

ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE EU*

LUCIA NEGRUT, ANDRA MICULESCU
WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMISOARA, FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION, B-DUL VASILE PÂRVAN,
lucia.negrut@feaa.uvt.ro, andra15m@gmail.com

Abstract:

**Increasingly concerns on sustainable economic development for every country and worldwide, are related to complex problems facing humanity today, namely: poverty, environmental degradation, uncontrolled expansion of urbanization, employment uncertainty of job, alienation of youth, removing traditional values, inflation, unemployment, monetary crises, economic and geographical ones. Sustainable development is not an end itself, but a mean to foster technical and economic progress through more equitable distribution of its effects on present and future generations. The objective of the sustainable development strategy is the same for all countries in the world, practical problems to be solved are very different from one country to another.*

Key words: *sustainable development, economic development, environmental degradation, natural resources.*

JEL classification: *Q01*

As a form of manifestation of macroeconomic dynamics, economic development involves a series of quantitative changes, both structural and qualitative, in the economy field, scientific research and manufacturing technologies, in organizational structures and operating mechanisms of the economy, people's thinking and behavior. In this context, is the concept of sustainable economic development, which is that form of economic development during which aims to meet current demands, consumption ones, and which does not jeopardize or compromise those of future generations. Increasingly concerns on sustainable economic development in each country and the worldwide are linked to a multitude of problems facing mankind. Sustainable development concept designates all forms and methods of socio-economic development, whose foundation is firstly ensuring a balance between the socio-economic systems and natural capital items. The most known definition is certainly given by the World Commission on Environment and Development in the report "our common future" known as the Brundtland Report: "Sustainable development is development that aims to meet the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations future to meet their needs."

Sustainable development aims and try to find a stable theoretical framework for decision making in any situation in which a report such as man / environment is found , whether it's the environment, economic or social. Although sustainable development was initially meant to be a solution to the ecological crisis caused by intensive industrial exploitation of resources and environmental degradation, it continues to look primarily at the conservation and environmental quality; today the concept expanded on the

* This project is realized through financing POSDRU/88/1.5/S/55287

quality of life in its complexity, including on the economically and socially aspects. It is now the subject of sustainable development and concern for justice and equity between states, not only between generations.

Sustainable development in FAO's conception requires planning and natural resource conservation and technical exchanges and institutional orientation in a manner that meets current and future generations' needs: land conservation, water and plant and livestock assets, use of materials hazardous to the environment, good adapted in terms of adjusting, economically viable and socially acceptable. In other words, sustainability is not limited to environmental aspects of sustainable development, by contrast, is a general concept, all agronomic, economic and social factors being of equal importance and refers to optimization of resources, environmental management and to ensure production of abundant and stable.

In essence, the various definitions relating to sustainability are addressed in the vision of reconciliation between economy and environment in a new way to support human progress, not only in a few places and for some years, but for the entire planet for a long future, what means and achieve a set of economic and social, and relating to insurance:

- Economic growth with consideration of conservation and protecting natural resources;
- Essential requirements for work, food, energy, water, housing and medical care for people;
- A new quality of economic growth processes;
- Increased control of the population;
- Preserve and increase the pool of resources;
- Technological restructuring and maintaining control of potential risks;
- Integrated approach to environmental protection, economic growth and energy needs;

Referring to the need for poverty eradication, the global problem of the contemporary world, Brundtland report emphasizes that `the essential needs of the poor world should represent the priority should be meeting their needs. In other words, sustainable development should ensure an increase in living standards of people, with special emphasis on the prosperity of the poor world , while avoiding the implications in the future.

In Thomas Sterner's vision, sustainability is in the form of any third unit dimensions: economic, social and ecological. Joining the economy to the eco-friendly attitude, influences the process of economic growth by affecting natural resources and biodiversity, the social and eco-friendly overlapped ensure a rational use of natural resources, biodiversity conservation, a respect for nature through education and culture. Sustainable development takes place amid major principles which characterizes it:

- The concern for equity and fairness between countries and between generations;
- Long-term vision on the development process;
- Corporate thinking, interconnection between economy, society and environment;

In support of this general principle, the concept of sustainable development is characterized by fluidity, as shown by many of his performances. Thus, the appearance

of the first formulations of the concept of sustainable development and so far, its content had a permanent improvement, adding new coordinates.

