

ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF THE PROCESS OF GLOBALIZATION – NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS AND CRISIS

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Abstract. *Growing environmental problems of modern age capture attention of the global society. Man, as a major factor in the process of disturbing the optimal environmental balance, is considered to be the most responsible for the emergence of the environmental crisis that manifests itself in all spheres of life. Due to a growing number of environmental problems that require urgent attention, it is necessary to increase awareness of the problems that surround us. In the future, it is necessary to develop environmental (“green”) economy, rationalize consumption, and instill a higher level of environmental awareness into future generations, in order to reduce environmental problems to a minimum level. It should be borne in mind that the environmental dimension is the underlying component of sustainable development of modern mankind. In line with this, the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) methodology has been developed. On the basis of this methodology and the presentation of ranking of countries according to the environmental performance, the work analyzes the state of environmental development in Serbia and neighboring countries.*

Key words: *globalization, environmental problems, environmental crisis, Environmental Performance Index (EPI).*

INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, environmental problems have become a global problem of mankind in terms of their existence and influence, as well as social and economic forces that produce them. Definition of the term globalization is multifunctional and has different meanings, depending on the context in which it needs to be understood. Globalization is a complex process whose pace and direction are determined by a number of factors, while its economic, social, and environmental manifestations leave significant and lasting impact. One context (environmental definition) refers to the understanding of globalization as a process of manifestation of widespread environmental crises, caused by

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global environmental pollution. The environmental crisis that occurred during the last decades of the twentieth century imposed the need for rearrangement of human activities and a serious warning to the basic foundations of the survival of man on Earth.

More serious consequences of the environmental crisis resulted in the formal emergence of the concept of sustainable development, which rests on the harmonious relationship of natural resources, economic development, and the environment, in order to protect the health of present generations and preserve the economic wealth of the planet for future generations. The concept is actually formed by hybridization of social development and environmental problems. The idea of developing the concept of sustainability stems from the problematic relationship between society and its natural environment. The concept itself is based on unification of three key dimensions, environmental, economic, and social. Although there is no generally accepted definition of sustainable development, there is awareness and the need for denoting the concept of sustainability, as well as its origin. Simply put, it is a development that is sustainable, that does not lead to exhaustion or complete disappearance of natural resources, or to endangerment of universal human rights of any of us on the planet. Sustainable development is one of the most important ideas and goals of our time.

Globalizing mankind, in a sense, becomes “the global society”, faced with real global problems. Among these issues, an important place belongs to the disruption of the environmental balance of the planet Earth, which threatens the survival of human life on it, to the extent that one can speak of a global environmental crisis. End of XX and the beginning of XXI century were marked by three interrelated processes: globalization, the development of science and technology, and the global environmental crisis. The consequence of rapid development of science and technology in thus-far unimaginable proportions is the emergence of the global environmental crisis. Expansive development has contributed to improving the living conditions of the human species, but, on the other hand, has had negative consequences for the environment and quality of life.

The consequences that globalization has on the environment are disastrous and should by no means be neglected. Environmental consequences that are difficult to eradicate in the long term cause a number of other consequences. The work starts with the traditional and time-proven opinion that globalization threatens the environment, and places an emphasis on the environmental consequences of globalization, as important obstacles to further economic and social development. By focusing on the environmental performance index (EPI), the paper will analyze the position of Serbia in relation to neighboring countries.

1. GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The global aspect of environmental way of thinking has become the focus of attention, because environmental problems usually occur on a global scale, caused by the progress of science and technology. The environmental problems rise in importance mainly due to increased economic integration. What is more, globalization has brought significant conceptual change in the way of thinking about the environment. Many of us now see environmental problems as problems of international significance, not only as a national interest in terms of protection of the oceans and the atmosphere from warming. The environment is considered “common heritage of mankind”, and environmental issues are increasingly the subject of international efforts due to their cross-border effects, as

well as the inability of only one or a few nations to solve these problems alone (Basler, 2011).

