

REFLECTIONS ON ROMANIA'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

The destructive impact of antropic activities can no longer be ignored and all the human activities – from industry to domestic household - must impose a friendly behavior in relation to the environment. The environmental protection is an essential part of the enlarged reproduction and modern economic growth, aiming to ensure the dynamic ecological equilibrium, preserving and improving the quality of natural factors, the development of country's natural riches, ensuring better conditions of life and work for present and future generations. Thus, the whole activity for environmental protection in all of its components has a productive being creative of net income and value. On the long term, the achievement of dynamic economic equilibrium is illusory, without observing and respecting of ecological balance, the economic imbalances will cannot be resolved on the basis of creating some ecological imbalances, because these latter generate huge economic damage, a to which we can add a series of consequences, most often unpredictable.

Key words: *Environmental Policy Integration, environmental management, environmental audit, environmental protection, sustainable development*

JEL Classification : *Q50; Q51; Q52; Q53; Q56*

Introduction

Any human activity and implicitly the human existence it is inconceivable outside the environment. The system of relations which are established between man and nature, influences the ecological equilibrium, determines the conditions of life, as well as the work conditions for people, the perspectives of society development. These relations concern both the content of the activity and the creation of human existence conditions.

Taking into account these reflections we can underline the necessity for adaptation and organization of the environment so that to respond of individuals needs, that involves taking from nature of resources and their processing in order to serve the population, and to satisfy the people's needs. This addiction knows a great degree of reciprocity, because the human needs adapt to a higher or lower extent of environment. So the ensurance of environment quality is an issue of major concern and current interest for social evolution. In this sense, we consider that it is necessary to keep the unaltered quality of the environment

1. A conceptual delimitation of the environmental management - essential vector of environmental protection

In the current circumstances in our country is requires with necessity the environmental management at the level of economic agents, who knows an approach and a continuous, rapid evolution especially in the last 10-15 years.

The concept of environmental management at the level of the enterprises consists of an ideal connection between policy, objectives and the program of the economic agents, on the one hand, and the results of their activities, on the other hand. In essence, the role of environmental management is to achieve the policy and the program of the enterprise, concentrating the attention on the organizational aspects, evaluating the effects of pollution, the quality of monitoring systems and the efficiency of the information system.

Relative to Romania, the beneficial effects of the application of the environmental management protection, can result only in the context of the following basic elements:

- effective implementation of the instruments of the European environmental policy;
- the establishment of individual responsibilities for the various aspects of the environmental protection;
- the organization of the control quality of pollutants effluents of the internal monitoring system;

- the organisation of environmental audit which consists in the systematic action of the interaction between the operations made within the enterprise and its environment. In this regard, we must take into account the environmental factors, the existing legislation, the effects on neighboring communities, on the landscape, of the ecological systems.

The environmental audit includes the public perception of the enterprise activities. This interaction should be seen in strong relation with: the company policy, the existing and planned management system, production schedule, the budget of revenue and expenditures, the allocation of an considerable budget for the environmental protection, the proper training of the specialized staff, the sensibilization of the entire staff of the company in connection with the problems and solutions (causes and effects) on the phenomenon of industrial pollution.[2]

As the set of adequate actions of management to give the desired results in the case of industrial enterprises from our country we consider that should be taken into account some of the key objectives.

Thus it is necessary the organisational reconsideration of each enterprise for the inclusion of the typical forms of management, starting from the specific of economic enterprise, the intensity of the current phenomenon of pollution, the existing difference in relation to the limits of pollutants specified in the standards of quality.[5]

On the other hand, we mention that the laying out of the environmental policy must be achieved as a derivative of general policy of enterprise, from which it may come off the economic, financial, investments the quality of environmental factors aspects etc.

In this context we consider that the studies of impact should be elaborated by the institutions and the external specialist of industrial enterprise, given the size and the interdisciplinary of necessary collectives. At the same time, the environmental audit should be filled up through the expenditure accounting for the environmental protection, it is acquiring the necessary elements in order to compile the budget for environmental protection.[7]

So, the environment audit axial organized plays the role of feedback for the overall activity of the enterprise, regarding the concernment of compliance with the rules for the environmental protection.

Also, we emphasize the importance of sensibilization for the entire personnel employment, relative to the necessity of the environmental protection which can be made in accordance with the exigences of the EU practice in this field through the use of several methods.

Of these methods, it is worth to point through the proven efficiency of Winter model that is aimed at changing the behaviour of employees through the development of an ecological thinking that to exceed the limited borders of the gates of the enterprise succeeding thus to integrate the ecological criteria into the economic performances of the company (supposed of what is meant by ecological business).

