

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

This article discusses the evolution and importance of the Community Environmental Programs as a starting point with alarm at the Conference on Environment held in Stockholm in 1972 by stating that human activities contribute to environmental damage, with serious consequences on the population. Year 1972 is of particular importance in the environment representing the start of the six EU environmental programs, and creation of Community environmental policy.

Key words: *sustainable development, community, environmental programs, environmental protection, environmental policy*

JEL classification : Q 01, Q 20, Q 54, Q 58

Environmental issues were the subject of several meetings: the first Global Conference on Environmental Issues, "About the environment" (Stockholm, 1972), which was created following EU environmental policy, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) occasion that were created opportunities for joint communication on environmental protection between nations, governmental organizations. Maastricht Treaty signed on 7 February 1992 and entered into force on November 1, 1993 set as a priority environmental protection and how decision-making in the field of environmental policy, even against the will of Member States with low interest environment. Treaty of Lisbon (December 2007) comes with the following environmental policy objectives: to preserve, protect and improve the environment, health, the prudent and rational utilization of natural resources, promoting measures to combat climate change.

In the mid 70 s, Barbara Word, founder of the International Institute for Environment and Development, created and introduced the term sustainable development¹ that will become an objective of the European Union since 1997 when it was included in the Treaty of Maastricht.

Environmental protection is essential for achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development includes environmental protection and sustainable environmental condition, as reflected in the Declaration of Rio: the desire for sustainable development can be achieved, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be addressed independent from this².

Existing requirements in the European Union impose a new approach to global environmental problems, in terms of environmental effects and pressure of all socio-economic consequences³.

In 1987, in the Brundtland Report-"Our Common Future", the most famous definition of sustainable development was emitted: Sustainable development is the

¹Bejan Mircea Tiberiu Rusu, *Exploitation of natural resources and sustainable development concept*, AGIR Bulletin no. 1/2007, p20

²Declaration on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 1992

³Dumitra Mereuta, Simon Thomas, sustainable development indicators system situation in Romania, the National Conference on development of environmental statistics in Romania, Tulcea, 13 to 14 May 2004

development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs⁴.

From the definition it is clear that we, the present generation, must use resources sparingly, guiding us after famous phrase. "The earth is inherited from our children".

Whatever the approach, sustainable development means also ensuring economic development, environmental protection and social welfare, resulting interdependence between the three pillars:

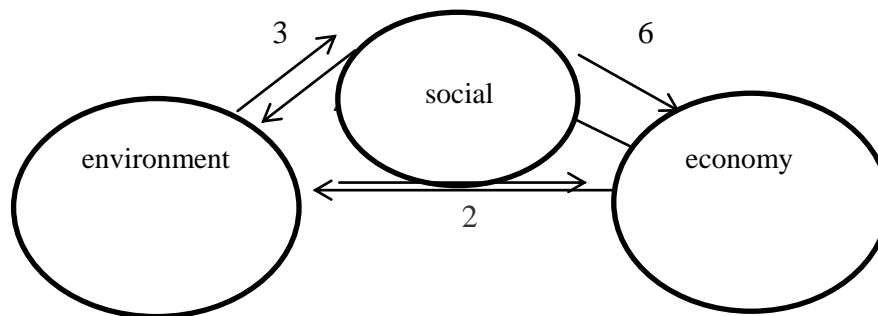


Figure 1 Interaction between economic, social and environmental
Adapted from: OECD, Sustainable Development: Critical Issues, OECD, 2001

1. environment- economy: the economic costs of environmental protection
2. economy-environment: pressure on environmental resources, environmental protection investment
3. environment-social: human welfare, health insurance by maintaining unpolluted environment
4. social- environment: environmental responsibility, consumption patterns
5. economy-social: providing jobs, at good living, incomes
6. social-economy: quantity and quality of labor

Sustainable development mission is to find ways of growth and development, while the rational use of natural resources, so that renewable resources can be maintained and renewable sources to be used at a pace to accommodate the needs of future generations⁵.

Equity with future generations is a challenge to sustainable development, which includes natural resource planning very carefully and long. However, it is necessary to find a balance between conservation, interests and abandoning all present and irrational exploitation of all resources.

A sustainability criterion requires that, at a minimum, future generations could not live worse than current generations⁶.