When globalization is considered in the context of ecological issues, environmental issues, and modern environmental crises, four interrelated contexts should be mentioned. The process of globalization is seen as a process of manifestation of environmental crises on a large scale, and the problems resulting from the global economic crisis are now very far from the national and regional frameworks. The development of civilization has certainly caused the gradual emergence of global warming and climate change on Earth. Second, the process of globalization can be seen in the context of developing environmental awareness of environmental issues and developing environmental movements. In the last decades of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century, the opinion that it is not possible to solve the emerging environmental problems by restricting them to a local area or through local action has become engraved in people's minds. Environmental movements around the world have been among the first social movements with the so-called "mondial" character. Some environmentalists have even suggested the creation of a "world environmental organization" for the sake of easier coordination of international environmental policies. When perceiving environmental problems from an ecological point of view, sociological meaning of the term globalization, as the socio-historical process, cannot be avoided. In this regard, it should be noted that globalization takes place in all areas of life, primarily in the economic, political, cultural, and psychological sphere (Smrečník, 2002).

From an environmental perspective, the observed process of globalization causes severe consequences for the environment. In this regard, there are two prevailing standpoints. The first standpoint is that the process of globalization creates assumptions and possibilities for solving environmental problems present at the global level. In contrast to this view, there is the opinion that the process of globalization itself causes deep environmental crises, as it is characterized by the absolute dominance of the socio-political and economic model of the western highly developed countries, thus creating a global society with pronounced social inequality (Smrečník, 2002).

Globalization caused international trade growth and accelerated financial flows, as well as greater cooperation among countries and innovations in science and technology. However, it also contributed to environmental degradation. The main causes of environmental problems, in terms of environmental protection and sustainable development, are: industrial production, growth of energy production, development of traffic, uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources, development of technics and technology, and chemical contamination of agriculture.

With the development of society and the increasing population, due to which the demand for products necessary for life increases, it has become necessary to shift to the industrial mode of production. Industrial production certainly has positive sides, in terms of increased production, but, on the other hand, it endangers environment through the emission of harmful gases into the air, water, and soil. The negative effects of industrialization are also manifested through the devastation of plants, destruction of animals, and deterioration of human health. Violation of the environment through depletion of raw materials and excessive accumulation of waste of all kinds that the nature cannot decompose are the characteristics of industrial production.

Virtually all energy sources have an impact on the environment and its pollution. Energy production, in addition to occupation and changes in the use of land rich in coal deposits, affects the level and regime of the ground water and waterways, reduces the

land available for agricultural production, pollutes the air with dust, changes land relief and climate. In addition to the visible negative consequences that increased energy production has on nature, there are other effects that are not noticeable, but that still affect the health of humans and animals. The main pollutants resulting from the increased energy production are: flue gases, fly ash, slag, and waste water.

Globalization, as a planetary process (Siriner et al., 2011), has led to the development of traffic, thus bringing another cause of environmental degradation. Increasingly developed transport infrastructure has brought a series of environmental problems, in terms of increased air pollution, noise levels, taking up space, and uncontrolled release of harmful and hazardous substances. The consequences of climate change are common in areas with the developed road traffic. Specifically, road traffic is largely dependent on oil, which has a share of 14% in emissions of harmful gases into the atmosphere, which directly affects human health (Jovanović et al., 2012).

All the above causes are the main drivers of the uncontrolled use of resources, which directly affects the reduction of environmental quality and causes significant environmental problems. Excessive depletion of these resources diminishes their ability to regenerate naturally, brings ecosystem disturbances, and threatens disappearance of resources, which would call into question the survival of the world.

Globalization has had far-reaching consequences for our way of life. This is due to faster access to technologies, improved communication networks, and innovation. The development of technics and technology leads to industry concentration, which negatively affects the environment in the way that has been described. The application of modern technology greatly contributes to global warming and increased emission of harmful gases. The problem of global warming is of an ecological nature and affects many vital functions of the planet Earth. Rapid development of technics and technology generates increasing disorder in the world, in terms of serious environmental problems.

In order to achieve higher agricultural production and protect against various parasites, chemical contamination of agriculture occurs. Furthermore, the use of chemicals to destroy weeds and other noxious plants disturbs the balance in the ecosystem. Toxic waste from this process pollutes the environment and damages plants. The products obtained after the application of chemicals in agriculture are considered to be harmful to human health.