In this sense the ecological performance of Romanian enterprises cannot be essentially improved without changes in the organizational and functional structure of the units, without to increase the sensibilization of specialized staff in environmental issues and without the developing a true "reflex" of the company, considered as a whole ((infrastructure production + personell).

The initial form of environmental management already being proposed, the set of actions required to be taken in the short medium and long term can be amplified, and the activity of environmental protection can be greatly improved, depending on the strategic and tactical of staff desire, the economic and financial situation and the degree of staff awareness with the disadvantages of pollution and advantages of environmental protection.

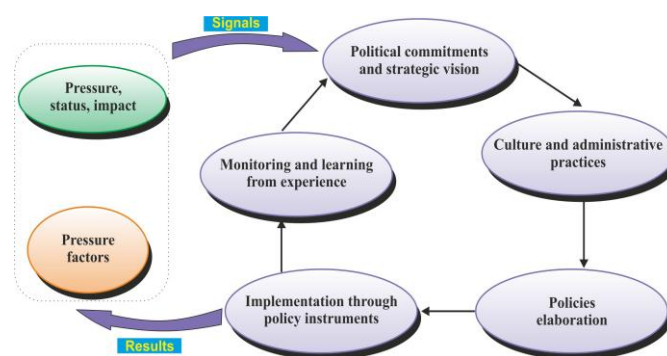
2. The Environmental Policy Integration at intersectorial level in order to promote sustainable development

The environmental policy represents the system of the priorities, the environmental objectives, the methods and the necessary instruments to achieve these, environmental policy being directed to ensure the sustainable utilization of natural resources and to prevent the degradation of environmental quality.[1]

Also, we can mention that the Environmental Policy Integration (EPI) is a continuous process which reflects the introduction of the principles of environmental protection, in all sectorial policies, in order to promote the sustainable development. In another train of ideas EPI is accomplished at national, regional and local levels, through the concerted efforts of the public institutions, such as to develop an application framework for implementation the strategic action plans, the financial instruments, such as the environmental taxes, various financial incentives, green certificates scheme etc.

The implementation of the framework of sustainable development will allow the integration of environmental policy at inter-sectorial level, having thus a global picture of interdependences that exists between the various policies, strategies and plans at national level.[9]

Figure 1. An evaluation framework of the environmental policy integration into sectoral policies: pressure, status, impact

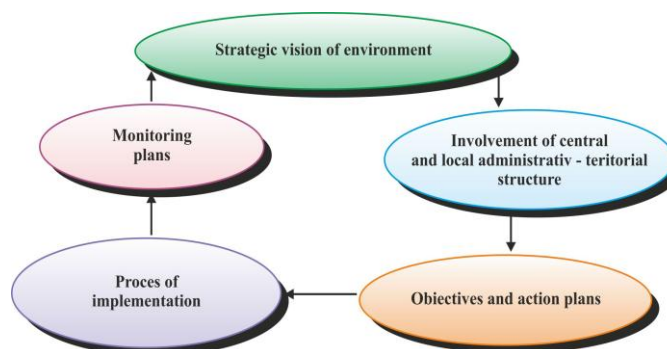


Source: <http://www.mmediu.ro>

The achievement of integrated framework of environmental policy must aim at a series of clearly defined objectives, flexible structures and a good coordination of making - decision mechanisms.[4]

The success of EPI into the other sectorial policies is influenced by the specific characteristics and the impact of each sector of activity, as well as the public's perception.

Figure 2. Graphical representation of the environmental policy integration at inter-sectorial level



Source: <http://www.mmediu.ro>

EPI into the others sectorial policies is achived on two plans. Thus, while the horizontal integration of policies and strategies at the national level is materialized through the involvement of authorities and central institutions, the vertical integration within the framework of the policies and strategies at the regional and local level, of the plans and urban development strategies of municipalities, regions unfolds through the involvement of local institutions and authorities.[3]

