

# Social Aspects of Food Security

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**Abstract:** Social security protects the vital interests of society, the individual, and the family from external and internal threats. This is of particular interest from a scientific research point of view. All the main elements of the social system, which ensure the level and quality of life of the population and are regulated by social and national policy, have been studied. The criteria with the help of which the state and level of social security can be studied have been analyzed. The need to develop strategic plans for the development of agriculture for each country has been proven, which is based on the understanding that there are no “universal” solutions for each country.

**Key-Words:** Social Security, Quality of Life, Social Policy, National Policy, Strategic Planning, Food Security

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## 1 Introduction

Society is a complexly organized type of structuring of society. These are associations of people who constantly live in the same territory, have their own social and cultural norms, as well as established values. They are connected by a common language and a conscious attitude towards a certain social group. Society puts the development of both society and the state as a whole, as well as each individual, at the forefront.

The question of what constitutes society is one of the most complex in modern social science and science. For many decades, a logical explanation of the causes, patterns, and prospects for the development of such a phenomenon as society has been sought. Over time, the content of the concept of “society” has changed and been clarified [1].

The main and specific phenomenon of society is that it possesses characteristics and qualities that a person does not have. It can constantly change in its existing states, i.e. it has dynamic conditioning. The latter consists of the disappearance of some systems, the emergence of others, and the constant development of third ones.

Considering the concept of social society, it is impossible not to touch upon phenomena such as social security and social risk in the context of food security.

Food security is the basis of the country's social and economic policy. The strategy for ensuring food security is not just a strategy of agrarian and food policy, its functions are much broader. It represents a set of principles of state governance and social security of the population, which are used as a long-term basis for the socio-economic policy of the state, aimed at ensuring a normal life for the country's population.

The availability of affordable food products is influenced by the economic development of individual regions, as well as by the social, agricultural, scientific, educational, and foreign economic policy of the country. Moreover, the accessibility of products is impossible without intellectual independence, without the implementation of its scientific institutes for research in the field of innovative agriculture, robotics, as well as without the training of specialized personnel. It is necessary to develop a strategy for the development of agriculture, taking into account the implementation of innovative developments and socially significant programs for the development of rural areas.

## 2 Social Challenges and Opportunities in Food Security

Agriculture of any country is a strategically important sector, since, first of all, the standard of living of the population and ensuring the food security of the state depend on it. The problem of food security is one of the most important in the modern world economy. Food security affects the interests of various groups of countries, social and political forces, becoming increasingly relevant with the deepening of the international division of labor, the acceleration of globalization processes, and the development of world trade in agricultural products and food supplies. The issue of food security remains one of the most controversial, due to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the problem, it is difficult to offer a single definition of the scientific category "food security" [3].

Social security is the protection of the vital interests of society, the individual, and the family from external and internal threats. All the basic and main elements of the social system, which ensure the level and quality of life of the population and are regulated by social and national policy, are objects of social security. This is a fundamental component of national security.

Several criteria for preserving social security are distinguished:

1. Prevention of the emergence of a situation of social explosion.
2. Control over the inadmissibility of degradation of the social structure.
3. Ensuring maximum stability of the social structure with normal horizontal and vertical mobility.
4. Maintaining and ensuring an adequate system of value orientations, culture of behavior in society, and economic and political behavior.

Social security is, first of all, a way of functioning of the social system, which ensures the preservation of its integrity, sustainability and viability in the process of interaction between its structural components (subsystems: economic, political, demographic, informational, cultural, etc.; elements: social groups, organizations, institutions, individuals) with each other and with the environment throughout the entire period of existence and development of society [2].

The World Social Declaration formulates the minimum tasks for ensuring social security:

- Universal primary education, for both girls and boys;
- Halving the illiteracy rate among the adult population;
- Elementary medical care for all with priority vaccination of children;

- Elimination of cases of acute malnutrition;
- Provision of family planning services for all who wish;
- Safe drinking water and sanitation for all;
- Credit for all in order to provide opportunities for self-employment.

The widespread use of the term "social security", including in international legal acts, leads to the formation of different approaches to its understanding in Bulgarian science, legal, social, and political practice.

