builds relationships of rapport and mutual help between producers and the local community - reduces depopulation of small villages and urban migration - stimulates healthy and sustainable way of life - informational and educational role in the methods of growing produce (in particular among children) - personal satisfaction from the mutually beneficial cooperation and benefits gained - creation of new social contacts - preserves local culture, customs and traditions - access to cheaper, better quality products at lower prices than certified organic products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conservation of natural resources – protecting the soil from chemicals - preserving biodiversity, including local sorts of agricultural crops or local breeds of cattle that are typical for the region - reduces the use of artificial fertilizers, seeds and GMOs - reduces wastes and throwing spoiled produce away (as there are no middlemen delaying distribution) - reduces fuel-generated emissions resulting from distribution of products into remote regions

Table 3. Benefits from Contemporary CSR and sustainable practices

The idea of *Fair Trade* arose in the 1960s. Today it is an international movement which includes networks of distributors of different products, manufactured in poor countries (the so called Third World countries) and exported to developed countries. The social responsibility of Fair Trade is contained in its basic mission – to ensure a lasting improvement in the working conditions provided by manufacturers, including decent payment, at the expense of reducing

the number of intermediaries along the retail chain, avoiding forced labour, avoiding the exploitation of women and child labour, and eliminating discrimination practices. At the same time *Fair Trade* strives to contribute towards the sustainable development of poor regions and to preservation of the environment. Initially the movement focused on coffee, cocoa and bananas, while today a diverse assortment of products is covered. The first specialized store to offer fair trade goods opened in the Netherlands in 1969 and in Europe and USA Fair Trade retail outlets gained popularity in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Unlike international practice, where Fair Trade is fairly popular and well developed, in Bulgaria this type of trade is far from popular, associated with considerably high product prices, limited distribution in the retail network and insufficient research regarding the possibilities for development. In Turkey, for instance, the idea is well-spread and has been gaining popularity through the assistance of the international organization for socially responsible and sustainable business – *Global compact (UNDP, 2007)*. In Albania Fair trade has not local initiatives yet.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) appeared over 40 years ago in Asia, America and Western Europe. Its socially responsible role is revealed in the creation of mutual benefits between city people and small village farmers from the surrounding region and the resulting contribution for the sustainable economic development of the region (see table 3). Local producers, usually small entrepreneurs, deliver naturally produced fruit, vegetables, meat and other similar products to groups of bigger city households against payment in advance and a secured stable market. The main idea lies in the desire of big city dwellers to “get back to Nature” by eating natural food instead of the products of large corporations that, most often, are full of artificial additives. In Europe this trend first caught on in Austria, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Slovakia and UK. Greece is among the first European countries applied CSA. The growth of CSA spreading in Romania has continued in recent years. Its development in Bulgaria started around the year 2010, with more than 10 community supported farms functioning at present. CSA exists in various modifications, one of the most popular being the so called Farmers Markets, in which, on a certain day of the week, at a certain place in the city, farmers from the neighbouring villages sell their produce. Increasingly, small Bulgarian regions start applying various forms of CSA in order to support their sustainable development.

One of the most peculiar socially responsible and sustainable practices today is the *Slow movement*. It arose as a backlash response of individuals who do not much like the fast pace of life in our contemporary society. One of the first manifestations of this trend is considered to be Carlo Petrini’s protest against the opening of a MacDonald restaurant in Piazza di Spagna in Rome in 1986 (www.slowfood.com). This is how *slow food movement* arises in opposition of the fast-food culture. Gradually other varieties come to life, such as *slow cities* (aiming to slow down globalization and loss of cities’ individual features by striving to make citizens happier and more satisfied with their city experience), *slow tourism/travel* (while travelling, one gets to know foreign culture, traditions, cuisine, etc by staying with a local family and not at a hotel, for example), *slow science* (contrary to the requirements for a large number of publications a scientist must produce, it is believed that a true scientist needs more time to read, research, study and test their findings and thus come to novel ideas), *slow money* (calling for a change in our attitude towards money, the desire to make and spend money wisely), *slow ageing* (accepting the process of ageing as a natural process, without employing all the modern instruments for delaying old age, is supposed to make people feel happy and at peace with themselves and hence, look younger), etc. The said examples of *Slow movement* varieties also show their potential benefits concerning CSR and sustainable development – a return to a natural lifestyle and production, keeping local traditions, customs and culture, preservation of

natural resources and conservation of the environment, stimulation of local production and local employment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle.

5. Conclusions

The interest in CSR as a tool for SD is still growing because of the increasing expectations of society from business organizations. From the reviewed contemporary concepts of CSR and sustainable development, the idea which has had the most limited application is that of the social business – so far only in Albania. Unsuccessful attempts at its dissemination are due to the fact that socially disadvantaged groups of the population, which it is designed for, are considerably different in status from analogous groups of population in the countries this idea is applied, as the former are used to relying on social benefits provided by the state. It is possible to apply the idea in the modified variant of micro-financing, but organized differently. Fair trade is more popular in Old Continental Europe, most probably because this is where the idea started, and is less widely spread in the Balkan countries we have researched, because of the too high prices of fair trade products. At the moment, in Balkan European countries such as Greece, Romania and Bulgaria, different modifications of community supported agriculture are going strong. Turkey also seems to show greater interest in this form, whereas in Albania, for instance, the idea has not been given any comment yet. The trendiest varieties of socially responsible and sustainable business such as slow movement, green living and sustainable lifestyle seem to be least practiced. They are still at the stage of popularization in South East Balkan countries (Bulgaria and Romania). The trends reviewed and conclusions formulated in the present study outline the logic of our future research, and namely the ways socially responsible and sustainable business practices can be integrated in an overall business model of Sustainable Management.

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