Theoretical, methodological and practical valences.

Their specific is distinguishing views that sustainability is addressed as follows:

- a) Economically, on the basis of maximum income generation while maintaining capital (physical, natural, human), sustainable development refers to the amount of capital (natural, human). On the accounting, sustainable development consists of accumulation should be higher consumption, which is addressed in terms of economic efficiency;
- b) Environmentally, based on natural biological systems and anthropic support, sustainable development is approached as a growing population and reducing the consumption of resources and potential recovery stocks, with adverse consequences on the overall ecological balance. The tendency of offering as many opportunities for future generations, is included in general biodiversity conservation, regardless of the known advantages;
- c) Socio-culturally, based on maintaining the stability of social, educational and cultural systems, in order to determinate intra and inter-generational equity, by the preservation of cultural diversity and encouraging pluralism of ideas, the effect of continuous education which aims enhancing human potential, enhancing it with new valences, thus ensuring more efficient use of material factors of production
- d) Morally and spiritually, sustainability is put in relation to the ethical values of human behavior as a factor increasing the efficiency of social work;
- e) Temporally, is addressed in terms of improvement measure of the sustainability through a system of indicators by which to highlight the size of replacement and renewal processes in relation to the depreciation.

The overall objective of sustainable development is to find an optimal interaction and compatibility of four systems: economical, human, environmental and technological, in a dynamic and flexible operation. The optimal level corresponds to that long-term development that can be supported by the four systems. For the system to be operational, it is necessary that this support or viability will be applied to all subsystems that form the four dimensions of sustainable development: starting from energy, agriculture, industry, investment, human settlements and biodiversity. These multiples of sustainable development, from population growth and people employment, to gender equality, environmental protection and individual freedom, they are treated in an integrative vision, focusing on expanding opportunities for expression to people's options.

Sustainable development is not an end in itself but a means to foster technical and economical progress through more equitable distribution of impact for present and future generations. Common problem of all countries of the planet is that sustainable development strategy must be addressed taking into account existing disparities in the world today, the division of the developing countries and underdeveloped, rich and poor. Although the ultimate goal of sustainable development is the same for all countries in the world, practical problems to be solved are very different from one country to another.

For developed countries which impose themselves to assure compatibility of direct economic efficiency criteria imposed by the market with the ones of social, human and ecological efficiency imposed by the need to create conditions for equal opportunities standing present and future generations, growth is projected to achieve a consolidated, dynamic environment based on compatibility between the natural environment and the one created by man, and based on compatibility between the economic efficiency and social justice.

Europe is one of the most urbanized continent in the world, approximately 75% of its population being located in cities. European urban future, is still a problem to be considered. More than one quarter of the EU is affected directly by the use of arable land to urban purposes. It is projected that by 2020 approximately 80% of Europeans will live in urban areas and in 7 countries the proportion will be more than 90%. Every day we witness a rapid change in terms of visible and conflicting use of the land that defines friendly landscape and affects the environment in and around cities more than ever. Cities extend, minimizing time and distance between them. This expansion occurs in an acute way across Europe leading to changing lifestyle and consumption, and is often called urban sprawl. Thus, there is conclusive evidence that clearly say that urban sprawl has led to self-development cities in Europe over the past 50 years.

Analysis of the situation over time and some forecasts for major economic and social sectors affecting the environment, such as pollutants that have the largest impact on its environment and the degree to which components were affected.

Agricultural use of fertilizers: economical and population growth of all regions involves an increase in demand for grain and other agricultural products globally. If current trends continue and the use of fertilizers will be more effective then demand for fertilizer will increase by 1% annually, from 138 million tonnes in 1999 to 188 million tons in 2030 (an overall increase of 37%. However, fertilizer use in many developed countries is inefficient. Best practices for fertilizer use could significantly reduce pressure over the environment, associated with nutrient losses. Even modest increases in fertilizer application could cause problems when growth stagnates, resulting in inefficient use of nutrients and severe pollution.