The analysis of numerous sources on the problems of social security allows us to state that several approaches have been formed in the interpretation of this concept.

One of the approaches to defining the concept of "social security" has become widespread. This approach is characterized by the association of the concept of "social security" with the concept of "social insurance". In this approach, solving the problems related to ensuring social security, providing material and other assistance to needy categories of citizens is a fundamental aspect of ensuring national security. In accordance with this approach, practical work is carried out to solve problems of a social nature.

Many studies are characterized by the approach according to which "social security" is considered as a complex concept used to denote the security of the country's population from a whole complex of different threats, not only of a social, but also of an economic, environmental, and other nature. Among them, the threats of unemployment, poverty, criminal encroachments, environmental pollution, man-made disasters, and others are most often mentioned.

A similar approach is also characteristic of some international Organizations, as the United Nations recognizes two main components of human security - freedom from fear and freedom from want or poverty. The world cannot be protected from wars if people are not safe in their homes, at their workplaces, in their everyday lives.

The United Nations has developed a comprehensive Concept of Human Security, which consists of eight main categories: Economic Security, Food Security, Health Security, Environmental Security, Personal Security, Social Security, Public Security, Political Security.

In real life, all these categories are closely interconnected. The fight against poverty, crime, protection of jobs and incomes, health, and environmental safety - all this includes the concept of social security.

Social security causes a lot of discussion and controversy. This concept is understood as the physical survival of the state, the preservation and protection of sovereignty, territorial integrity, as well as the ability to adequately respond to potential and real external and internal threats.

To assess food security, T. Malthus proposed using the ratio between production and consumption indicators per capita. This formula is the basis of modern economic analysis. From the theory of T. Malthus, the conclusion follows that providing the population with food products is a prerequisite for its existence, and that this provision does not always allow for a normal existence of man. The very functioning of man, as a living being, is not always adequate to the presence of food opportunities in nature, and an increase in the population undermines the basis of their existence [4].

The first stage of the development of the idea of food security is characterized by the fact that the national economy and its production capabilities are considered as a source of its provision, or in other words, the ability of a state to provide the necessary means of existence for its citizens regardless of external factors. The level of provision of basic human needs for food products, the quantity of products produced and their quality characteristics are an indicator of the maturity and vitality of the state, its ability to feed a growing population and withstand cataclysms, which "ultimately forms the material basis for the progressive course of the historical process" [6].

Social security is closely and inextricably linked with the safety of the country's social and political system. On the other hand, the state, realizing its goals, maintains relations with other states that either contribute to or hinder the implementation of the set goals. Based on this, the concept of the term "social security" is built, taking into account internal and external threats. Social risk is the probability or frequency of occurrence of undesirable events, which are determined by the impact on a certain number of people during the realization of one or another hazard, as well as human activity or refusal to do so in a risk situation. Risk is an unavoidable and permanent component of any individual activity - both destructive and creative, and requires constant adaptation to the environment. In the category of risk, as part of its structure, a situation, assessment, degree of awareness, factors, boundaries, and zones are distinguished. Five of the most common social risks are distinguished:

- The first is the difficulties in selecting qualified personnel, which leads to an increase in the costs of staffing;

- The second is the reluctance to observe labor discipline, which leads to fines and termination of contracts;

- The third is the attitude of local authorities, which leads to additional costs for fulfilling certain requirements;

- The fourth is low pay, leading to staff turnover;

- The fifth is insufficient qualification of personnel, which leads to a decrease in the quality of the goods and services provided;

- There are three groups of criteria with which the state and level of social security can be examined.

The first group of criteria is built based on a natural source of threat to security and includes the following indicators:

- State of ecology and dynamics of its change (warming, cooling, pollution);

- Rate of reduction of natural reserves and their restoration;

- Level of natural cataclysms and catastrophes (earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, etc.).

The second group of criteria is built based on a technogenic source of threat to social security and is characterized by the following indicators:

- Number and dynamics of technical inventions and discoveries threatening the safety of mankind;

- Degree of danger to the life of mankind and the individual society from technical inventions and discoveries;

- Dynamics in the field of invention and production of weapons of mass destruction (atomic, nuclear) and trends in the field of disarmament and, conversely, armament on a global scale.