Environmental Action Programs (EAP) are documents that underpin EU environmental policy and contributed to the integration of ecological and environmental concerns into all Community policies. The first EAP (1973-1977) focused on corrective actions. It was released one of the Rio principles, the principle of responsibility, known as "polluter pays", responsible for pollution must to bear the costs of cleaning and pay compensation for damages. The 1st EAP and the second EAP (1978-1982) reflect a sectoral approach to combat pollution and promote the need to protect water and air, by introducing minimum standards for pollution. The second EAP underlies the second

⁴World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our common future*, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 43

⁵Sectoral Operational Programme Environment 2007 - 2013, final version 2007, p.12

⁶Gheorghe Zaman, Zenovia Gerasimos, *Criteria and principles of sustainable development in terms of it sresources*, AGIR Bulletin no.1/2007 January-March, p.137

principle: the principle of preventive action focused on the general rule that "it is better to prevent than to fight". In the third EAP (1983 -1986), emphasis was placed on the fundamental principles of prevention (requires precautionary measures when an activity threatens to affect the environment or human health, even if cause and effect relationship is not fully established scientifically) and protection (high environmental protection principle requires that EU environmental policy to pursue a high level of protection). Environmental objectives are beginning to be viewed as tools to increase economic performance and competitiveness.

The 4th EAP(1987-1992) promotes an integrated approach to environmental policy and introduces the concept of "sustainable development".

The 5th EAP (1993 -2000) called "Towards Sustainability" changed sustainable development in environmental policy strategy. This approach appears in all EU policies with the Amsterdam Treaty (1997), when it is promoted as transversal policy. In this perspective, sustainable development means maintaining overall quality of life, maintain continuing access to natural reserves, to avoid compromising long-term environment.

Other innovations introduced by 5th EAP are changing direction of environmental policy by a policy based on consensus, in consultation with stakeholders in the decision making process and transition to a control approach based on prevention and operationalized the use of economic instruments and tax.

The program emphasizes five major areas that can degrade the environment and deplete natural resources: mining, transport, energy, agriculture and tourism. There are set targets to achieve in each of the six elements of action and sustainable development of the European Union: integration of environmental considerations into other policies; partnership between EU Member States, businesses, public and divided responsibilities, broadening the range of instruments environmental policy: taxes, subsidies, firm agreements, changing consumption and production schemes, monitoring the implementation of European legislation by Member States, international cooperation in the United Nations "Agenda 21" .

The 6th EAP (2002-2010), called "Our Choice, Our Future" leaves behind legislative approach and switches to a strategic approach. This program discusses four priority areas, showing the following achievements:

✓ *climate change and global warming*- an issue of increasingly burdensome for life on the planet, the main threat is increasing the concentration of CO₂, one of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere over the past centuries: methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydro fluorocarbons (HFCs), per fluorocarbons(PFCs), sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆).

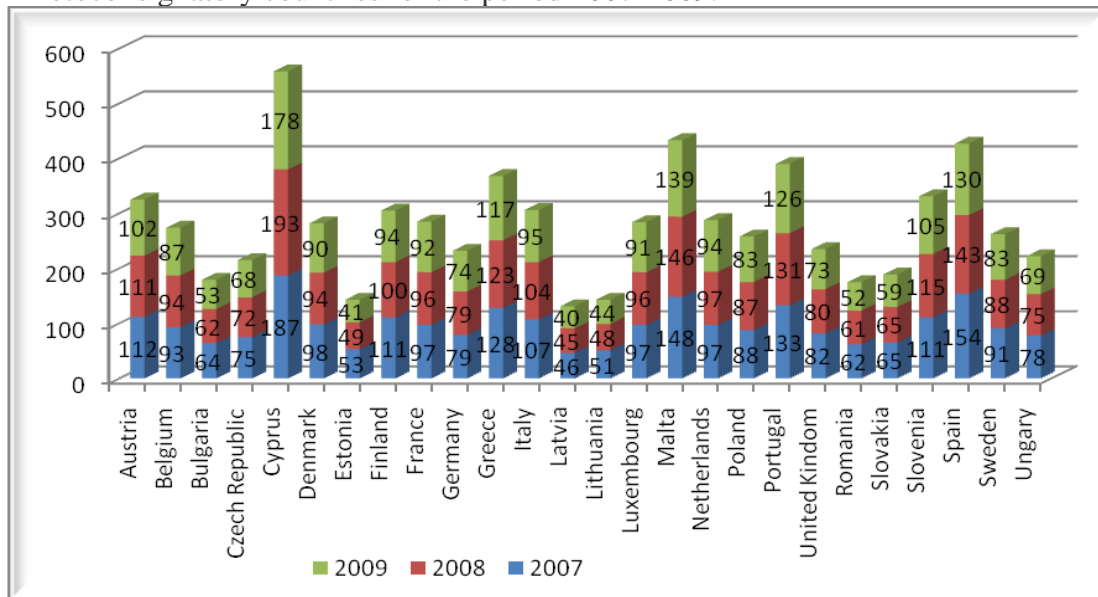
By 2080, about 3.4 billion people will suffer from serious water shortages caused by melting glaciers, and another 600 million people will suffer hunger from drought, degradation and soil salinization⁷. Nature provides solutions against climate change: renewable energy, energy efficiency and reduced use of fossil fuels (oil and gas). The only problem is how to convert sunlight, wind, biomass, geothermal energy or water power into electricity or heat in an environmentally and cost as low as possible, thus reducing CO₂ emissions and greenhouse gases and helping to protect the climate and environments surrounding.

