

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT POLICY

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Abstract: *The environment protection is a very important challenge to the E.U. The paper begins with the inventory of the European regulations on environment, including the six Environment Action Plans.*

Another part of the paper deals with the financing of the European environment policy, including Romania, as a new member state.

The last part of the paper analyse the divergent opinias about the impact of the European environment policy.

Keywords : *Environment Action Program, environment strategy, environment protection, European Environment Agency, BAT*

European environment policy appeared as a separate element of the communitaire efforts in 1972, as a result of U.N.O.'s conferences from Stockholm in the same year.

First (1973-1977) represented a mix of mediumterm programs and strategic thinking which accentuated the need to protect water and aer and which presented a sector approach of pollution elimination.

The second Environment Action Program (1978-1982) had the same priorities like the first one and it represented a new form of the precedent one.

In 1981, was created the General Direction for Environment Policy inside European Comission. It had to arrange and ensure the implementation of environment policies and of their specific legislative documents. As a result, environment policy became more complex and higher correlated with other community policies.

The third Environment Action Program (1982-1986) was approved in 1982. It was a response to common market development and it wanted to equilibrate its objectives with market objectives too. More, this program represents a transfer from qualitative approach for environment standards to a new one based on pollution emissions.

The European Single Act was adopted in 1986. It was the document which supported environment protection to obtain a legal base into European Treaty. In 1987, was adopted the forth Environment Action Program (1987-1992) which was well coordinated with market evolution and objectives.

The forth program prepared the elements for a strategy for sustainable development in Europe.

The fifth program (1993-1999) leaved an approach based on command and control and supported the introduction of economic and fiscal instruments and consultation with specific decision factors. More, this program transformed sustainable development into a environment strategy.

The European Parliament obtained a greater role in environment policy development as a result of opting Maastricht Treaty.

In 1997, environment policy became European horizontal policy (Amsterdam Treaty). It means that environment aspects have to be considered as elements of sector policies.

The sixth Environment Action Program (2001-2010) supports the strategy for sustainable development and amplifies responsibilities for all environment decisions. This program identifies four priority areas of the environment policy for the next 10 years:

- climate changes and global heating;
- nature protection and biodiversity;
- health and environment;
- natural resources preservention and offalls gestion.

The E.U. is focused on achieving the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol (1997) which established the decreasing of the pollutant emissions to 8% during 2008-2012. As a result, the E.U. implemented a scheme of decreasing pollution in the Member States.

The E.U. uses specific legislation and regulations about air and water pollution standards as a component of its strategy connected with biodiversity.

In order to preserve health environment, the European Commission applies new standards connected with noise, air pollution, pesticides and the risk management of using new chemical substances.

As a result, the European Commission proposed a decreasing to 20% of the toxic residues still in 2010, using specific measures as taxes on using resources or new policies which promote integrate production.

This Action Program recognized the importance of the implementation and monitoring actual legislation in order to introduce market incentives and to adopt the Ecomanagement and Audit Scheme across the E.U.

The sixth Environment Action Program develops six environment strategies, as:

- air quality: this strategy was introduced in 2001, using “Clean Air for Europe” Program. It is focused on the elimination of the effects of the pollution on environment and human health;
- earth protection: is a strategy based on the document of the European Commission named “To a thematic strategy for earth protection”. It was for the first time when earth protection was independently discussed;
- pesticides using: is based on the project “To a thematic strategy in using pesticides under sustainable development” (2002). It established specific objectives, as: decreasing the risk of using and distributing pesticides on health and environment, decreasing of active toxic substances by replacing them with more safe substances, and supporting ecological agriculture;
- protection and preservation of maritime environment: the European Commission was involved into seas’ using under sustainability and maritime ecosystems’ preservation, including oceans, estuaries and coastal areas;
- recycling of waste: this strategy was initiated in 2003, in order to find the best way to recycle goods under cost-efficiency constraint;
- urban environment: it is connected to urban transport, sustainable urban management buildings and urban architecture;
- environment and healthcare (SCALE): is the latest environment strategy, which analyses the connection between the pollution, the environment changes and human health. SCALE is focused especially on children health. This strategy is based on suppositions, as:
 - ✓ is based on a scientific framework and analyses complex connections between polluters and human organism;
 - ✓ is focused on children and it initiates pilot actions on pollutions with specific relevance on children, as heavy metals and dioxins;
 - ✓ has as main objective the growth of information and responsibility degree to specific actors and all inhabitants;
 - ✓ the European legislation is complementary to national legislations and it is revised in order to reflect the situation and the special needs of the children;
 - ✓ it has to evaluate all actions and their impact on environment.