The third group of social security criteria, which is the most numerous, is based on sources of threats of a social nature, such as public relations, and includes the following:

Demographic indicators - indicators of life expectancy, mortality, birth rate, marriages, divorces, migration, characterizing the reproductive potential of society and its viability. Demographic indicators of the development of society over a fairly long period of time testify to a serious danger looming over humanity, which is catastrophically decreasing and is characterized by a high level of social morbidity. A number of researchers substantiate the statement that the decrease in population is associated not so much with economic as with social reasons, reflecting the tension and nervousness, uncertainty and instability of modern social life, the growth of alcoholism and drug addiction, the

deterioration of material well-being and, accordingly, the quality of nutrition, treatment, rest. This undermines the social and physical well-being of the population and is a prerequisite for high mortality;

Level of social health of the population, as a set of indicators of the physical and spiritual self-esteem of the population. If a prolonged trend of decreasing social self-esteem of the population persists, there is a decline in the spiritual and moral potential of society and, as a consequence, the stable and safe development of society and the state is under threat;

Quality of life as a complex characteristic of the living conditions of the population, which is expressed in objective indicators and subjective assessments of the satisfaction of material, social and cultural needs, and is associated with the perception of the situation of people depending on the cultural characteristics, the system of values and social standards existing in society;

Level of deviation and crime, reflecting the number of crimes and their dynamics for a certain period of time. Of great importance is the analysis of the gender and age characteristics of crime (child, adolescent, youth, female, male, etc.), as well as its typical characteristics (severity of crimes, dynamics of recidivism, etc.);

Index of the moral state of society (INSO), based on the integration of indicators such as the number (per 100 inhabitants) of murders; homeless children; corruption index; Gini index - inequality of income distribution. According to experts, the problem of moral decline is a major problem - systematic violations of the norms of social justice, the concepts of civic honor and responsibility;

Human Capital Development Index (HCDI), as an indicator of the intellectual potential of society, which is understood as the totality of human, material and financial resources activated in two closely related key areas of the spiritual life of society - science and education, and whose measured value shows the ability created and accumulated in society for the creative creation of new knowledge, technologies, products;

Level of social stratification and polarization in society, the measurement of which implies the study of the social structure of society, the level of poverty, the degree of social polarization, and the presence and number of the middle class in society.

The complexity of society, the insane dynamics of its development, and the revolution in the space of information and communication relations are the causes of a change in social development and a change in the picture of the world. As a result, the uncertainty, instability, and riskiness of social development are increasing. In this regard, the role of

the social security system for the population is growing.

Within the framework of the UN, the "Millennium Development Goals" have been formulated, an integral and most important part of which is food security. The goal is set - to halve the share of the hungry population by 2015. Countries that sign the Declaration and Plan of Action on World Food Security commit to eradicating hunger and to building a fair food trade system, as well as ensuring equal access to food for all segments of the population. A system of food aid is being developed for countries affected by natural disasters. Food security is recognized as the most important part of the economic security of any country [5].

The global food crisis that arose in 2004 can be conditionally considered the beginning of a new stage in the formation of views on the problem of food security. The agro-food crisis is reflected not only in the deterioration of the indicators of the global food situation (rising food prices, malnutrition of particularly vulnerable segments of the population), but also in the reduction of the efficiency of entities in the agro-food sector, weakening of competition and monopolization in the food market due to the ruin and departure of small producers.

If until now there was an understanding of the need to provide international food support to needy countries, then after 2004 It is seen that in the context of global agro-food crises arising as a result of unpredictable adverse natural phenomena, against which no country is insured, solving the problem of food security is possible only by coordinating the food policies pursued by countries and uniting their efforts at the global level.

The analysis of the policies pursued by international organizations shows that humanity is approaching the concept of forming an integrated agro-food market. Taking into account that the food market receives special attention from state regulators, this is increasingly emphasized in global liberalization as a way to improve efficiency. State regulation in agriculture is increasingly influenced by external factors, such as international treaties and agreements. This trend creates a problem of national security, the threat of which is dependence on food imports. Countries, supporting the national producer, have the opportunity to maintain their positions in the world market mainly by increasing their competitiveness. This is the main characteristic of the modern period in the development of the concept of food security.