The EU target for climate change area is to achieve Kyoto Protocol targets (December 11, 1997), namely to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 8% in 2008-2012 compared to 1990. Longer-term, 2020 will be necessary to reduce these emissions to 20-40% through an effective⁸.

⁷<http://www.revista22.ro/protocolul-de-la-kyoto-evaluari-si-perspective-2493.html>

⁸http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/general_provisions/128027_en.htm

Figure below shows that emissions of greenhouse gases are down in the Kyoto Protocol signatory countries for the period 2007-2009.



Fig

Figure no.2 A greenhouse emissions EU countries 2007-2009

Source: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/sdi/indicators>

✓ *international biodiversity and nature protection*- has spurred the development of thematic strategy on soil protection, environmental protection and conservation of marine; Nature 2000 network of protected areas has been expanded to cover about 17% of total EU territory; the pollution of rivers and lakes with nitrates and phosphorus decreased.

✓ *health in relation to environment*- has contributed to increased awareness and information about the links between environment and health.

✓ *conserve natural resources and waste management*

Consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources must not exceed the capacity of the environment; efficient use of resources must be maintained significantly improved and waste reduction.

The 6th EAP also provides thematic development strategies, which correspond to important aspects of environmental protection, such as soil protection, marine environmental protection and conservation, pesticide use in the context of sustainable development, air pollution, urban, waste recycling, management and use of resources in sustainable development.

These strategies are a gradual approach, structured in two phases: first, the description of the situation and identify the problems and the second, presentation of the measures proposed to resolve the problems⁹.

1) air quality – strategy initiated by the "Clean Air for Europe" launched in March 2001, proposes to develop a strategic and integrated set of recommendations, aimed at combating the negative effects of air pollution on the environment and human health.

2) soil - The European Commission initiated in April 2002 the Communication "Towards a Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection". In this agreement, the protection of soil is first treated independently and there are shown existing problems, functions and distinctive features of environmental policy in this direction.

⁹Meena Mag, Ruxandra Petrescu, Environmental protection in the context of sustainable development. Legislation and institutions, Publisher Bioflux. Cluj Napoca, 2011, page 67

3) use of pesticides in the context of sustainable development - a strategy that starts in June 2002, the Commission Communication "Towards a thematic strategy for pesticides in the context of sustainable development". There were established the following objectives: to minimize health and environmental risks from pesticide use, improve control over the use and distribution of pesticides, reduction of harmful active substances by replacing them with safer alternatives, encourage the taking of crops without using pesticides.

In Romania, share of organic crop areas in the utilized agricultural area for 2007 has increased with 2 percent compared to 2006, resulting one hectare that will be kept for 2008 and there was an increase to 1.2 hectares in 2009¹⁰.

4) protection and preservation of the marine environment: launched in 2002 to promote the use of the seas in the context of sustainability and conservation of marine ecosystems, including ocean seabed, estuaries and coastal areas, paying particular attention to areas with high biodiversity.

5) recycling and waste prevention - launched in May 2003, this strategy is the first treatment and recycling aspects separate and waste prevention.

Recycling rate has increased significantly starting in 2003 from 0.29 percent to 2.22 for 2005, followed by a decrease in 2006 and slight increase in 2007, the average period 2003-2007 was 1.12%. The recycling rate was 1.10 percent for 2008, doubling in 2009 when it reached 2.95%.¹¹ According to European legislation, Romania has to recycle 55% of packaging waste generated from 2013¹².

6) the urban environment - this strategy has already identified four priority themes for the purposes of sustainable development through their influence on development in the urban environment: urban transport, sustainable urban management, construction and urban planning/urban architecture.

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¹⁰ http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/Web_IDD_BD_ro/index.htm

¹¹ http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/Web_IDD_BD_ro/index.htm

¹² http://www.euractiv.ro/uniunea-europeana/articles%7CdisplayArticle/articleID_14072/Reciclare.html

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