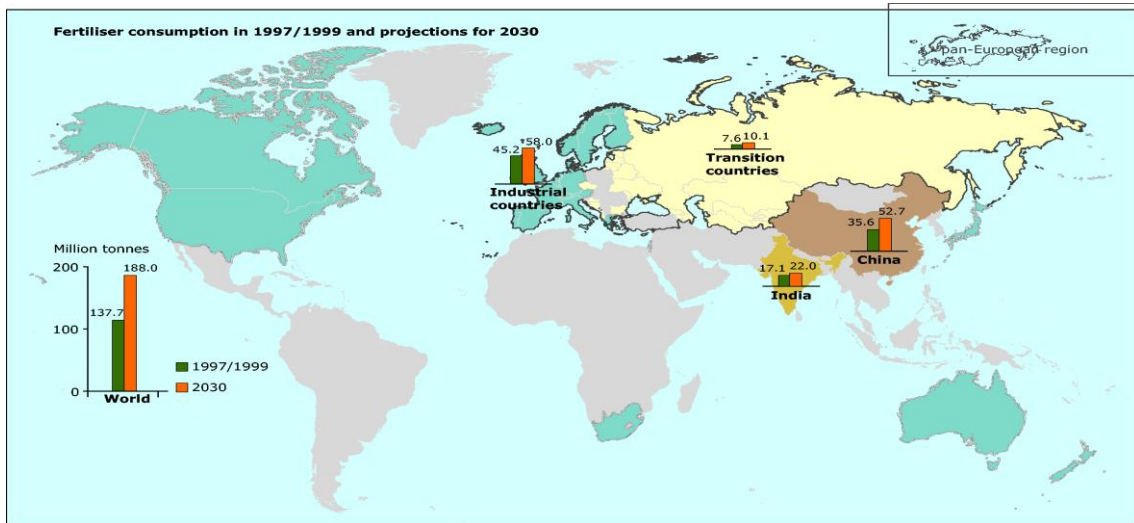
Users' consumption is relevant in two European directives:

- Nitrates Directive (91/676/CE)
- Water framework Directive (2000/60/EC)

Nitrates Directive aims generally to "reduce water pollution caused by nitrates or introduced from agricultural sources and prevent future pollution of this kind" (art. 1). A dose of nitrate concentration of 50 mg / l nitrate and 170 kg / hectare / year is the maximum level. Aquatic Framework Directive (the Board of the European Communities, 2000) requires that all coastal waters and intercontinental reach a "sustainable level" by 2015. Good ecological status is defined in terms of quality biological communities, hydrological and chemical characteristics. 6 Environment Operational Programme (European Commission, 2001) encourages both directives to reach water quality levels which do not affect and endanger human life and environment.

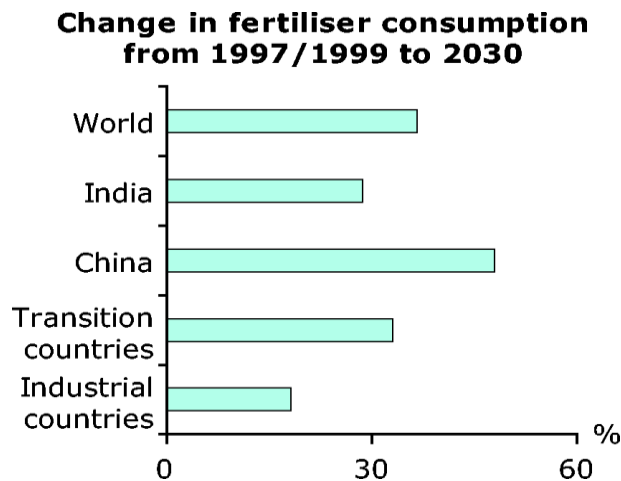
These directives require accurate measures of pollution prevention. However, at under- regional level there is no policy to link directly with the indicators.