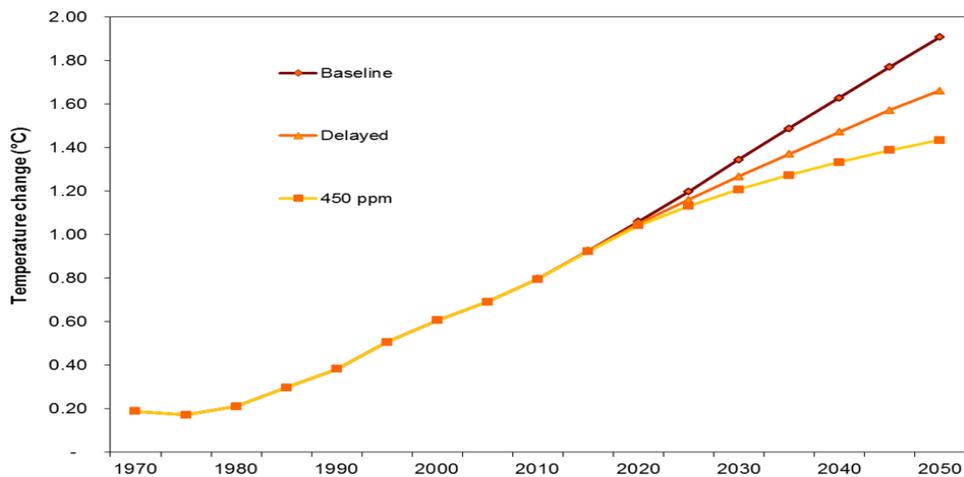
The positive impact of the process of globalization on the environment exists to some extent, but the key negative impacts of globalization are by far greater. Among the significant positive impacts of globalization on the environment, the progress in the use of resources, increased environmental awareness, and the development of environmental technology are worth mentioning.

Improved use of resources and preservation of the environment are achieved by promoting growth through sustainable development, improving education and income. An example of this is the activity of the World Bank in 1990, when it helped Mexico reduce the number of unhealthy ozone days (World Bank, 1990). Due to the impact of globalization, many multinational companies have focused on the creation of technology that reduces the impact of humans on the environment. Therefore, they created "green" technology, exemplified by the hybrid car and a new "green" Apple Mac.

Unfortunately, the negative impacts of globalization on the environment outweigh the positive ones. The main negative impact is reflected in the export-oriented environmental destruction. Excessive use of natural resources due to increased demand, and the removal of the ecosystem due to population growth have a major detrimental impact on the

environment. Unplanned deforestation causes loss of biodiversity on the planet. In Australia, about 90% of native forest trees is exported, thus destroying the natural heritage of this part of the world. Throughout the process of civilization and globalization, about one-half of the forests that once covered the Earth disappeared (World Wide Fund for Nature Europe).

A very important and far-reaching negative effect of globalization is manifested in global warming and climate change. Global warming is brought by greenhouse effect, caused by growing industrialization of developing countries and heavy reliance on fossil fuels. The carbon released into the atmosphere in this way causes global warming, which results in ice and glacier melting and consequent sea level rise, which, in turn, has a wide impact on biodiversity and weather system. Due to the above, according to the OECD, average global temperature has risen by 0.6 degrees Celsius since the late nineteenth century (See Graph 1).



Graph 1 Preview changes in average global temperatures in the period up to 2050.

Source: OECD (2013) What is the impact of globalisation on the environment?, page 57

Global warming is particularly caused by increase in transport, i.e. harmful exhaust emissions from vehicles. According to the Office for National Statistics, the share of traffic-borne gas emissions in the greenhouse effect has increased by 47% since 1990 (Office for National Statistics). From an environmental point of view, the negative effects of globalization are higher, compared to the positive effects. The positive impact is only reflected in increased awareness of environmental issues and encouraging of multinational companies to take steps to protect the environment. Negative impacts are mainly based on export-oriented destruction, as well as on carbon and harmful gases emissions.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS AS THE GLOBAL CRISIS OF HUMANITY

The negative effects of globalization and contemporary implications of social development are certainly the main causes of environmental crises. The fact that the ecological crisis is global in character and that its consequences are catastrophic for the Earth is indisputable. Most simply put, the environmental crisis refers to the global “attack” on ecosystems, that is, the man’s immoral behavior towards nature. The manifestation of the environmental crisis is complex, which means that it appears as a structural and civilizational crisis of the modern era (Malešević, 2004).