Consideration of approaches to understanding food security from a historical point of view allows us to more clearly formulate the concept and essence

of such an important economic category, taking into account different points of view. In this case, it is necessary to proceed from the generally accepted view of food security as the availability of food supplies in an economic and physical sense. “Physical availability” is a characteristic of the supply of food on the market of a particular country. “Economic availability” means the possibility and availability of financial security of the population, which is necessary to purchase food supplies at affordable prices and form consumer demand in the national market for food products. This is “a state of the food market in which the relationship between demand and supply of food products forms prices that ensure the ability of the population of all social groups to satisfy their needs for food products” [7].

This definition of food security does not reveal the factors that ensure the physical and economic availability of food, but this aspect of the issue is the most important and essential for understanding the category of food security. It is a combination of internal and external factors, such as national agricultural production, the creation of a food reserve, export-import supplies of food, international food aid, etc.

In this regard, the European Union has been implementing a Common Agricultural Policy for over 60 years. Since its introduction, the Common Agricultural Policy has undergone many changes. One of the most recent changes is the 2020 reform of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy, which will enter into force in 2023.

The main priorities of the new Common Agricultural Policy are [8]:

- Increasing competitive advantages: Helping farmers become more efficient and productive so that they can compete in global markets;
- Supporting rural development: Investing in infrastructure, education, and other services to make rural areas more attractive places to live and work;
- Combating climate change: Promoting sustainable farming practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the environment;
- Raising agricultural incomes: Helping farmers get a fairer price for their produce and improve their profitability;
- Ensuring food security: Ensuring that all citizens have access to sufficient and healthy food.

Introducing the latest developments in the digital economy, agri-innovation, and agri-technologies:

- Helping farmers use new technologies to improve their efficiency and productivity;

- Empowering farmers along the value chain: Empowering farmers to negotiate fairer prices for their produce and to better control their destiny.

The main aspects of the new EU Common Agricultural Policy from 2023 are:

- A new green architecture based on environmental conditions that farmers must meet;
- More targeted direct transfers and rural development activities based on the strategic planning of each country and region;
- A performance-based approach, according to which Member States must report annually on their achievements and results of the implementation of the strategic plans.

According to the reform, these priorities in the European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy will be specified both in the programming document itself and in special acts - strategic development plans, which from 2023 will be implemented consistently by each Member State in its national strategic plan, taking into account the specificities of the country.

From 1 January 2023 supporting farmers and ensuring sustainable development of rural areas and the agricultural sector in all 27 countries of the European Union will be implemented on a new regulatory framework in accordance with detailed strategic plans for each country for the period 2023–2027, which has been approved by the European Commission. The rule enters into force with Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules for support for strategic plans developed by Member States under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) [9]. At the same time, Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013 of 2013 have been repealed. The total amount of support for the implementation of all strategic plans for 2023–2027 is €264 billion, which includes funding from the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund – EAGF (direct payments, sectoral support) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development – EAFRD. The European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) absorbs a significant part of the general budget of the European Union. It provides direct payments to farmers under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and also finances measures to stabilize internal agricultural markets, such as food interventions and export compensations. The European Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) is one of the European Structural and Investment Funds (European

Structural and Investment Funds – ESIFs) and was created to finance sustainable rural development programmes under the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union. Rural development is a very important area of socio-economic policy, affecting more than 50% of the EU population and almost 90% of the EU's land. Agriculture and forestry continue to be central to the rural economy. Issues such as climate change, the development of renewable energy, biodiversity, and sound water management are also becoming increasingly important aspects of rural development policy. In addition to the European Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Structural and Investment Funds include the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF). Both funds (the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund and the EAFRD) were launched in 2007 to replace the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, a special fund of the European Community created in 1962 to finance the common agricultural policy.

A necessary condition for financing strategic plans from the European Rural Development Fund is additional co-financing from the recipient country.

