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**SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The purpose of the work is to study the experience of the development of social entrepreneurship in the countries of the European Union.

My research has shown that social entrepreneurship is actively developing and functioning in many socially useful areas, contributes to the effective interaction of fundamentally important areas of the economy in addressing socially important issues.

Methods. The research used methods of scientific knowledge, such as analysis of theoretical sources, analysis of regulatory legal acts of the member states of the European Union, cause-and-effect analysis, classification, structural and functional analysis. Description is used as theoretical methods.

***Keywords***: social entrepreneurship, economic development, European Union, social sphere, social economy

What is social entrepreneurship? This is the process by which individuals, startups and entrepreneurs develop and fund solutions that directly address social problems. A social entrepreneur is a person who explores business opportunities that have a positive impact on their community, in society or the world.

Social entrepreneurship is one of the main components of economic development. Its activities are aimed at solving the most important and significant social problems. It helps to level out the shortcomings of the market economy. In addition, social entrepreneurship acts as a link between various sectors of the economy, involves them in solving socially significant problems.

The development of social entrepreneurship in Europe has intensified since the 2009 global economic crisis. This has sparked a growing interest in systems that involve a wide variety of actors, including social business. But it should be noted that the activities of the social entrepreneurship sector covered all regions of the world. In this regard, a certain interest is aroused by the study of the experience of the development of social entrepreneurship in the most economically developed countries, in the countries of the European Union.

Social entrepreneurship is an integral part of the social economy of the European Union. At the beginning of 2020, about 13.6 million (1) people were employed at social enterprises in Europe. The main activities of social enterprises can be divided into three groups. The first group is focused on the provision of socially significant goods and services, the second on the employment and socialization of persons with disabilities, and the third on solving broader social issues related to sustainable development goals.

Assessment of social entrepreneurship is difficult. Various studies are being carried out as part of the Employment and Social Innovation 2018-2020 program. Various studies are being conducted as part of the Employment and Social Innovation 2018-2020 program. Thus, within the framework of this program, the study "Social enterprises and their ecosystem in Europe" was carried out.

Analyzing the data in the table, it can be noted that countries such as Belgium, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, France, Estonia have the largest number of social enterprises per capita. In Italy, the number of social enterprises per 1 million of the population is 1694, in Hungary - 1621, in Estonia - 1603. The development of social entrepreneurship in Belgium is historically conditioned. The basis for the rapid development of the non-profit sector in Belgium is the flexibility of legislation in the field of choice of activities and sources of funding. The development of the cooperative movement in Belgium was also a prerequisite for the creation and development of social entrepreneurship. As in many other countries of the European Union, the first cooperatives appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century. Despite the difficulties, the cooperative movement continued to develop. Along with existing cooperatives, which tried to diversify their activities, new ones focused on social and environmental innovations were actively functioning. At the present stage, in the context of the strengthening of the relationship between the economy and social life of society, the development of that direction of the social economy, which is based on the development of the individual and the achievement of social progress, has a significant impact on the development of social entrepreneurship.

In Belgium social entrepreneurship is most actively developed in the production and sale of organic food. The organization's work in these areas is aimed at creating conditions for a more efficient mechanism for selling products of local agricultural producers. At the beginning of 2015, 18074 social enterprises were registered in Belgium, the share of employed in social entrepreneurship structures is 11.9% in relation to total employment. The main sources of income for social enterprises are income from product sales and income received from grants [1].

At the level of the constituent entities of the Belgian federation, social entrepreneurship has its own legislation and organizational forms.

Social entrepreneurship is also actively developing in Italy. This country was one of the first to develop a legislative framework for the functioning of social entrepreneurship. Historically, the cooperative movement is especially developed on the territory of Italy. Italian social entrepreneurship has one of the longest histories in the world. During periods of crises and economic downturns, cooperatives have been a reliable support in the spheres of health care, education, and the provision of social services. They are actively developing in various fields and modern social life. It is no coincidence that today in Italy one can find social cooperatives with a hundred-year history. In this regard, social entrepreneurship in Italy functions as a social cooperative [2].

The adoption of the law "On social cooperatives" in Italy in 1991 was the impetus for its rapid development. In 2001, more than five thousand social cooperatives worked in Italy. By 2005, there were about 7,300 of them in the country. About 250 thousand workers were employed in social cooperatives. Social cooperatives involve socially vulnerable categories of citizens. Nowadays cooperatives serve about 4 million customers. In Italy for every 100 thousand inhabitants there are 12.5 social cooperatives [3].

At the present stage of development of the French economy, socially oriented enterprises are an integral part of it. The organizations of this sector employ and employ about 2.35 million people. In recent years, about 440 thousand new jobs have been created in the social entrepreneurship sector. The most active social entrepreneurship in France is developing in the areas of social security, sports and leisure, finance and insurance, art and culture, education, and health care.

After analyzing the activities of social entrepreneurship on the example of the countries of the European Union, we can conclude that social entrepreneurship contributes to the development of the country's economy.

The direct impact of social entrepreneurship on the economy is related to the fact that it provides employment for the local population. Social entrepreneurship actively involves in economic life and contributes to the socialization of the unprotected part of the population. Social entrepreneurship operates in areas in which the commercial sector is not interested due to too low profit margins. Social entrepreneurship contributes to an increase in the efficiency of the functioning of the system for the provision of social services as a whole.

To sum up, social entrepreneurship has a positive effect on the efficiency of the economy and contributes to an increase in economic growth. The practical activities of social entrepreneurship entities support social, economic and political stability. This is an integral part of the economic development of both separate states and the entire world community. In the same time, assessment of the overall state of the social entrepreneurship sector is a rather complicated task. This is due to the legal status of social entrepreneurship and the diversity of its organizational and legal forms, which causes certain difficulties in its monitoring.

This area of activity is very important due to the further development of the socially-oriented Russian economy and the need to attract additional resources to solve the problems of society with intensive economic development. The experience of economically developed countries in this area of activity is extensive and will significantly develop the domestic system of support for social entrepreneurship.

**Список использованных источников и литературы**

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