Figure 1. Fertilizer consumption in 1997/1999 and projections for 2030



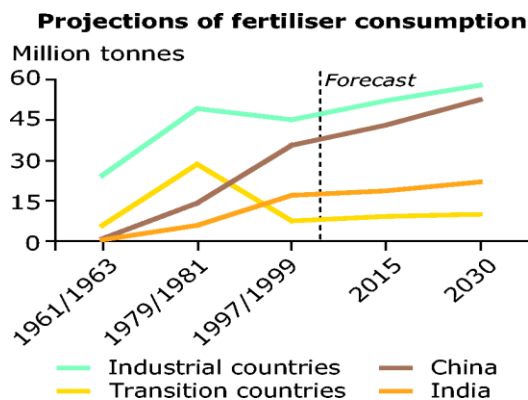
Source: European Environment Agency, Product economic forecasts, Indicators, Office file for Official Publications of the European Communities, Copenhagen, 2008

Figure 2. Change in fertilizer consumption in 1997/1999 and projections for 2030



Source: European Environment Agency, Product economic forecasts, Indicators, Office for Official Publications of the European

Figure 3. Fertilizer consumption in 1997/1999 and 2030 projections for industrial and transition countries

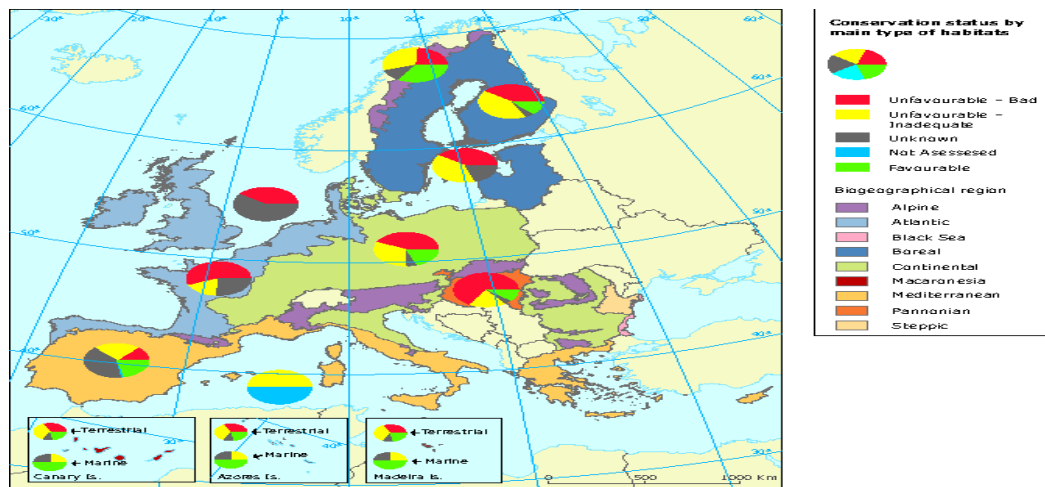


Source: European Environment Agency, Product economic forecasts, Indicators, Office for Official Publications of the European

Biodiversity, climate change affects species diversity

Until 2100 are expected radical changes in the distribution of plant species in Europe due to rising global temperature to 3.10C. Such growth is much more than long term sustainable goals established in the 6th European Environmental Action Programme. Part of SW and most of Eastern Europe will be affected by a high level of changes in biodiversity, species extinction may exceed 50% by 2050. Until 2100 most member states are expected to lose more than 50 species status in 1995. At European level, the EU Council adopted the European Strategy for Sustainable Development in 2001, one objective is to stop the extinction of species by 2010. In June 2004, European Environment Council adopted a set of indicators and other European instruments to act in this direction include the 6/lea European Environmental Action Programme and the strategy and action plan of the Community Biodiversity

Figure 4. Habitat conservation in the major categories



In the Mediterranean biogeographically region, about 21 % of habitats are in favorable conservation status, but 37 % are in unfavorable (bad plus inadequate) status.