The strategic plans of the Common Agricultural Policy are aimed at achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal, which was approved by the European Commission in 2020 and aims to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions and zero total environmental pollution by transitioning from the use of fossil fuels to renewable energy sources and raw materials in the Member States of the European Union by 2050. In line with these strategic plans, the Common Agricultural Policy will remain a key instrument for achieving sustainable development of the agricultural sector and rural areas, ensuring food security and facilitating the transition to sustainable development based on the “green agenda”. Taking into account co-financing from national states, the total amount of financial support for agriculture for 2023-2027 through public expenditure is expected to be EUR 307 billion. Despite the fact that there are 27 EU Member States, a total of 28 strategic plans have been developed, as 2 strategic plans have been developed for Belgium: one for the Walloon region and the other for Flanders.

The strategic plans set out the following EU strategic objectives for 2023–2027: ensuring a fair income for farmers; increasing their competitiveness; improving the position of farmers in the food chain; taking action to combat climate change; caring for the environment; preserving natural landscapes and

biodiversity; revitalising rural areas; protecting food quality and health; promoting the dissemination of knowledge and innovation in agriculture.

The need to develop strategic plans for the development of agriculture for each country is based on the understanding that there are no “universal” solutions for each country.

Despite the unity of strategic objectives developed within the framework of the EU Common Agricultural Policy, 28 strategic plans imply individual strategies for each country and region, taking into account the specific circumstances and their development needs, taking into account resource constraints, since one of the principles for developing strategies is their differentiation depending on the agricultural characteristics of the territories. Such features include: natural and climatic features of the territories; level of development of small and medium-sized businesses (farms) in the region; presence of resource constraints (financial, agricultural, natural, personnel); possibility of co-participation of the countries; demographic situation in rural areas, which determines the need for a change of generations of farmers and agricultural workers.

Each plan combines a wide range of targeted actions to address the specific needs of an EU country and delivers tangible results against EU-level targets, contributing to the ambitions of the European Green Deal. A strategic priority under the new Common Agricultural Policy is to ensure a fair distribution of income, both within the agricultural sector and to reduce the gap between rural residents engaged in agriculture and urban residents working in industry and other sectors of the economy. The following activities, foreseen in the country and regional strategic plans, aim to achieve this strategic objective:

Support for fair income redistribution: EU countries should allocate at least 10% of their direct payments to finance income redistribution. The aim is to create conditions for increasing the income of small and medium-sized farms;

Support for active farmers: the new legislation contains a mandatory but flexible definition of an active farmer, which must be established by EU countries. Active farmers are understood primarily to be those farmers who have strategic goals for the development of their farm. They intend to invest in the implementation of modern methods of farming, including the implementation of agro-innovations, agro-technologies and the digitalization of agricultural processes. Active farmers receive priority in receiving support from the European Union.

Improving the social conditions and labor standards of hired workers on farms: maximum payments are tied to compliance with certain EU labor standards and recipients of payments are required to direct part of them to improving working conditions on farms.

Convergence of payments: under the new strategic plans, income support levels are becoming more convergent both within and between EU countries.

Support for young farmers: EU countries should allocate at least 3% of their budget to direct payments to young farmers in the form of income support or investment financing, as well as start-up aid for young farmers to start a business.

Improving gender balance: gender equality and increasing the participation of women in agriculture are for the first time included in the strategic plans of the Common Agricultural Policy. EU countries must make reciprocal commitments to improve gender balance.

The strategic plans pay particular attention to supporting small and medium-sized farms, as farming and small-scale entrepreneurship in rural areas are not just business or commercial activities, but forms of organising social life in rural areas. In addition to economic goals (increasing productivity and sustainable development of rural farms and small businesses), state policy should always imply certain social goals.

### 3 Conclusion

The new strategy of the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union provides for individual strategies for each country and region, which take into account the specific circumstances and development needs of the countries and regions, taking into account the pressing socio-economic problems and the existing natural and climatic constraints. After the 2020 reform, one of the main principles of strategic planning of agriculture in the European Union is the differentiation of national strategic plans depending on the agricultural characteristics of the different territories.

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