The importance of the European environment policy is relevant by the dimension of its funds.

Moreover, the latest Member States benefited by 5.7 billion Euros during 2000-2007 for environment infrastructure. 3.5 billion Euros came from ISPA, 1.5 billion Euros from PHARE and 0.5 billion Euros from SAPARD.

On the other hand, the instruments of environment policy’s implementation are divided as legislative, technical and economic-financial.

Under legislative instruments, there are regulations and decisions which created a common framework of environment protection.

The technical instruments represent those instruments which ensure quality standards of environment and using of the best existing technologies, as:

- standards and limits of emissions: in order to limit environment pollution and to identify the big polluters;
- best available technologies (BAT): in order to prevent industrial pollution. As a result, there were realised BAT guidebooks which became obligatory for all industries;
- environment label: praises European goods which achieve specific environment needs and eco criteria established by the European Union Eco-Labeling Board. Eco claber offers consumers exactly scientific informations about goods;
- criteria for the environment inspections in the Member States: are connected with organizing, fallowing and informing the results of the environment inspections in every Member State.

The main financial instruments of the European environment policy are LIFE program and the Cohesion Fund.

The legal framework of European environment policy is covered by articles number 6, 95 and 174-176 from the European Treaty. The article number 174 evidents the objectives and the finality of environment policy in order to obtain a high level of environment protection across the E.U.

Article number 175 identifies legislative procedures which allow achieving this objective and establishes the manner of adopting decisions about environment policy. Article no. 176 allows Member States to adopt more strictly environment standards.

Article no. 95 follows harmonization between health legislation, environment protection and consumers' protection in Member States.

At least, article no.6 promotes sustainable development as a transversal European policy. There are other 200 directives and regulations which form horinzontal and sector legislation about environment protection too.

The horizontal legislation covers regulations which support transparacy and information movement, decision making process facilities, development of civil society implication in environment protection. We can exemplify the Directive 90/313/CEE about free access to environment information or the Regulation 1210/90/CEE about implementation of the European Environment Agency.

The sector legislation cover sectors connected with environment policy: offalls gestion, sonor pollution, water pollution, air pollution, biodiversity preservation, land and civil protection.

The European environment policy is supported by some institutional actors which are connected with the governments of the Member States, with industrial organizations, NGOs and reflexion groups.

These actors support synergetic character of environment policy and ensure achieving legal and implementation objectives.

Inside the European Commission was created the General Direction for Environment in 1981. It has to elaborate and ensure the environment policy implementation. More, it has to initiate and define new environment laws in order to ensure their implementation in the Member States.

The Council of the Ministries of Environment represents a component of the European Council; it has several meetings on year in order to coordinate environment policies in Member States.

Another actor is European Parliament which cooperates with other institutions and which is implied into co-decision process. The European Parliament created an Environment Commitee in 1973. This committee is formed from specialists connected with environment and consumers protection.

Other actor, Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC) has a consultative role in making decision process as a result of generalizing environment policy.

Regions Commitee has a consultative role too and ensures regional and local authorities' implication in making decision process across the E.U. Environment aspects are debated into 4th Commission together with other problems like the following: spatial planning, urban policy and energy policy.

European Environment Agency has it central office in Copenhagen and it collects, operates and offers informations about environment to decisional institutions and to the public. It requests permanent monitoring activities about environment connected with:

- informations which can be used by political decisions;
- good practices promoting in technologies and environment protection;

- supporting European Commission in order to disseminate researches results about environment.

The activity of European Environment Agency is doubled by European Information and Observation Network for Environment (EIONET), which connects national informal networks of the Member States.

The article no. 175 of the European Treaty established the principles of the environment making decisions process:

- decisions are adopted under a qualified vote by the European Council and by cooperation with European Parliament;
- for action programs it has to respect the decision of a qualified majority in Council and in co-decision with the European Parliament;
- unanimity decisions for fiscal aspects and measures connected with territorial planning, land uses, water resources' management and energetic policy (Dutu Mircea, 1998).

The present Environment Action Program includes seven strategical themes such are: land protection, marine environment protection, pesticides uses under sustainable development, air pollution, urban environment, offalls recycling, gestion and using resources under sustainable development.

The implementation of these strategies is a gradual one and it is structured into two phases: first, of problems' identification and second of presenting proposal measures for solving these problems.