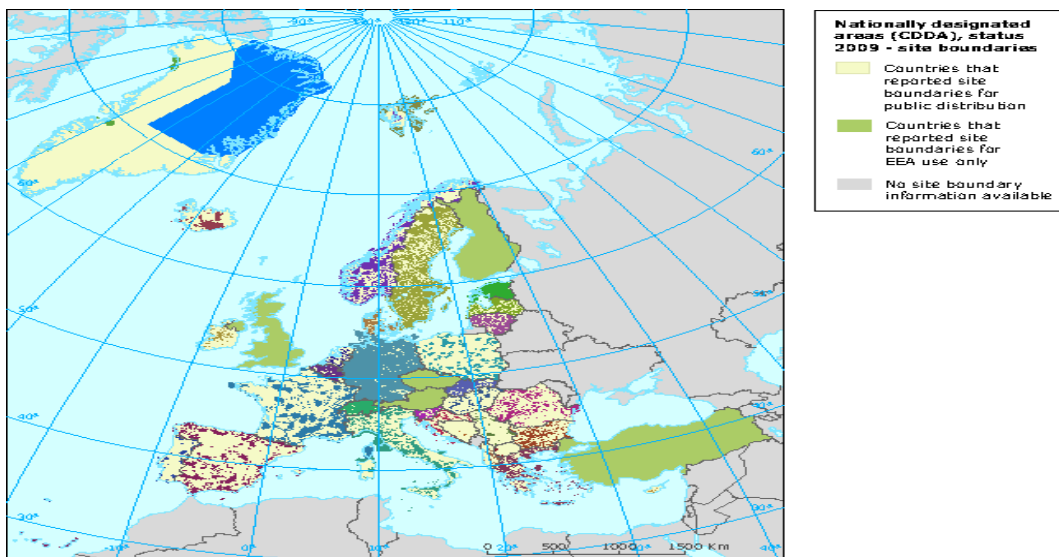
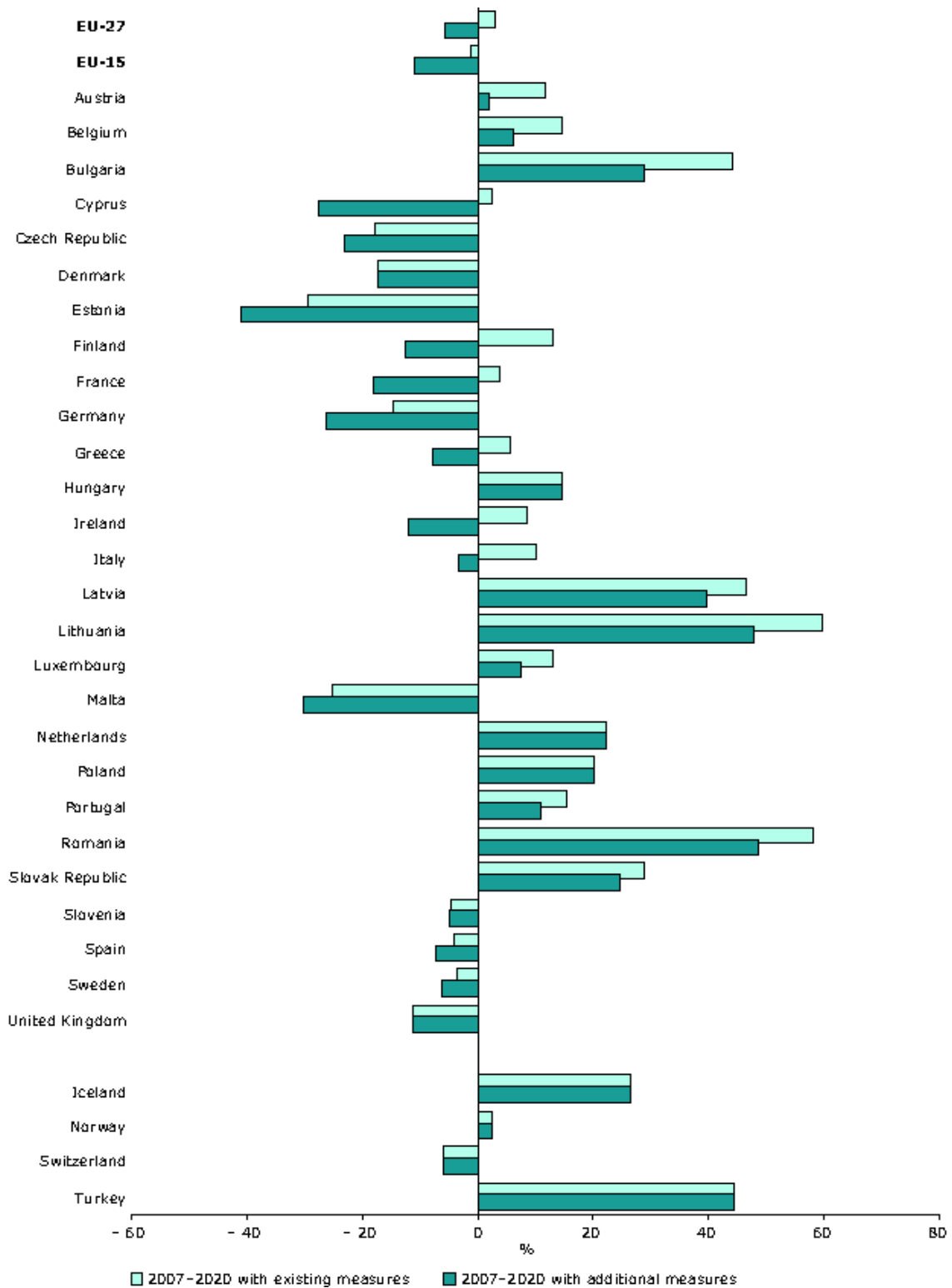