The attitude of man to nature has resulted in the devastation of forest resources, exploitation of immeasurable amount of ores and minerals, and extinction of certain animal and plant species. Increased consumption of electricity for industrial purposes at the global level has doubled in less than a decade. Most researchers believe that with this pace of energy consumption, civilization cannot survive long. What is more, according to the most optimistic estimates, oil, as the non-renewable energy source, will disappear by the end of the XXI century (Malešević, 2004).

Assessing the social causes of the environmental crisis requires a lot of effort, but it is certain that they are crucial for the emergence and escalation of the crisis. Because of the consequences of globalization, nature socializes and society modernizes in the technical sense. Key to the enigma of the environmental crisis should be primarily searched in the sphere of the social system, because it is basically a social crisis. The reason for this fact lies in the fact that man is the only creature that can destroy their own survival through careless attitude towards nature. In line with this is Davies’s opinion that economics describes the way in which humans interact with the environment in the production and reproduction of their lives. This relationship indicates that there is no environmental issue independent of economic relations (Davies, 2006). Maximum and inadequate exploitation of nature and the environment is especially typical of an industrial society. Future postindustrial society must raise awareness and turn more towards the preservation of nature and its revival, as well as diminish the gap that has been growing between the nature and society for ages.

To achieve the optimal balance between the environment and economic activity, it is necessary to reduce production, rationalize consumption, and instill a higher level of environmental awareness in future generations. There is an opinion that the environmental crisis is not accidental, but that it is immanent in essential characteristics of industrial civilization. The system of values of industrial civilization is most blamed because it focuses primarily on profit, while morality is ignored. Because of this belief that this system of values imposes, the significant destruction of nature occurs. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on a radical change of values in the future (Lomborg, 2009).

All economic activities affect the environment, whether done intentionally or unintentionally. Most of these activities usually lead to damage to the ecosystem or only pollute the environment. Mechanisms of economic growth can affect the environment by pollution and over-exploitation of natural resources, degradation and loss of wildlife habitat, and climate change. In addition, excessive consumption leads to degradation and increased exploitation of natural resources. Economic and environmental goals are often contradictory, and it is necessary to make a choice between them because their simultaneous realization is unlikely.

Environmental problems are increasingly present due to man's growing use of the environment in everyday activities. In order to preserve environment for the future generations, environmental protection requires slowing the uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources and lower level of pollution which results from expansive economic growth. Therefore, it is necessary to limit the economic growth in a short period of time and bring many activities in line with the rules of environmental protection, so as not to be brought to the brink of survival. Literature hosts conflicting opinions regarding the slowdown of economic growth for the sake of preserving the environment. Some theorists lobby for slower economic growth in order to protect the environment. In contrast, others say that the free market and technological progress are the best tools for solving environmental problems and lifting people out of poverty. In accordance with the concept of sustainable development, the focus should be on optimal use of natural resources that come from the environment for the sake of its preservation and further ability to use its resources in economic activities. The man, as one of the pillars of origin of the environmental crisis, is expected to rationally and responsibly manage natural resources, and, while still not too late, stop destruction and protect the natural environment from damage.

The concept that is closely associated with the environmental crisis refers to environmental awareness, which needs to be developed to prevent the emergence of the environmental crisis. Environmental awareness is immanent in social consciousness, and has its social essence, so that it cannot be exhausted only in criticism, no matter how progressive, nor can it be merely reduced to the awareness of the environment. It is actually a spiritual dimension of environmental culture, which includes knowledge and habits, adopted values, attitudes and beliefs, acceptance of norms about what is in the natural and social environment healthy and of high quality, how health is taken care of and what threatens it, in which way can the awareness and quality of life be improved in existing conditions (Koković, 2010). Furthermore, it is important to develop applied ecology on the basis of agreed environmental policies. It should be noted here that environmental policy relies on three basic attitudes, or groupings, based on current development. The first attitude sees current environmental policy as insufficient to successfully solve the existing dangers. It is mainly negatively evaluated. According to the second attitude, current environmental policy has mostly met all important expectations despite the permanent criticism of minor problems and failures. Third believe that environmental problems are exaggerated and that everything comes down to unnecessary environmental hysteria. Different currents and positions are found within these attitudes, among which are: moralists, biologists, socialists, rationalists, capitalists, and realists.

3. THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDEX

For the purposes of reviewing the situation of the environment around the world, the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) was developed in 2006, whose forerunner was the Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI), developed in 1999. The Environmental Performance Index assesses the environmental performance of the country, by observing indicators that reflect the state of the environment. The main objective of EPI methodology is to "draw attention to how far countries have gone in achieving the objectives of environmental policy" (Environmental Performance Index, 2010). EPI index assesses the social and economic driving forces, pressures on the environment, the state of the environment and impact on human health and ecosystems.

In general, the EPI index is a powerful tool for managing a particular country and the world as a whole, with reference to the concept of sustainable development. The Environmental Performance Index strives to meet the needs of the governments to monitor the achieved environmental performance, and offers a method for assessing the effectiveness of environmental policies. It is especially designed to help policy makers to: 1) notice the current problems and identify priorities in environmental protection; 2) control the pollution of natural resources; 3) discover the most successful areas of environmental policy, and, where it is necessary, stop the ineffective efforts (Environmental Performance Index, 2008). The EPI methodology was developed through collaboration of the World Economic Forum with the Yale University and Columbia University. The data used for calculating the values of the EPI index has been obtained from the governments of countries, and it includes statements regarding environmental performance indicators.



Fig 1 The structure according to the EPI report from 2014.

Source: 2014 Environmental Performance Index - Full Report, page 18

The Environmental Performance Index reflects the environmental performance ranking of the countries around the world, based on 10 categories, i.e. areas of environmental policy, and

25 performance indicators, grouped into two key components. These are: environmental “health” (perceived influence of environmental conditions on the health of humans) and ecosystem vitality (the health of ecosystems and natural resource management). Each of the indicators included in the EPI index structure is directed towards long-term sustainability of public health or ecosystems. The last report on the environmental performance shows a modified structure of the EPI index, which considers 9 environmental policy areas and 20 indicators (See Figure 1). The number of areas is reduced by one, because two previously separate areas, the effect of air pollution on human health and the effect of air pollution on ecosystems, are observed together. Now this is one area, designated as air quality. The environmental component “health” includes health impact, air quality, and water and sanitation as the most important areas of environmental policy. Within the components of the ecosystem vitality, the following environmental policy areas are analyzed: climate and energy, biodiversity and habitat, fishing, forestry, agriculture, and water resources.

EPI methodology, which is used for ranking the countries with respect to the environmental performance, has been applied in the analysis of the position of Serbia in relation to neighboring countries. For research purposes, the data concerning the ranking of the country has been taken from the reports for 2010, 2012, and 2014. It is important to note that Serbia and Montenegro were observed together in the reports for 2010 and 2012. The report from 2010 covered 163 countries around the world, where Serbia and Montenegro occupied the 29th position. In that year, in respect of neighboring countries, only Albania was better than us, occupying the 23rd position. Hungary was in the 33rd position, Croatia in the 35th, Romania in the 45th, followed by Slovenia (55th) and Bulgaria (65th). The lowest positions in the group of surveyed countries were occupied by Macedonia (73rd) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (98th). In the report for 2012, it is characteristic that Serbia and Montenegro went backward in the rankings, occupying 103rd position out of 132 countries in the rankings. The same trend could be observed in the case of Romania (88th) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (124th). In contrast, all other countries in the region advanced in the rankings and occupied much better positions in relation to 2010.

Table 1 Preview rank the countries selected according to EPI methodology for the period from 2010 to 2014

Country	Year / The number of countries		
	2010 /163	2012 / 132	2014 / 178
Albania	23	15	67
Bosnia and Herzegovina	98	124	107
Bulgaria	65	53	41
Croatia	35	20	45
Hungary	33	45	28
Macedonia	73	97	89
Montenegro	/	/	62
Romania	45	88	86
Slovenia	55	28	15
Serbia	29	103	31

Source: Author presentation according to the report from Yale University

According to the latest report from 2014, which shows the ranking of 178 countries, it can be seen that Serbia recorded progress (31st), returning to approximately the same

position in which it was together with Montenegro in 2010. From this year, Serbia and Montenegro are observed separately, so that Montenegro was for the first time independently ranked, occupying the 62nd position. The highest ranked among the analyzed countries in this year was Slovenia (15th), followed by Hungary (28th). The rest of the countries progressed in the ranking. Only Croatia and Albania occupied the lower positions in relation to 2012 (See Table 1). By analyzing the movement of positions in the rankings, only Bulgaria and Slovenia had an upward trend during the years observed in the study. Oscillatory movement in the ranking was characteristic for all other countries in the group of selected countries in the covered time period.