Nowadays, there are six strategies initiated. These are the following:

- air quality: is a strategy which was initiated under "Fresh air for Europe" Program in 2001. It consist in strategical integrate recomandations in order to eliminate nocive effects of air pollution on environment and health. These recomandations were presented to the European Commission in order to realise the strategy of elimination air pollution;
- land protection: in 2002, the European Commission published paper named "To a temathical strategy for land protection" (www.europe.eu/environment). In this document, the problem of land protection is trated independent;
- pesticides' using: "To a thematical strategy for using pesticides under sustainable development". This document established the following objectives: minimizing risks for health and environment as a result of pesticides use; improving control about pesticides' using and distribution; decreasing the level of nocive substances; supporting agriculture withput pesticides; implementing a transparent report and monitoring system for progress;
- maritime environment's protection and preservation: this strategy is initiated by the omonime communication of the European Commission (October 2002) in order to promote sea's using under sustainability and marine ecosiystems' preservation, especially for those areas with a great biodiversity;
- recycleing and preventing offalls (2003): this strategy represents first separate approach of reciclyng and preventing offalls' production, in order to promote goods' recycling under cost-efficiency report;
- urban environment: has four priority themes connected with sustainable development, urban transport, urban sustainable gestion and urban architecture.

An inovative aspect of the 6th Environment Action Program is adopting of a integrate goods policy (PIP) for decreasing environment degradation and developing a market of ecologic goods.

The evolution of the European environment policy can be analysing using the evolution of its implementing instruments. These instruments are divided into three categories: legislative, technical and economico-financial. More, there are other helping instruments which were created in order to respond to the new environment protection's tendances ans strategies.

Legislative instruments create lagal framework for European environment policy. There are more than 200 directives, regulations and decisions about environment protection across the E.U.

During 2007-2013, the Romanian National Development Plan has, as the 3rd priority, environment problems.

The evolution of the finacial framework for this priority is presented in figure no.1.

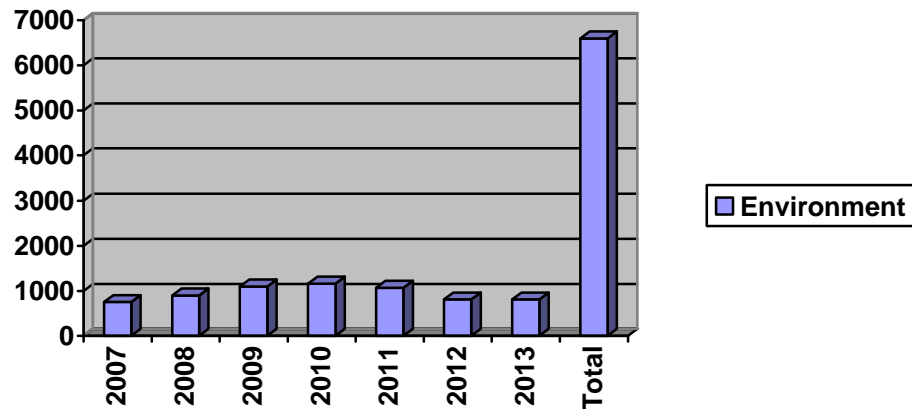


Figure no.1. Romanian environment policy's financial framework during 2007-2013 (mill. Euros)

Romania will benefit by funds under Objective Convergence. A part of these funds cover the Operational Program Environment infrastructure (3960 million Euros), as in figure no.2.

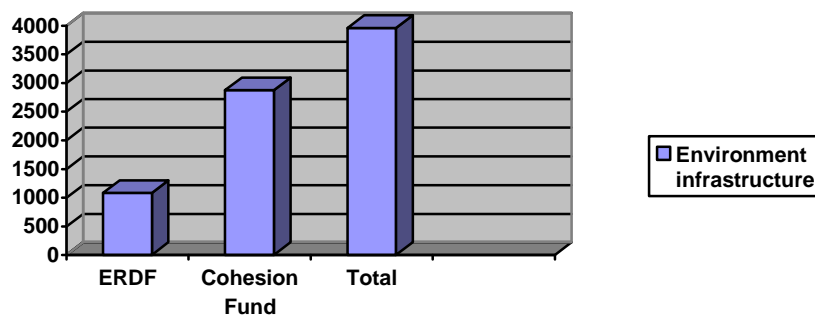


Figure no.2. Romanian's finance for environment infrastructure

The European environment policy is use as a success example. Maybe, it is the effect of more than 100 regulations about environment adopted still 1986.

Moreover, there were adopted systems of information harmionization and monitoring environment actions.

On the other hand, some specialists consider that the effects of the environment policy are just a few. They argued that the decreases of the smog and the sulf dioxide emissions were accompanied by increasing of the emissions of dioxide of carbon and nitrogen. Moreover, the improvement of the quality of water across the E.U. was done in the same time with the increase of the pollution of seas waters, too.

The latest enlargements of the E.U. represent an example of good environment management, as well.

Nowadays, the environment protection becomes one of the most important challenges to the world.

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