Figure 5: Projected GHG trends in Europe 2007–2020



Kyoto Protocol, the Protocol of the Framework Convention is only a first step in addressing climate change issues. To limit temperature increases to a maximum of 20C above pre-industrial levels will be needed to reduce global emissions by 50% by 2050, as the binding target proposed by the EU to avoid future impacts of climate change are unacceptable.

Energy policy should be consistent with the objectives of security of supply, competitiveness and environmental sustainability in the spirit of Europe's energy policy released in March 2006 by the European Council. Energy policy is crucial to face the challenge of climate change. Adaptation and mitigation should be integrated into all relevant European policies. As a common but differentiated target, by the end of 2010, a 12% average of energy consumption and 21% of electricity consumption from renewable sources must be ensured, taking into account the size proportions of 15% by 2015.

Sustainable development means meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In this context the overall goal of the European Union refers to maintaining the capacity of Earth to support life in all its diversity, and is founded on the principle of democracy, solidarity, respect for the law and against fundamental rights, including freedom and equal opportunities for all.

REFERENCES

1. National Center for Sustainable Development (2009), Agenda 21, URL: http://www.ncds.ro/documents_local_agenda_21.html
2. Comisia Brundtland http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brundtland_Commission
3. Goodland, R. and Ledec, G., Neoclassical Economics and Principles of Sustainable Development, Ecological, Modelling, 38
4. United Nations report "Our Common Future", <http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>
5. Pearce, D.W., Optimal Prices for Sustainable Development, in Economics Growth and Sustainable Developments, D.Collard, D.Pearce and D.Ulph, St.Martin's Press, New York
6. Regional Policy-Info regio, the European Union Solidarity Fund, <http://ec.europa.eu/regional-policy/funds/solidar/solid>
7. United Nations Environment Programme (1972), "Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment <http://www.unep.org/documents.Multilingual>
8. Regional Operational Programme: <http://www.fonduri-structurale-europene.rp/por/>
9. Sterner, T.(1994), Economic Policies for Sustainable Development, Ed. Kluwer Academic Publishers London, pag.75.
10. Tolba, M.K. (1987), Sustainable Development: Constraints and opportunities, Butterworths , London.