In regard to the national environmental policy should not omit that this instrument takes into account the reduction of risks associated with the extreme events, generated by the climate changes and the improvement of the institutional instruments, which can contribute to the utilization and the resources protection, bazed on the principles of sustainable development and to reduce pollution. The main objective of the Romanian environmental policy consists in the gap reduction comparative with EU Member States in terms of sustainable development and environmental protection. The main institutional actors of environmental policy in Romania are: Ministry of Environment and Forests, European Affairs Ministry, Parliament, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Health. Besides of the institutions at the national level there are also a number of local authorities involved in the environmental protection . A such example is given by the cities hall, which are directly responsible for the development, management, and protection of green spaces. At the national level we have to mentione and other organizations as well as non-governmental organizations and foundations for enviromental protection which have an important contribution to implement the national environmental policy, as well as to establish a clear dialog of civil society with the government authorities, focusing on some specific and punctual issues, where local authorities have omitted to include them in their agenda. Thus, we can notice that these organisations have an important role in the development and the implementation of national environmental policy. Confirming all these aspects, we have to emphasize that the Romanian institutional arrangement concerning the environmental protection, has undergone numerous changes and transfers of new competences in the past few years, however, it is important to note that the degree of involvement and

awareness regarding the necessity for a strict control of the environment protection in Romania on the part of the competent institutions has grown considerably.

3. The environmental protection in Romania in terms of national strategy for sustainable development

To describe the general status of national economy we consider necessary to start from the constatation that at the end of the first decade of the XXI century, after a prolonged and traumatic transition to market economy and pluralist democracy, Romania has recovered considerable gaps compared with the other Member States of European Union, at the same time with the asimilation and transposition in practice of the principles and practices in sustainable development in the context of globalization. With all the progress made in the last few years, it is true that Romania still has an economy based on intensive consumption of resources, a civil society and administration which are looking for an unitare vision and a natural capital affected by risk of damage that can become irreversible.

In order to the inclusion of our country on the trajectory of sustainable development the Government of Romania has adopted in 2008. The national strategy for sustainable development of Romania - Horizons 2013-2020-2030.[8]

The EU strategy for sustainable development, which is the foundation of the Romanian National Strategy completes the Lisbon strategy and is intended to be a catalyst for Policymakers and public opinion, in order to change the behaviour in the European society respectively in the Romanian society and to involve active public and private decision-maker and citizens in development, implementation and monitoring of sustainable development objectives.

The defining element of this national strategy is the complete connection of Romania to a new philosophy of development, own of EU and worldwide - the sustainable development

The current Strategy sets the concrete objectives switching to the development model of high value-added generator for a reasonable and realistic period of time, model driven by the interest in knowledge and innovation, geared towards the continuous improvement the quality of life of people and the relationships between them in harmony with the natural environment.

The fundamental premise of sustainable development is the human factor priority and in this sense, in accordance with Lisbon Agenda objectives, it was considered that, above all, the sustainable development means outstanding progress in the direction of research and innovation for 2030 horizon, the Romanian economy to switch to the stage of information society. Successive strategies (2001 and 2006) of the European Union sustainable development tend to emphasize in a growing extent on the conservation and prudent use of natural capital. Among the determinants factors of this evolution was awareness of the real dangers of climate changes caused by human activities, as well as the public perception increasingly emphasized on the benefits utilization of clean products and services from ecological point of view, with positive effects on human health and wellness. Taking into account that the future development of the organic component is determined, on the one hand by the current state of the environment, on the other hand by the financial resources possible to allocate for its improvement, it results that the economic dimension (capital created) is decisive for amelioration of environmental protection, and, therefore, a high level of investment and, implicitly, of the national income, will ensure the achievement of the objectives in this area.

At the same time, the orientation of economic development activities circumscribed to the concept of the "information society", in the detriment of traditional natural intensive resource, it will represent an important instrument for ensuring the environmental protection .[6]

In accordingly for the economic development on medium-term to be sustainable, it have to identify that modality to combine and use of the capital and human factor, that satisfy both the objective of economic growth, in order to reduce the economic gaps, and the objective of sustainable use of natural resources, in order to restore and improve the environment.

Conclusions

In the conditions of Romania's sustainable development we must provide a special attention to the extremely complex problem of unaltered preservation of the environmental quality, the only guarantee of the predictable process for ecologization of the enterprises. For Romania, as a Member State of the European Union, sustainable development is not one of the options possible, but is the only rational perspective ob national becoming, having as a result the formation of a new paradigm of development, through the confluence of economic, social and environmental factors. Through the promotion of ecological deontology it is accredited the need of conceptual change that define the fundament of the models of current economic development. For ensuring the success of the society awareness with regard to the level and the percentage of pollution a special role is played by non-governmental organizations (NGO) they are called to strengthen their institutional capacity and to assume the responsibilities on civil society. Objectively the unfolding of industrial process of production will still lead to the pollution of the environment.

Therefore, it is completely justified the adoption at national level of measures for the environmental protection in accordance with the objectives of sustainable development. Finally, paraphrasing on Lester Brown we can affirm that: Nature is the guardian of time, but we can't see timepiece. We pass over the limits required of the environment and violate the conditions imposed by nature.

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