Sustainability in CRM Supply Chains:
Revising the post-Global Gateway agenda?

Dimitrios Karkanis, Assistant Professor
University of Macedonia, Greece, email: dkarkanis@uom.edu.gr

Charalampos Bakagiannis, Ph.D. Student
University of Macedonia, Greece, email: hbakagiannis@uom.edu.gr

Dimitrios Kyrkilis, Professor
University of Macedonia, Greece, email: kyrkilis@uom.edu.gr

The search for and improvement of the European Union's terms of access to the supply chain of critical or strategic raw materials is already considered of key importance for the future steps of the EU economy. Global economic competition to gain access to productive sectors related to the CRM / SRM industry (e.g. mining, processing) increasingly shapes the EU policies, as long as the BRICS group controls the major share of the production processes. The European Union is called upon to set the rules and ensure, on the one hand, the smooth functioning of sustainable supply chains globally, and, on the other hand, to update foreign economic policies, such as the Global Gateway. The latter EU initiative aims, among others, at enhancing economic cooperation with African states, combined with investment projects and financial tools for several key interventions, mainly in the fields of green and digital transition, sustainable growth and job creation, as well as in human capital.

The aim of the present study is to delve into the divergent patterns of economic cooperation between African states and the major economies being economically active in the African continent during the recent years. An overview of the recent relevant literature seeks to assess whether foreign-based investment strategies are aligned, so far, with origin-based economic institutions, such as the ACFTA initiative, or even to introduce more local ownership business schemes. The study intends to highlight any best practices of "win-win" economic relationships between African states and foreign-based economic entities penetrating the African market, but also the extent to which foreign penetration is aligned to the continent's development challenges and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this context, several questions may arise regarding the EU investment (re)orientation in Africa in light of this generalized geopolitical competition. Does the EU possess any comparative advantages in providing financing tools for infrastructure construction, compared to other global economic competitors, in specific sectors? At the policy level, is there a need for reconsidering the key objectives or the financing tools in the context of the Global Gateway, from 2027 onwards, in order to enhance cooperation in the context of the proper functioning of the CRM / SRM supply chains? Are there any prospects of promoting research cooperation schemes between African states and their EU partners, as long as investment is human capital is of major importance for both sides, given the demographic decline in the European Union?