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EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY IN THE ASPECT OF TWO-SPEED EUROPE MODEL

Abstract:

The concept of a two-speed Europe is based on the division of EU countries into two categories of members, i.e. countries seeking closer integration among the founding countries of the European Communities and a group of countries that are outside the euro area. This approach to the two-speed union, however, has more political than economic background. Taking into account objectives in the Europe 2020 Strategy, the main aim of this paper is to indicate if the Union of two speeds is an existing and real concept.

The current lack of political consent of all EU members does not mean that such activities will not be carried out in the near future. As a result, the study covered indicators adopted in the Europe 2020 Strategy for the period 2010-2016 and public expenditure on selected areas. Based on the selected data, it was examined whether the division of countries corresponds to the assumptions of the two-speed Europe concept and whether it is equivalent to the countries of the euro area. In addition, it was checked, whether there is a correlation between designated groups of countries and progress to achieve their goals (which countries are the most advanced in the context of a given 2020 objective).

The conducted research used multidimensional exploration methods in the forms of discriminant analysis and data clustering, logistic regression. Furthermore, nonparametric tests of significance for differences were done using a test for independent samples by U Mann-Whitney. Research showed that there are no significant differences regarding analysed variables in eurozone countries and beyond it, except for the greenhouse gas emissions variable, which both in 2010 and 2016 showed average statistically significant higher values in countries of the eurozone. Based on the analysed variables, discriminant models as well as models of logistic regression were built. The division into countries of the eurozone and those outside it in 2016 was best discriminated by greenhouse gas emission variables, expenditure on environment protection as a % of total general government expenditure, severely materially deprived people, at-risk-of-poverty rate. Results of logistic regression confirm the results of discriminant analysis. Data clustering has allowed to isolate, based on variables from the discriminant model, three groups of countries, therefore, in the context of conducted research, it should be concluded that in the EU, we are dealing with a model of a Europe of many speeds.

Keywords:

Europe 2020 Strategy, two-speed Europe, general government expenditure

JEL Classification: F36, H77, H50