CONCLUSION

Globalization is a global process, and its effects will broaden and deepen over time. In addition to a large number of implications that it leaves behind, it can be said that the most difficult are the ones that threaten the survival of society and the environment. Economic activities are precisely the ones that contribute the most to environmental degradation, and they are directly correlated. Given the high degree of correlation between them, the economic activities must be sustainable, in order for the man to survive while respecting strong moral reasons, environmental regulations, and economic arguments. The concept of sustainable development should be widely accepted as a condition of survival and overall future progress. Failure to comply with the concept of sustainability leads to inefficient economic development, in terms of wastage of resources and energy, i.e. the tendency of long-term deterioration in the input-output ratio on a global scale. The economic and environmental objectives are often contradictory, and it is necessary to make a choice, because their simultaneous realization is unlikely.

The link between environment and economic development is very complex, and there is no possibility of independence of economic from environmental issues. Environmental problems, based on their scope and significance, are the most complex negative consequence of globalization. The expansion of environmental problems and involvement of the growing part of environment creates an environmental crisis, which is greatly affected by technological development. Manifestation of environmental crisis through various degrees of pollution, vulnerability, and degradation of environment is essential and burning problem of civilization, whose solution determines the future. In addition to the environmental crisis, environmental problems lead to the emergence of social crisis. The environmental crisis as such jeopardizes the natural and the human community, so that the requirements for the preservation of healthy living and working environment appear as a high moral social norm.

As an initial solution for combating the negative consequences of the globalization process, it is necessary to develop environmental awareness of all people, starting with the youngest, who are the future leaders of life on Earth. Expansion of environmental awareness results from the development of a growing number of environmental movements in the world and in our country. Legislative solutions should be reflected in the introduction of stringent environmental standards and environmental taxes that will ultimately discourage non- environmental behavior. The focus should be on the implementation of environmentally friendly technologies that can be applied in the production process, and imposing requirements for adherence to strict environmental standardization in carrying out economic activities. In addition to these solutions, strategic solutions are needed as

well, in terms of adherence to sustainable development strategy, based on the concept of sustainable development and smooth economic, environmental, and social prosperity. Interventionist role of the state is vital for the creation and implementation of required environmental principles and standards in doing business. The future is definitely in the green economy, which will be able to reconcile the problems posed by globalization and the environment. Perhaps the current environmentally shaken trajectory of human development can be changed, but it requires globalization of efficient social and political actions for the purpose of sustainability.

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EKOLOŠKI ASPEKTI PROCESA GLOBALIZACIJE – NEGATIVNE IMPLIKACIJE I KRIZA

Nadolazeći ekološki problemi današnjice sve više zaokupljaju pažnju globalnog društva. Čovek kao glavni činilac remećenja optimalne ravnoteže životne sredine smatra se najodgovornijim za nastanak ekološke krize koja se ispoljava u svim sferama života. Kako postoji sve veći broj ekoloških problema koji zahtevaju hitno rešavanje, neophodno je povećanje svesti o problemima koji nas okružuju. Uбудuće je potrebno razvijati ekološku („zelenu“) ekonomiju, racionalizovati

potrošnju, i usaditi viši nivo ekološke svesti nadolazećim generacijama kako bi ekološki problemi bili svedeni na minimalni nivo. Treba imati u vidu da je ekološka dimenzija noseća komponenta održivog razvoja savremenog čovečanstva. U skladu sa time, razvijena je metodologija Indeksa ekoloških performansi – EPI (The Environmental Performance Index). Po osnovu ove metodologije i izražavanja ranga zemlje prema ekološkim performansama u radu je izvršena analiza stanja ekološke razvijenosti u Srbiji i zemljama u okruženju.

Ključne reči: *globalizacija, ekološki problemi, ekološka kriza, Indeks ekoloških performansi (EPI)*